

## **SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

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# **WEST OF SCOTLAND HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Policy Statement**

West of Scotland Housing Association is committed to promoting an ethical and cost saving approach to sustainability. This policy and guidance will endeavour to include all staff and stakeholders in understanding and working towards the organisational goal of improving our sustainability.

The aim of this policy and guidance is to implement an organisational strategy for sustainability. As you will see from this guidance this organisational strategy is being included in the overall business plan with targets to be met.

West of Scotland Housing Association aims to incorporate sustainable practices in all areas of the organisation.

We are all aware that climate change is occurring and that human actions are responsible for this. The Scottish Government and local authorities are committed to reducing carbon emissions and implementing sustainable actions and policies. West of Scotland Housing Association has a social responsibility to ensure our actions in delivering our services do as little, if any harm, to our environment as possible.

As part of our organisational strategy, West of Scotland Housing Association have the following objectives:

- 10% reduction in direct operational carbon emissions (energy/waste/transport)
- Embed Planet Smart culturally within the business
- Help external customers and supply chain partners be planet smart
- Report internally in a regular and relevant way on planet smart performance
- Support the Group in becoming recognised as a leader in sustainable business (brand and influence)
- Engage and empower customers to be planet smart through service offers

This policy outlines the different areas of the Association where we can ensure that sustainability is embedded:

- Development
- Procurement
- Sustainable Communities
- Office Practice
- Staff
- Raising Awareness with Tenants

## **1.2 Links to Performance Standards**

In line with 'Performance Standards' we have high-quality written policies and procedures to guide our actions. The purpose of this document is to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of, and commitment to, sustainability issues
- Clearly define the links to the sustainability agenda that we will adopt when developing new housing, maintaining existing stock and operating our business overall
- Set measurable targets
- Ensure that we actively strive for continuous improvement

## **1.3 Equality and Diversity**

The Housing Association has incorporated equality of opportunity commitments into all our operations.<sup>1</sup> We recognise our pro-active role in valuing and promoting diversity, fairness, social justice and equality of opportunity by adopting and promoting fair policies and procedures. We will check this policy and associated procedures regularly for their equality implications, taking appropriate action to address inequalities likely to result or resulting from the implementation of the policy and procedures.

## **1.4 Relevant Regulation and Legislation**

- Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012
- Scottish Housing Quality Standard
- Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014

## **1.5 Monitoring and Review**

- Implementation of the policy with the Chief Executive or an individual appointed by the Chief Executive, supported by the Planet Smart Team Leaders
- All Managers and Directors have the responsibility of implementing the policy in their area.
- The Policy will be subject to review at least once every three years.

## 2 Areas of Work

### 2.1 Development

To encourage this policy, RSLs, as recipients of public money, are required to embrace the sustainability agenda in order to obtain grant funding for their development programme.

In line with this, the Association views good, sustainable design as the principle at the heart of all new build/rehabilitation projects and therefore expects the incorporation of sustainable design principles throughout each project. In essence, we seek to provide affordable, safe, functional, well maintained buildings and environments whilst minimising the impact of their design, construction, maintenance, renovation, reuse and demolition on the natural environment. Quite simply, the design of any Association development must minimise the negative impact on the environment over its lifetime.

The Association understands that to be sustainable, its developments require to address social and economic factors as well as the quality of its housing and surrounding environment.

By working in partnership with relevant authorities and organisations, the Association will endeavour to build on its existing efforts in the social field whilst also developing its commitment to economic development wherever practically possible.

### 2.2 Key Performance Indicators

The following key performance indicators have been developed to assist in measuring the success in promoting sustainability in relation to the development of housing.

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>KPI 1</b> | The design of all new housing will be in line with Housing for Varying Needs  |
| <b>KPI 2</b> | New housing will <i>exceed</i> the requirements of Scottish Housing Quality Standard  |
| <b>KPI 3</b> | The <i>target</i> for each new development will be the achievement of an 'Excellent' rating under the EcoHomes Assessment Method (or BREEAM multi-residential assessment for non-self contained units). A minimum of 'very good' <i>must</i> be achieved. |
| <b>KPI 4</b> | All new homes will display an Energy Performance Certificate. Electronic copies including an energy report will be provided to the Association on completion of all developments.   |
| <b>KPI 5</b> | All new build housing will achieve at least a 'B' rating on both the energy efficiency and CO <sub>2</sub> emissions ratings that make up the Energy Performance Certificate assessment.  |

**KPI 7**            Every new build development will achieve an average score of at least 9 out of 10 from end-users when questioned on 'overall satisfaction with property' via the resident satisfaction survey

**KPI 8**            There will be no more than ten defects per unit

The following development objectives will be achieved:

### **2.3 Site Development & Design**

- All future development opportunities are expected to favour brownfield development for new build construction
- Site selection will favour land that already has a limited value to wildlife/ flora/ fauna.
- Future development selection will minimise the dependence of residents on car use
- Site selection will consider the options available for design and layout that will minimise energy demanded
- Site selection will be limited to sites with a low flood risk potential or where remedial work is being done to minimise this risk
- The Association will undertake a cost benefit analysis considering sustainability as a key issue before making a decision on whether to demolish and rebuild.
- The Association will only select sites that can demonstrate that there will be or can create a long term demand for the housing.

### **2.4 Scheme Design**

- The Association will build homes that have flexible design for ease of subsequent adaptation.
- The Association will ensure wherever practically possible that the layout, design and specification provide a safe and secure environment for residents and will have a secure by design award.
- The Association will make best use of each site to maximise solar gain, natural daylight, views to nature and to minimise cooling loads, wind chill and potential for dampness/condensation.

- The design of developments will minimise the dependence of residents on car use and will encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport
- The Association will maximise water efficiency and make use of up to date technology
- Design will promote and facilitate the recycling of household waste
- The Association will design in to the development aspects that positively enhance the ecology of the site
- The Association will contribute to a positive quality of life for residents and enhance comfort.
- The Association will try to ensure our new homes provide the facilities and space standards that meet tenants' future aspirations to ensure a continuing long term demand.

## **2.5 Energy Efficiency**

- The Association will design and build energy efficient buildings.
- The Association will wherever practical embrace new technology and sustainable technologies and incorporate renewable energy sources when selecting equipment and products
- The Association will contribute to the reduction in fuel poverty of its tenants and residents.

## **2.6 Material Specification**

- The Association will minimise long term maintenance costs for the Housing Association
- The Association will give due consideration to the potential lifecycle and overall environmental impact of the development
- The Association will work towards minimising its burden on natural resources in the selection of materials by encouraging the specification of materials with low embodied energy and minimal negative impact on the environment
- The Association will work closely with all partners to ensure the safety of its staff, end users and third parties when selecting materials for use.
- The Association will endeavour to source materials from local markets and sustainable /renewable sources.

- The Association will strive to be at the forefront of waste management, recycling of materials, energy consumption and the adaptability/longevity of our developments.

## **2.7 Information sharing and continual improvement**

- The Association will engender ownership of designs and specification choices with end-users where appropriate.
- The Association will provide residents with relevant information to assist them in understanding and operating their home efficiently and to support them in making informed decisions on responsible purchasing.
- The Association will continually improve by seeking feedback from stakeholders on completed developments.

## **2.8 Procurement**

- Efficiencies in the construction process will be achieved to the benefit of the Association and its tenants and residents.
- The Association will seek to achieve benefits to the local economy through its capital investments.
- When selecting Contractors and consultants for new developments, the Association will consider, amongst other matters, their commitment to sustainability.
- In selecting contractors, the Association will encourage contractors to manage sites in an environmentally and socially considerate and accountable manner.

## **2.9 Management and Maintenance of Existing Stock**

- The Association will maximise the use of embodied energy in its existing buildings by keeping the building viable and desirable for rent for the longest possible time.
- The Association will seek to ensure that property is allocated, appropriate to existing and future needs of its applicants and, where practical, will carry out adaptations as required to increase their suitability.
- The Association will make environmentally responsible choices when specifying materials for repair work to existing stock.
- The Association aims to ensure that all our homes, services and the surrounding environment are improved and maintained to our customers' aspirational standards to ensure a continuing demand in the long term.



- We will adopt an asset management approach to the maintenance of our stock, assessing the long term viability of the stock when considering the investment in the houses.
- Our five year programme will be reviewed in line with the Asset Management Strategy to ensure that assets are managed effectively, provide value for money and contribute to ensuring our tenants live in high quality homes that they are proud of.
- We will review dispersed properties in line with the Stock Disposal Policy and consider disposal of stock which meets the agreed criteria.

## **2.10 Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)**

EESH is a mandatory standard for Social Landlords to meet by 2020, is to succeed the energy targets and guidance in the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). The EESH targets will replace element 35 (SHQS) post 2015.

The Standard aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing and reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases.

Whilst the Scottish Government is not prescriptive about how RSLs satisfy the elements required by EESH it would be reasonable to assume an Energy Performance Certificate for every property would be a sensible route. A requirement for SAP ratings for all properties will be required by 2020 and therefore WSHAs commitment will be around increasing the knowledge we have of our stock in relation to its energy performance.

The minimum ratings required to satisfy EESH in 2020 is as follows:

<b>Dwelling Type</b>	<b>Gas</b>	<b>Electric</b>
<b>Flats</b>	69	65
<b>Four-in-a-block</b>	65	65
<b>Houses (non-detached)</b>	69	65
<b>Detached</b>	60	60

## **2.11 Procurement**

The Association's overall strategic objective is to establish a framework to embed planet smart within all levels of procurement. Planet should be one of the key principles at the foundation of all procurement activity. We are aware that 91% of the Group's carbon footprint is within our supply chain therefore we intend to work with our supply chain in a targeted way to reduce our indirect emissions.

We will do this by engaging with our suppliers so that they can be more planet smart too. This will mean working together to realise continual and measurable reductions in environmental impacts.

### **We will do this by achieving the following:**

- Create a framework to identify our baseline position
- Develop a process to measure carbon emissions from all supply chain spend

- Engage suppliers on planet smart, targeting high spend, high emission or engaged suppliers
- Work with suppliers to put in place practices or processes which will reduce our indirect carbon emissions
- Embed planet smart in Group procurement processes, to reduce unnecessary demand, waste and encourage procurement of more planet smart goods and materials
- Develop a framework to measure the reduction in carbon emissions from projects and initiatives undertaken in our supply chain

In addition to this we are committed to ethical purchasing of goods e.g. fair trade.

### **3 Sustainable Communities – Green Agenda**

There are many definitions and there are many different ways for communities to attain a more sustainable future. The sustainability of a community depends on creating and maintaining its economic and environmental health, promoting social equity, and fostering active citizen participation in planning and implementation. Communities that engage citizens to develop sustainability principles and a collective vision for the future and that apply an integrative approach to environmental, economic, and social goals are generally more successful.

Employment, energy use, social housing, transportation, education and health & wellbeing are considered complementary parts of creating a sustainable community. As issues are interconnected they must be addressed collectively. This includes:

- broad and diverse involvement of people and communities
- the creation of a collective vision for the future
- the development of principles of sustainability
- an inventory of existing assets and resources and additional assets that would benefit the community
- clear, measurable goals
- the development of community indicators to evaluate progress
- open and transparent communication
- early, visible results
- celebration of success

Sustainability is a process of continuous improvement so communities constantly evolve and make changes in terms of making communities healthier, safer, greener, good places to live and are more prosperous

## **WSHA 's Sustainable Communities Green agenda seeks to :**

### **3.1 Increase Recycling**

Processing of used material waste into new products to prevent waste of potentially useful materials, reducing the consumption of fresh raw materials, reducing energy usage, reducing air pollution from incineration and water pollution from landfill by reducing the need for conventional waste disposal, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions as compared to virgin production.

### **3.2 Work On Reduction**

Buying less and using less. This incorporates common sense ideas such as turning off the lights, rainwater harvesting, taking shorter showers, low flow toilets/wash hand basins, programmable thermostats / energy management systems, car sharing. Efficiencies are increased and carbon footprints are decreased.

### **3.3 Re-use (Upcycling)**

Promote and enable the reuse of products. Initiatives include Freecycle, car boot sales, and composting, non-disposable nappies.

### **3.4 Environment**

Preservation of the natural environment is essential for maintaining community sustainability. This provides an overview of the various techniques used successfully protect and restore communities' natural resources.

### **3.5 Water**

Adequate water supplies of high quality are necessary both for community use and local ecosystems. Communities must work together to assure an adequate water supply to meet future needs. .

### **3.6 Energy**

Communities require energy. Non-renewable sources for power generation, home and workplace, and transportation cause pollution and its harmful impacts. Energy conservation and the use of renewable fuels provide cost-effective and more sustainable alternatives. Ensuring that communities have access to advice to make energy use more efficient.

### **3.7 Air and Climate**

Both the natural ecosystem and human health can be adversely impacted by declining air quality and climatic change. Communities can preserve air quality by limiting or eliminating the discharge of harmful chemicals into the air and by minimizing the sources of air pollution.

### **3.8 Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is particularly important for creating sustainability because of the specialised roles each species plays in maintaining ecological balance. Communities can promote healthy wildlife by supporting integrative approaches for managing, protecting, and enhancing wildlife populations and habitats appropriate to their area.

### **3.9 Land, Forests, and Ecosystems**

While providing a protective covering for soil, water, and the atmosphere, forests are also renewable sources of an endless variety of products. In a healthy ecosystem, policies and programs must balance economic and conservation needs.

### **3.10 Key Aims**

To this end WSHA will identify waste ground/brown-field sites with a view to re-development (including community gardens, recycling centre, green spaces)

Promote recycling such as furniture, carpet initiatives to tenants and also use as a first choice for WSHA activity, particularly around tenancy sustainment

Promote recycling opportunities and benefits through newsletter, conference events and community engagement

Explore current initiatives taking place in schools/community centres and establish partnerships

Engage with local communities to increase awareness and encourage waste reduction and recycling:

Identify tenant community groups and work alongside to develop potential target areas for individual pilot projects

Undertake targeted interventions which impact on energy use

Undertake work to explore the potential of retro fit PV Panels to our properties

## **4. Office Practice**

**We have the following Planet Smart pledges in relation to our office practice:**

### **4.1 Energy**

WSHA enters into fixed price contracts for gas and electricity throughout the Association. While this ensures that we will not be exposed to the rising energy prices, staff also need to be aware of energy consumption from an environmental and cost point of view.

The following measures can be put in place in services to reduce energy consumption:

- Encourage staff to switch off lights, computers, photocopiers and other electrical equipment at night.
- Ensure that all lights and non essential equipment is turned off when not in use.
- Replace normal filament bulbs with energy efficient alternatives
- Put monitors to sleep rather than use screen savers, they often consume more energy
- Consider energy efficiency when purchasing new equipment. Give preference to equipment with low power stand-by or sleep features
- Keep a regular account of how much energy is used by the offices and monitor targets for reducing consumption to a practical level.
- Make sure external doors and windows are draught proofed.
- Regular maintenance of your heating system can improve efficiency
- Set heating system on a timer setting and turn the thermostat down when possible

### **4.2 Use of Water**

The first step in reducing water use is to calculate the amount of water used in the buildings. We will monitor our water bills for the last year and monitor this on an ongoing basis. When doing this we need to bear in mind any increase in staff numbers.

### **4.3 Find and fix leaks**

- If there is a water meter, we can check for leaks by turning off the water and taking two meter readings several minutes apart. If the reading is different, there must be a leak.
- Leaks more often occur in supply pipe work below or adjacent to your premises.
- Contact your suppliers if you are unsure where the source of increase water usage
- Some water areas provide free water audits

- Check cisterns, overflows and pipe-work to and from heating and cooling systems
- Check all areas where water is used in your office/building. A dripping tap could loose as much as 90 litres a week. Check for leaking taps/

#### **4.4 Simple water saving techniques**

- Consider installing a special water saving device in the cistern, such as the inexpensive HIPPO, less water is wasted when you flush the toilet. These don't work with all cistern types.

#### **4.5 New Fittings**

There are other options to consider in relation to fittings:

- Fit spray inserts in often-used taps. These reduce the amount of water from the tap don't reduce washing efficiency.
- Fit new percussion taps, which turn off after a set period.
- Fit variable flush handles to all applicable toilet cisterns. Standard toilets use between 7 and 9 litres of water every time they are flushed.
- Ensure our dishwashers are water and energy efficient. Ask the supplier for the resource saving features or low rated products.

#### **4.6 Efficient water use within the office**

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the need to be water efficient. Communicate the measures you are taking and the results of any changes made.

#### **4.7 Stationery**

It is recommended that all stationery be ordered from a single preferred supplier (Lyreco). Not only will this provide increased cost savings but will also allow us to negotiate better deals in recycled materials, which at the moment are generally more expensive.

WSHA encourages staff to use electronic communications and wherever possible should avoid printing of hard copies. Emails should not printed unless absolutely necessary.

Using recycled paper does have a cost implication. We recommend that offices use Discovery paper which is produced in a more environmentally friendly way and is produced from renewable resources.

With only a few exceptions all printing should be done double sided. We will monitor our printing volume with a view to reducing paper volume going forward.

All copiers are set up with user codes therefore you can't print until you type in your code. This will allow you delete any documents that have errors in them or

that you didn't intend to send to print to avoid any wasted prints. If you do print something in error. You should use the paper as scrap paper for notes where possible.

#### **4.8 Equipment**

All WSHA purchases must be done in an environmentally responsible manner. Purchase of new and replacement equipment must be first proven to be required for the purposes of the organisation. Energy efficiency should be considered before purchasing equipment and all spent equipment should be recycled, reconditioned or reused.

#### **4.9 Recycling**

In addition to reducing our consumption of resources we will explore options and opportunities to recycle the waste that the Association produces in order to minimise the impact upon our environment. The vast majority of waste generated by WSHA is paper, recycling paper not only reduces landfill but also recycled paper as a product produces over 70% less carbon emissions in its production.

#### **4.10 Paper**

Paper is the greatest volume of waste produced by the Association. Staff should aim to reduce their paper usage significantly as mentioned previously by double sided printing, e-mailing where possible etc. However, we should recognise that we will continue to use and receive paper, therefore should aim to recycle 100% of all paper waste. Paper recycling facilities are in place in both offices and the G31 centre. All staff should make use of these. No paper should be put in the waste bins. The IDSL secure consoles should be used for any confidential documents.

Junk mail should be sent back to the source with requests to be removed from the mailing list in order to reduced unnecessary waste being delivered to offices.

#### **4.11 Plastic, Glass and Metals**

The volume of waste from these products may not be as high as paper but we have recycling facilities for all of the above in both offices and the G31 centre. All 3 sites should be recycling 100% of these item types.

#### **4.12 Food Waste**

We have facilities to recycle food waste in both office bases. When ordering catering staff should be careful about not over ordering to minimise food waste.

#### **4.13 Printer Cartridges**

There are several options for recycling printer cartridges and it up to each site how they choose to do it as long as they are recycling their cartridges. You may wish to do this locally using a local business or social enterprise. However, other options include the following:

- Lyreco can provide services with a recycling box, they will then pick up the cartridges free of charge and recycle them.
- There is a company called Reclaim It who will recycle your cartridges and you can get money back from the cartridges which can be donated to one of our chosen charities. For further information on this option, you can visit [www.Reclaim-it.com](http://www.Reclaim-it.com).

#### **4.14 Furniture**

There are a number of social enterprises throughout Scotland who refurbish and recycle furniture. When getting disposing of a piece of office furniture should contact social enterprises in the area to arrange this.

#### **4.15 IT Equipment**

Many recycling companies will recycle IT equipment, though there may be a fee for this. If pc's are being recycled, you should ensure that all information from the pc's are cleared before they are collected for recycling.

### **5 Staff**

Staff awareness and behaviours are key to the implementation of this policy. As already mentioned there are some key areas in which staff behaviours can contribute significantly.

- Reduction of energy usage
- Reduction of water usage
- Reduction of paper usage
- Recycling

All of the above rely of staff complying and following the policy and guidance. In addition to the above the other key area in which staff can play an important role and is essential to reducing carbon emissions is staff travel.

Due to the nature of the work that we do and the spread of our stock, staff travel is an integral part of the services that we provide. As a result of this we cannot cease staff travel but we can ask staff to think about their travel before making a journey. Examples of this includes:

- If there are more than one member of staff attending a meeting/visit – please ensure that car sharing is arranged where possible.
- If travelling down to Sunderland to Gentoo, staff should use the train and book as far in advance as possible to ensure that they get the best fare available. Where there is more than one person, car share could be considered
- Staff should take their own car into the city centre rather than a taxi as it is more cost effective for the Association to pay mileage and parking rather



than a taxi. As above, car sharing should be considered if more than one person is travelling into the city centre

## **5.1 Mobile Working**

We are introducing new mobile working arrangements for staff that require to be out and about a lot. These arrangements should impact positively on our carbon emissions as staff will not be required to come into the office to update notes etc, check emails etc. They will be able to do this while they are out in between visits etc.

## **5.2 Meetings**

Staff should also consider whether travel is necessary with regard to internal meetings in particular. Discussions could take place by e-mail, through intranet forums or by phone call. WSHA also has a conference call facility which is available to all staff. This should also be considered when arranging meetings with Gentoo staff.

## **5.3 Public Transport**

In an ideal world, we would like staff to always consider the use of public transport, however, it is appreciated that this can add significant time onto a journey and may not always be the best use of time. Staff should consider use of public transport where practical.

## **5.4 Staff Communication and Awareness raising**

We have several Planet Smart Team Leaders in place who will update and raise awareness with staff on a regular basis, this will include:

- Planet Smart Update in the Team Brief
- Planet Smart Roadshow sessions
- Notice board updates
- SMT Updates to be delivered at team meetings

We would welcome any ideas and suggestions from staff around this area.

## **6 Tenants**

### **6.1 Energy Advice to Tenants**

WSHA understands the effects that excessive and improper energy use can have on the environment. To assist tenants to maximise their energy usage and tackle fuel related debt, resources have been allocated through the Regeneration Services Financial Wellbeing Team to ensure advice and assistance is available. WSHA's dedicated Energy Advice service, introduced in April 2014, assists tenants to:

- Reduce their fuel bills
- Manage their fuel debt
- Manage their energy supply and make their energy go further

- Find the right energy tariffs for them
- Change their energy supplier

## 6.2 Digital Inclusion

WSHA aims to ensure that the communities we serve are inclusive in every way. Technology is continually advancing which means that more and more communication and learning is taking place in the digital world. Common activities such as applying for a car's road tax, accessing learning opportunities, applying for housing benefit or even contacting family and friends by e-mail or Skype are becoming increasingly digitally driven. In line with The Scottish Government's Digital Inclusion Strategy, WSHA aims to ensure that tenants who are not digitally connected do not get left behind.

WSHA believes that everyone should have the same opportunities relating to digital inclusion to play an inclusive role in society, to access learning and services and to engage with the community around them. Working in partnership with Kelvin College, WSHA has created it's first Learning Centre at the G31 Centre in the heart of Camlachie. The Centre, funded through The Big Lottery Support and Connect Fund contains 10 PC's with access to the internet, e-mail, IT, word processing packages, printing and scanning facilities for local communities.

The Centre is part of the John Wheatley learning network offering a wide range of personal, professional and educational opportunities for local communities. At the Learning Centre individuals and groups will be able to:

- Use (or learn how to use) the internet, e-mail, IT and word processing packages
- Learn new skills or improve on existing skills through a range of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SQA) qualifications delivered by Kelvin College and other agencies – for example First Aid, Food Hygiene, Art and Design and Customer Care
- Search for jobs, submit application forms or learn how to create CV's
- Look for money saving household options such as new and improved energy tariffs, TV deals, mobile phone and telephone deals
- Take part in workshops that will offer financial and benefits advice, support for housing enquiries, support for recovery from problems such as alcohol or drug use
- Set up bank accounts, use online banking and join credit unions
- Surf the net and use the internet for personal use – for example, Facebook, Twitter, Skype and online shopping

In addition to improving education and employment within WSHA communities, the Learning Centre aims to digitally include and connect individuals and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society with technology and electronic services.

Digital communication is an environmentally friendly way in which WSHA can communicate with tenants, customers and other stakeholders. By working towards ensuring that tenants are digitally included and equipped to operate in an ever

increasing technological environment, WSHA recognises this in turn will have positive environmental effects within WSHA communities.

### **6.3 Use of Social Media**

With approximately 31.5 million UK adults using Facebook and 15 million using Twitter social media has become mainstream form of communication. WSHA operates a Facebook and Twitter account to keep tenants, wider communities and partners informed of some of the work ongoing across WSHA communities.

Through WSHA's digital inclusion project tenants and the wider community who may not already be digitally connected can use PC's and the internet providing access to social networking. Communication through social media eradicates the need in many instances to produce hard copies, minimising any harm that may be caused to the environment.

### **7 Policy Links**

This policy also links to the following WSHA Policies:

- Development Policies and Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Procurement Policy and Procedures
- Maintenance Policies and Procedures