

# Environmental Sustainability Strategy

2022-2027





# Foreword from our Chair

At NCHA, we've been committed to providing more homes, great services and better lives for our customers for nearly 50 years.

Back in 1973 when we first started delivering homes, terms like 'environmental sustainability' and 'climate change' weren't even understood by most people.

Fast forward to 2022. Things have moved on, and we now provide 10,000 homes for people across the East Midlands. It's fair to say that we've thrived, alongside our customers.

But as we've grown, so has our understanding of the impact that we all have on the environment. In those same 50 years that we've been thriving, 2.2 million kilometers of Arctic ice has disappeared and 700 million Amazonian trees have been lost. More recently we've started to see how that damage is coming back to threaten our lives in the UK, with flooding, heat waves and energy price rises affecting the lives of more people, especially those on low incomes and living in unsuitable homes. All of these trends are set to continue and new challenges will emerge.

We recognise that we're in a fantastic position to provide great homes that can help our customers to thrive through this crisis. In the life of this strategy, we'll make strides to increase the resilience of our homes and communities to help us meet the coming challenges. We'll also manage our own environmental impacts and find opportunities to make positive contributions to the environment through our work.

It's often said that we are the first generation to understand the climate crisis, and that we're the last generation who can do something about it. We're determined to use our collective creativity to take on our big sustainability challenge, because we know that's the best way to ensure that we can thrive alongside our customers for another 50 years.



Claire Winfield (Chair)



# Our big sustainability challenge

**This strategy sets out our environmental sustainability priorities and objectives for the next five years.**

During this strategy we will build more than 2100 new homes, retrofit more than 1000 of our existing homes and create a new low-carbon headquarters. We'll make sure that all of this work reflects our values, because we know that the next five years are vital to establish a culture of sustainability for decades to come.



**To support our customers** in a time of environmental, economic and social change. We'll make our homes more energy efficient and our neighbourhoods greener, making the most of external partnerships and public funding to complete this extensive work.



**To continually improve our business operations** as resources deplete, costs increase and environmental legislation evolves, we'll establish a comprehensive environmental management system and embed a culture of sustainability across our business.



**To fulfil our social responsibilities as a Community Benefit Society,** we'll continue to build new affordable housing with continually improving energy efficiency and biodiversity standards. We'll work hard to cut our carbon footprint and resource consumption, reducing reliance on fossil fuels in our homes, offices and vehicles.

# Our sustainability principles

## Responsibility

We'll become an environmentally sustainable organisation. We'll carefully manage our environmental impacts, making sure that sustainability is considered as part of every decision we make. We'll find opportunities to make positive environmental impacts and never support decisions that are destructive to the environment.

## Resilience

We'll provide sustainable environments that help our customers to thrive. Environmental sustainability is closely linked to our social value aims. We'll continue to pursue better lives for our customers, even as the climate emergency brings new challenges.


## Regeneration

We'll improve places and communities through our work. We'll provide new homes on unused and dilapidated sites, upgrade existing homes, and restore natural ecosystems everywhere we work.



# NCHA environmental sustainability 2022-2027

## Our three top priorities




### Fuel poverty

Insulating our homes and working with customers to limit the impact of the energy crisis.

# -50%

we'll halve the number of our customers defined as fuel poor by 2028, with all homes reaching A-C efficiency ratings and energy efficiency support provided.




### Decarbonisation

Cutting carbon emissions across NCHA.

# -50%

reduction in our operational carbon footprint by 2030 and a full net-zero plan for all emissions sources published in 2024.



### Healthy environments

Maximising the environmental services offered by our homes and neighbourhoods.

# +10%

Biodiversity net-gain across our places by 2027 as part of a wider focus on liveable communities.







## Our four working areas for delivery

### Our sustainable places







More on pages 12-15



#### New places

- Building low-energy homes  
- Biodiversity net-gain 
- Sustainable Places Standard   







#### Improved places

- Fabric-first retrofit programme  
- Environmental sensors  
- Biodiversity action plan 
- Environmental risk mapping 

### Our sustainable customers

More on page 16-17











- Energy smart customers  
- Fuel poverty support  
- Customer-guided sustainability agenda 
- Food growing opportunities 

### Our sustainable people

More on page 18-19














- Green Leaders programme   
- Carbon literacy training 
- Environmental volunteering opportunities 
- Ethical pensions 
- Sustainable travel incentives 
- Education for sustainable consumer choices 

### Our sustainable business

More on page 20-21



- Carbon-neutral Clifton campus   
- Environmental management system  
- Fleet efficiency and electrification 
- Sustainable procurement 
- Waste management  
- Energy and carbon management 
- Green technology services 



# Priorities for this strategy



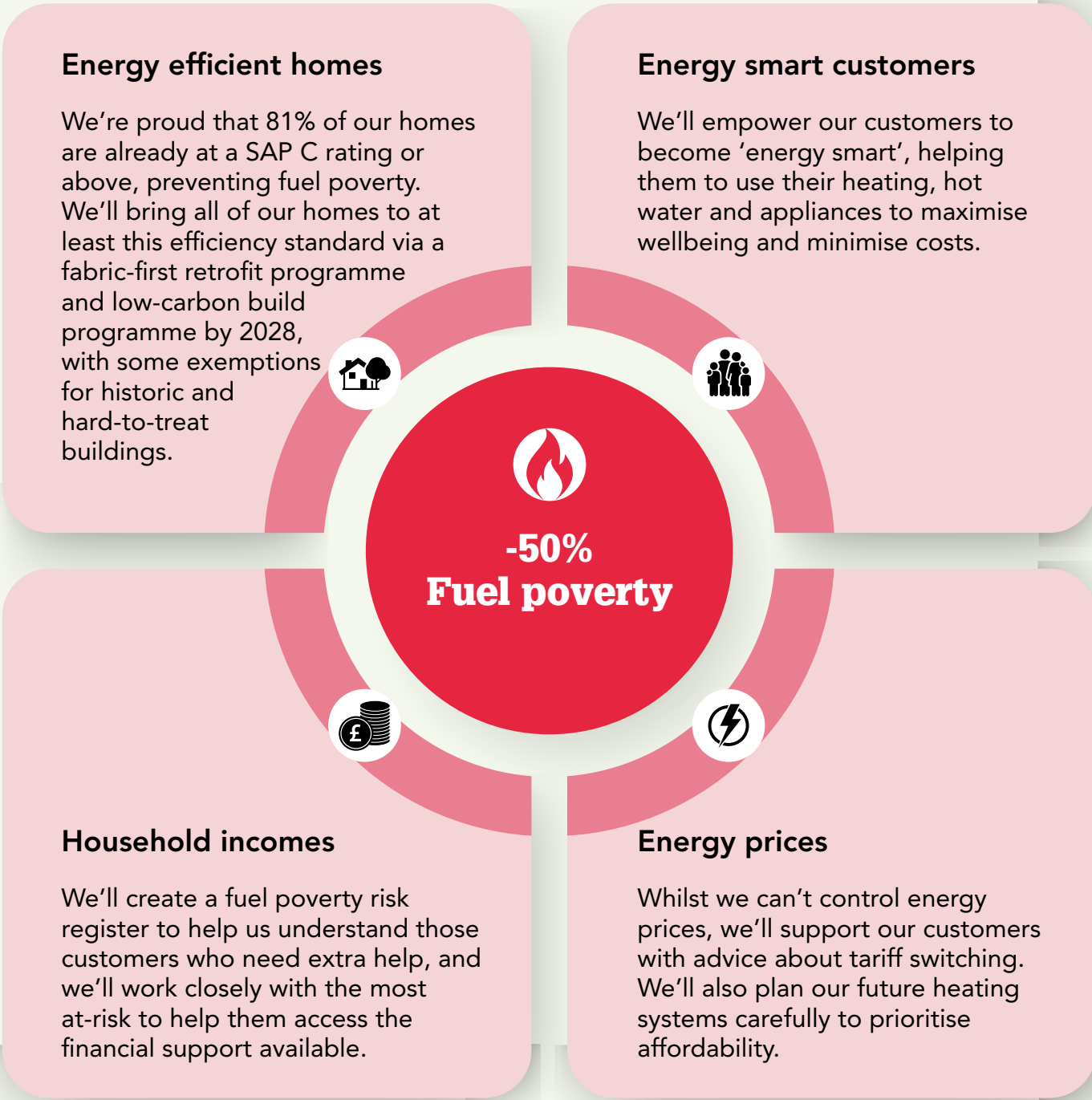
We've identified three big environmental challenges that really matter to our customers and colleagues. All of our sustainability work will relate to one or more of these areas. They include fuel poverty, decarbonisation and healthy environments. You can see our objectives for each over the next pages.

Chris Pryke-Hendy  
Sustainability Manager



## Fuel poverty

Fuel poverty happens when a household with a low income lives in a Low Energy Efficiency home (the government call this definition LILEE). 15% of UK families are estimated to suffer from fuel poverty. We have a plan to halve fuel poverty for NCHA customers.





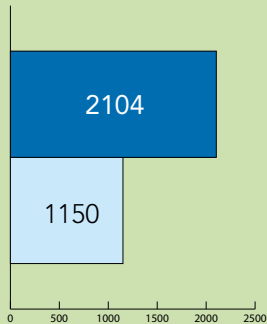


## Decarbonisation

The UK Climate Change Act 2019 requires that the UK reaches net zero carbon by 2050. At a local level, Nottingham has some of the most ambitious decarbonisation strategies of all UK cities.

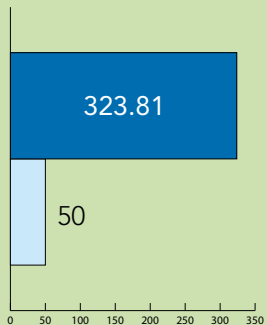
We have an ambitious, realistic plan to halve our company carbon emissions by 2030 (Scope 1 and 2), and by 2025 we'll publish a net zero plan to bring all of our emissions sources to zero, including the heating of our customers' homes and emissions associated with the what we buy (Scopes 1-3).

### Carbon emissions by use 2020-2030 tCO<sub>2</sub>e



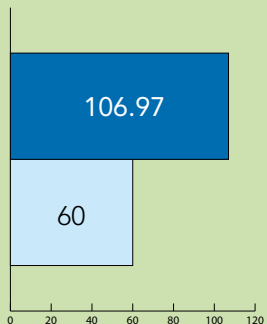
#### Gas

**45%** reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. We're building an all-electric new office and improving efficiency of other communal area heating systems through our environmental management system.



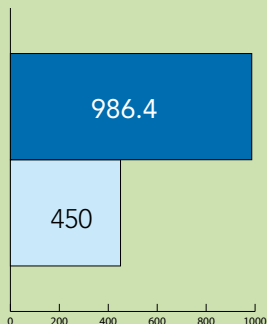
#### Van fleet

**85%** reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. Electrifying most of our van fleet will reduce the carbon intensity of fuels, and we'll find other efficiencies to reduce mileage.



#### Other vehicles

**44%** reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. We're working to reduce colleague car journeys and estimate that at least one quarter of colleagues will be driving electric vehicles by 2030.



#### Electricity

**54%** reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. Our electricity use will increase as we remove gas, but our new office will be highly efficient and the carbon intensity of grid electricity will be less than half of today.



## Healthy environments

The covid-19 pandemic reminded all of us about the importance of green spaces to our wellbeing. Places to play, to walk and to breathe are key to our quality of life.

Natural places are vital for building our resilience to drought, flooding and overheating, whilst also providing habitats for the wildlife that we depend on. We will revitalise our streetscapes, grounds and gardens to achieve beautiful and resilient outdoor spaces for our customers.



### Revitalising grounds



- We already manage allotments, woodlands and meadows across the East Midlands.
- In the next two years we'll audit the quality of the external areas we manage whilst creating new habitats, especially wildflower meadows.
- In the next five years we will achieve a +10% Biodiversity Net Gain across NCHA.



### Building with nature



- We already ensure that our new developments result in no net biodiversity loss.
- In the next two years we will comply with the new +10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirements for new developments.
- In the next five years we will adopt our own biodiversity design standard, ensuring that all of our developments provide excellent ecosystem services.



# Our sustainable places

## New places

### The long-term vision

All of our new homes will meet an in-house Sustainable Places Standard, achieving carbon neutrality, thermal comfort and high levels of wellbeing and affordability for customers. Communities will be resilient to environmental change, with superb green spaces helping to protect from flooding and overheating.

### Our current position

We’re already building all of our homes to EPC B and our first EPC A schemes are underway. We’ve developing our in-house construction expertise, beginning with Parkland Grove where we’ve built seven homes with high energy efficiency standards, air-source heat pumps, solar panels and access to a nature reserve.

## Targets for this strategy

Our sustainable new places 2022-2027			
Area	Current	2024 Targets	2027 Targets
Building low-energy homes	All new places built to EPC B.  Always review EPC A options for every development project.  Building one EPC A development through NCHA build.	Target EPC A on any schemes where financial feasibility allows.  Develop an NCHA zero-carbon design standard.  Complete first NCHA Build scheme and conduct detailed post-occupancy evaluation.  Comply with Future Homes 2022.  Start at least one modular scheme.  Develop life-cycle costing and carbon tool.	Comply with Future Homes Standard 2025.  Identify at least one pilot project to trial the NCHA zero-carbon design standard.  Incorporate life-cycle costing and carbon analysis into development decisions.  Finalise our Heat Electrification Plan.  Identify new funding streams to support higher energy standards.
Biodiversity net-gain	Complying with existing planners ecology requirements under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.  Ensuring that forthcoming development schemes are at least biodiversity neutral.	Compliance with Environment Bill 2022, including 10% Biodiversity net-gain on development sites.	Adopt a biodiversity design standard, for example Building with Nature.
Sustainable Places Standard	Employers requirements contain relevant building regulation standards.	Complete a Sustainable Places Standard to set our vision for liveable homes and communities.	Adopt Sustainable Places Standard in employers requirements.



We’re really keen to understand the impact our new, more efficient homes have on the lives of our customers. We’re going to be working over the coming years to monitor and measure the success of the technologies we’ve installed, so we can apply what we learn to future developments.

Allan Fisher  
Director of Development and Assets



# Our sustainable places

## Improved places

### The long-term vision

We'll upgrade our existing homes so they are carbon-neutral, thermally comfortable and highly liveable for all customers. We'll improve our communities to provide more access to nature and build resilience to environmental risks like flooding and overheating.

### Our current position

We're proud that 81% of our homes are already at EPC/SAP band C or above, demonstrating high levels of energy efficiency. We also manage a number of wonderful allotments, small woodlands and natural spaces, including wildflower meadows that we've created with customers.

## Targets for this strategy

Our sustainable improved places 2022-2027			
Area	Current	2024 Targets	2027 Targets
Fabric-first retrofit programme	81% of homes at SAP 69 (band C) or above.  Funding bid submitted for Wave one of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.  Outline plan drafted for retrofit programme.	85% of homes at SAP 69 (band C) or above.  Modelling all works required to achieve 100% SAP 69+, including identification of hard-to-treat homes.  Build relationships with local authorities to develop retrofit partnerships.  Develop in-house energy assessment and retrofit co-ordination capability.	95% of homes to SAP 69+ (band C) or above.  Develop in-house capability for PAS2035 compliant retrofit.  Complete costed zero-carbon retrofit plans for all home archetypes.  Finalise our Heat Electrification Plan.
Environmental sensors	Reviewed product options and planned trial.	Complete trial of at least one environmental-sensor system and review success.	Decision on roll-out of environmental sensors.
Biodiversity action plan	Our new grounds maintenance tender has prioritised peat-free, low chemical practises.	Map and quality-audit for all green spaces owned by NCHA.  Create 20 new wildflower meadow areas.	Create a 10% biodiversity net-gain across our places.
Environmental risk mapping		Map future flood-risk to our places using modelled climate change scenarios.	Identify homes with high future flood risk and produce plan for flood resilience.



We're really excited that we're going to be developing our own in-house energy assessment and retrofit team, supporting our ambition to bring 95% of our homes up to a band C or above within the next five years.

Mark Beeley  
Head of Property Services



# Our sustainable customers

**The long-term vision**

All of our customers will be enabled to achieve high levels of wellbeing in their home and community and empowered to choose lifestyles that tread lightly on the planet. We'll work side-by-side with our people to create more sustainable and resilient communities.

**Our current position**

Our customers are at the centre of everything we do. Many of our customers already model sustainable behaviours: buying renewable energy, recycling at home, cycling for transport and working with us to create wildlife areas near their homes. Our customer panel and focus groups reveal a strong commitment to sustainability issues.

**Targets for this strategy**

Our sustainable customers 2022-2027			
Area	Current	2024 Targets	2027 Targets
Energy smart customers	Published energy efficiency advice communications for customers.	Bespoke energy efficiency advice for all customers in homes below SAP 69, and those with higher-cost heating systems.  Explore incentive schemes with renewable providers (dependant on energy crisis).	Energy efficiency advice for all customers, specific to heating system and property archetype.  Energy efficiency advice built into letting processes.
Fuel poverty support	Drafted a prototype fuel poverty register.	Complete fuel poverty register and target support for most at-risk.  Integrate vulnerability information into retrofit programming where appropriate.	Review and adopt updated government fuel poverty definitions, and create new fuel poverty strategy.
Customer-guided sustainability agenda	Hosted a sustainability-themed customer focus group, helping to shape this strategy.  Worked directly with customers to respond to requests for biodiversity improvements.	Customer panels will be issued with sustainability progress reports and involved in redrafting strategy.	Create a customer Green Champions network to steer neighbourhood environmental improvements.
Food growing opportunities	We own several allotment sites and support food growing at some projects.	We'll assess our grounds and gardens for opportunities for food growing.	We'll support customers to grow food in their gardens and communities.  We'll consider edible plants and fruit trees as part of new planting schemes.



**We want to work with our customers to support them to make choices relating to sustainability that are right for them, their home, and the environment.**

**Holly Dagnall**  
Director of Homes and Wellbeing



# Our sustainable people

**The long-term vision**

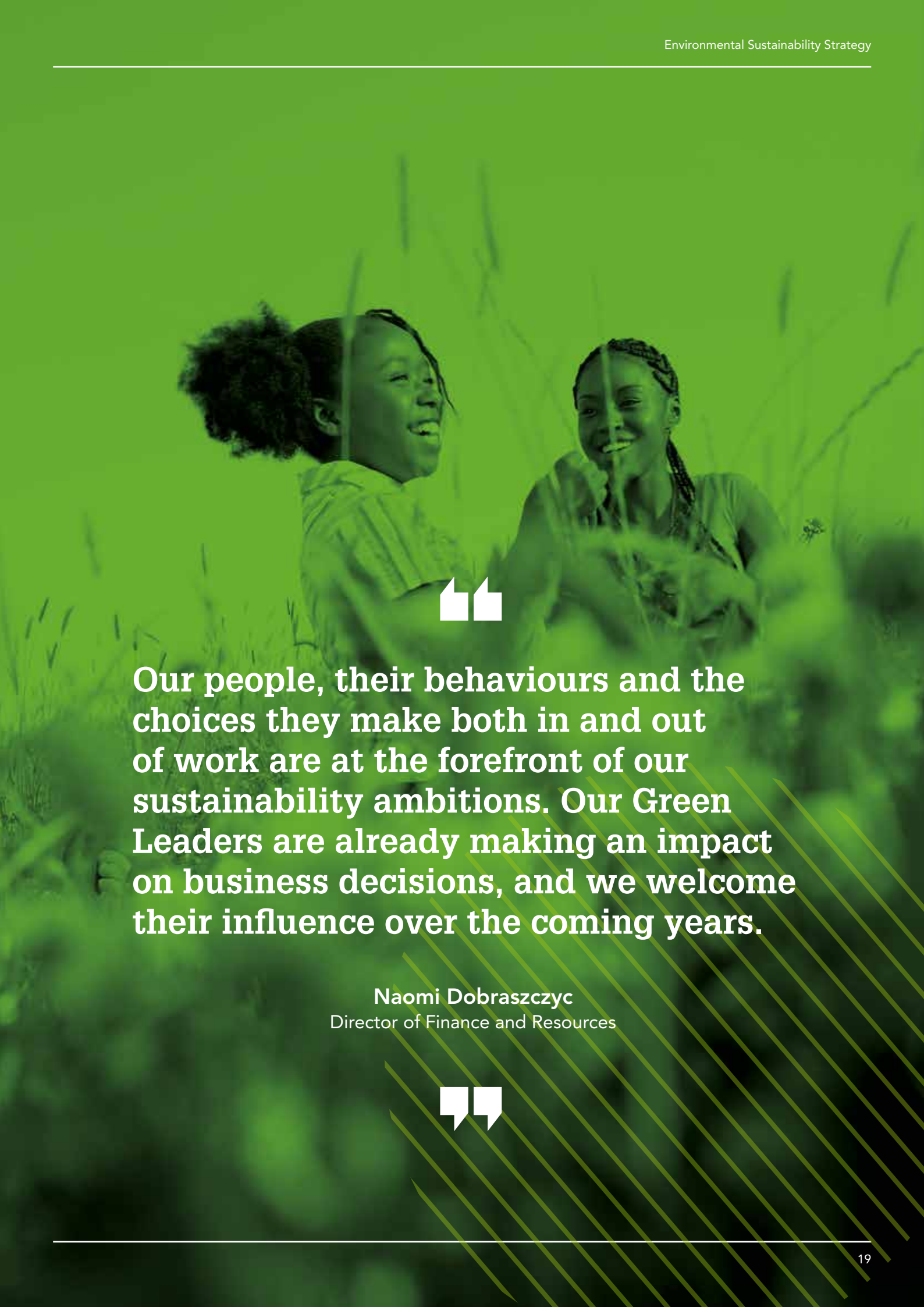
We'll be proud to have a culture of sustainability. All of our colleagues will be well versed in key sustainability issues and feel empowered to make sustainable choices at home and at work.

**Our current position**

Our 2021 colleague conference focused on sustainability, starting an all-NCHA conversation about our role in creating a sustainable future. We've continued that conversation by establishing a Green Leaders network of more than fifty colleagues who are committed to create sustainable changes.

**Targets for this strategy**

Our sustainable people 2022-2027			
Area	Current	2024 Targets	2027 Targets
Green Leaders programme	50 colleagues signed up as Green Leaders.	75 colleagues will be signed up as Green Leaders.  Most Green Leaders will have made progress with their personal footprint and to have taken on at least one green work project.	100 colleagues will be signed up as Green Leaders.  All Green Leaders offered at least one accredited environmental training offer.
Carbon literacy training	Many colleagues already have a high level of sustainability knowledge.	Adapt accredited Carbon Literacy Training package for NCHA internal delivery.	Carbon literacy training offered to all Green Leaders and Wider Management team.
Volunteering	Recruited volunteering officer and established staff volunteering policy.	Environmental opportunities offered as part of staff volunteering policy.	500 staff volunteering hours dedicated to environmental projects.
Ethical pensions	Engagement with pension provider around ethics of investment portfolio.	Review ethical pension options.	Take a decision on ethical pension options.
Sustainable travel incentives	Colleagues are able to purchase cycles and public transport passes at reduced prices through salary sacrifice.	Establish sustainable transport hierarchy and review expenses procedures.	Align expenses procedures and other travel incentives fully with sustainable transport hierarchy.
Sustainability awareness training for all colleagues	Hosted an all-NCHA colleague conference on sustainability and created an internal sustainability communications plan.	Align colleague incentives and perks with sustainability principles.  Complete internal awareness campaign on sustainable lifestyle choices.	For all new colleagues, sustainability awareness will be part of our standard onboarding process.  For all existing colleagues, sustainability awareness will be incorporated into our training and development and internal communications planning.



Our people, their behaviours and the choices they make both in and out of work are at the forefront of our sustainability ambitions. Our Green Leaders are already making an impact on business decisions, and we welcome their influence over the coming years.

Naomi Dobraszczyk  
Director of Finance and Resources



# Our sustainable business

**The long-term vision**

All of our business operations will be carbon neutral. We'll achieve this by ensuring our buildings and fleet vehicles are highly energy efficient, with any energy needs provided by renewable electricity. We'll also select carbon neutral suppliers, and ensure that our operations adopt a circular economy approach to minimise waste and resource consumption.

**Our current position**

We're already committed to halving our carbon emissions by 2030. We're purchasing electricity from renewable sources and beginning the transition from gas to electric heating. We have ISO14001 for our Care and Support work. We have secured planning permission for a low-carbon headquarters and we are beginning to adopt electric fleet vehicles.

**Targets for this strategy**

Our sustainable business 2022-2027			
Area	Current	2024 Targets	2027 Targets
Carbon neutral Clifton campus	Planning permission achieved with BREEAM Excellent and EPC A.	Complete BREEAM design-stage certificate at 75%+.	Complete BREEAM Excellent process at 70%+ and finalise EPC A.
Environmental management system	Care and Support already have an EMS.	Complete suite of policies and legal register for EMS.	Full EMS in operation, aligned to ISO14001.
	NCHA Environmental Standards document adopted.	Detailed aspects and impacts tables completed for EMS.	Decision on all-NCHA 14001 certification.
Fleet efficiency and electrification	Three electric vehicles leased.  Six EV charging points installed.	Establish membership of D2N2 electric fleet partnership.	At least 50% of our van fleet should be electric.
		Install charging points at all suitable workplaces.	Colleagues should have access to a coherent charging network.
		Finalise fleet electrification timetable.	Finalise procurement routes and preferred vehicles.
Sustainable procurement	Environmental criteria included as optional in tender processes.	Mandate use of environmental criteria in procurement.  Sustainability risk review of all major tenders.	Include enhanced sustainability criteria in all contracts with sustainability risks.
Waste management	Generally over 90% landfill diversion reported from maintenance services.	Complete waste management policy, embedding waste hierarchy.	Establish corporate waste reporting, achieving consistent 90% diversion from landfill.
Energy and carbon management	Corporate utilities procured through a REGO-backed contract.	Complete energy management policy.  Publish net-zero roadmap.  Establish a meter-reading and invoice verification procedure.	Consider an ISO5001 aligned energy management system.
Green technology services	Technology waste processed to ensure re-use where possible.	Complete a green-IT plan to reduce the environmental impacts of our technology services.	Ensure zero-carbon server storage.  Complete a green-IT plan to maximise the potential for technology services to wider NCHA impacts.



As a business, we're committed to reducing our carbon emissions in all areas of our operations. We've set ourselves ambitious targets, but we're confident we'll achieve them.

Paul Moat  
Chief Executive





# Delivering the strategy



## Governance structure

We will establish a sustainability governance structure that involves people from all levels of NCHA:

**A sustainability steering group** comprising members of our Executive team, our Senior Leadership team and our Sustainability Manager will oversee the delivery of this strategy.

**A sustainability action group** comprising the managers of departments who own targets in this strategy, alongside the Sustainability Manager will ensure progress against strategic targets.

**A Green Leaders network** comprising colleagues and customers will help us to embed a culture of sustainability in everything we do. The network will support members to develop our collective knowledge and strengthen our efforts to make more sustainable choices every day.



## Monitoring and reporting

Key performance indicators from this strategy will feed into a dashboard. An annual report based on this dashboard will be produced for customers and our board. The sustainability strategy and associated performance measures will also be used in other reporting and benchmarking as required.



## Governance and review

This strategy has been approved by the NCHA Board in March 2022 with reviews of the strategy to take place in April 2024 and April 2026.

# Glossary

Adaptation	Actions to reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts including flooding, overheating and increased energy prices.
Air quality	The amount (or absence) of contaminants in air that are harmful to health when inhaled, either indoors or outdoors. This includes particles and gases from a range of sources.
Baseline	The date against which we will measure progress when we use % targets, namely 2020/21.
Biodiversity net gain	When we increase the quantity and quality of habitat on a site compared to what existed previously. This is becoming a legal requirement from 2023.
Carbon emissions	Refers directly to carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere by NCHA activities. Also used as a shorthand for all greenhouse gas release, including other gases that we release. Measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e).
Embodied carbon	The carbon emissions produced when building materials are manufactured. These should be factored into net zero plans.
Energy performance certificate	The official public record of the energy efficiency of a building.
Fabric first	The principle that the insulation and air-tightness of a building should be improved as a priority to reduce the energy that is required to achieve thermal comfort.
Future Homes Standard	Will require all new homes to be very energy efficient whilst using low-carbon heating and cooling methods.
Fossil fuels	Coal, gas and oil products like petrol, diesel and natural gas. Burning these is the main source of carbon emissions for most organisations.
Fuel poverty	When a low-income household live in a home with low energy efficiency that rates below EPC/SAP C (LILEE).
Heat pumps	The government's preferred method of heating homes from 2025 onwards, heat pumps are powered by electricity and work like a fridge in reverse, efficiently extracting heat from the ground or air outside.
Net Zero Carbon	When our activities do not increase the amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, achieved by significantly reducing our carbon emissions and absorbing or offsetting any remaining emissions.
NCHA Build	NCHA's in-house construction programme.
Passivhaus	An official certification for an extremely energy efficient building that requires very little heating or cooling to be comfortable.
Retrofit	The process of making changes to a home to improve energy efficiency.
Scope 1 Emissions	Carbon emissions from fuel that we burn, including vehicle fuel and gas.
Scope 2 Emissions	Carbon emissions from fuel burned somewhere else to generate our electricity.
Scope 3 Emissions	Indirect carbon emissions related to our work, including customers heating homes, colleagues commuting and suppliers providing goods, building materials and services.
Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund	The key government fund that will help social housing providers to retrofit homes to improved energy efficiency standards.
Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP)	The calculated energy efficiency of a building. Broadly equivalent to EPC. Abbreviated to SAP.
Sustainability	Meeting the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
Thermal Comfort	The feeling of being comfortable in a building. Temperature, humidity and air movement create this feeling.
ULEV	Ultra-low emissions vehicle, usually electrically powered.
Wellbeing	A state of feeling good and functioning well, greatly influenced by the home environment.





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