



Sustainability and ESG Strategy 2024-2026

Supporting our Revised
Corporate Strategy
2023-2026

Version 1-8

Strategy Summary

Our Purpose at Platform is to deliver a customer-first housing experience for a better future. We want to make our future vision a reality; we will create homes everyone is proud of, and places where people thrive.

This Sustainability and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) Strategy seeks to integrate and broaden all initiatives to help us develop the resources, create the culture, and map out our pathway to achieve our vision as a leading sustainable housing association.

Current Landscape

The world faces an unprecedented time with the combined impacts of climate and ecological emergencies as well as social and economic crises brought by significant local, regional, and global events.

Registered social landlords have an important role to play in addressing these crises which significantly impact our customers, our business, and our planet, at a scale rarely seen before.

These challenges require considered, aspirational and brave decisions and actions. This Sustainability and ESG Strategy outlines the foundations to support our corporate goals in becoming a modern, sustainable, innovative housing association that takes the lead in helping our customers, people and partners navigate towards a more sustainable future.

Housing plays a significant role in contributing to climate change, with up to 40% of the UK's carbon emission coming from households, according to the Committee on Climate Change. New regulations and government policies are impacting on the sector with the Clean Growth Strategy, the Heat and Buildings Strategy, the Net Zero Strategy, the Energy Security Strategy, and the Future Homes Standard to name a few.

With this regulatory background in mind and the growing awareness of human impact on the environment, Platform has made a commitment to create a Platform Standard that will improve the quality of the homes we build and manage, ensuring they are fit for the future and move us forward on the journey to net zero carbon. Adaptation to the impacts of climate change will be a key part of our approach in addressing the risks of flooding, overheating and supply chain shortages.

The early development of a Green Philosophy and Plan in 2021 has identified the opportunity to reduce the environmental impact of our offices and operations such as our fleet vehicles, help support our customers and our staff to live more sustainable lifestyles, reduce our waste and resource use and help to improve our communities with green infrastructure and places for biodiversity to thrive. The environmental, social and economic strengths of the organisation are supporting our ability to secure sustainability focussed finance that will help to continually improve our sustainability performance.



Strategy Focus

This strategy has three key themes, each split into two sub-themes.

Corporate Strategy Themes	Sustainability and ESG Strategy Themes and sub-themes	
 People	Homes	New Existing
 Places	Communities	Places Customers
 Platform	Business	Colleagues Operations

These themes align with different functions of the business, enabling a coherent and strategic approach to addressing the far-reaching issues relevant to Sustainability and ESG.

The speed and timing of our sustainability journey will of course be influenced by our financial capacity and the availability of Government grant and other sources of funding. We will therefore maintain strong relationships with our funding partners and will continue to provide regular updates (as we have been doing since 2021), through our annually published sustainability report, which aligns with the Sustainability Reporting Standard for the sector.



Progress so far

Although this strategy takes us from 2024 to March 2026, we have already achieved a lot over the past two years, including:

For our Homes, we have:

- Ensured **99.92%** of new homes built in 2023/24 and **100%** of new homes in 2022/23 have a minimum EPC rating B.
- Delivered energy efficiency improvements to over **650 homes** with the support of government funding schemes. This work included installing air source heat pumps, solar PV systems, insulation, and more efficient heating systems. We estimate a saving for our customers of **£489** a year on energy bills per home.
- Secured **£13.4million** funding to retrofit **1095 homes** up until September 2025.

For our Communities, we have:

- Worked with a local school to create community gardens on an estate in Worcester and identified funding to create a communal garden with a covered outdoor seating area at a retirement living scheme.
- Supported **1,200 customers** with their energy bills through our Wellbeing Fund and secured a further **£90,000** to continue this support through energy grants/schemes.
- Provided energy advice and energy saving tips to our customers.

For our Business, we have:

- Reduced our carbon emissions by **46,313** tonnes, cutting our total emissions by **7%** between 2018/19 and 2022/23.
- Embedded environmental standards within our procurement award criteria to ensure we are working only with suppliers with responsible attitudes towards environmental issues.
- Secured **£500m** sustainability bond fundings and have a further **£275m** of sustainability linked loans where we are targeting improvements in energy efficiency and diversity year on year for the next five years. Approximately half of our borrowing portfolio is now explicitly supporting our sustainability objectives.
- Signed up to SHIFT Assessment to provide us with independent accreditation and benchmarking of our sustainability performance.
- Established a Sustainable Finance Framework for transparent reporting for sustainable funding.



Theme 1: Homes

Our New Homes

Our new homes need to be low carbon, resource-efficient, climate resilient and fit for the future. We aim to build homes that are net zero carbon ready, improving affordability for our customers, enabling them to get the most out of their homes and supporting our planet through our environmental impact. With an awareness of the higher building standards coming up, our approach is to invest in our new homes now, reducing the need for further investment that impact our customers in the future.

In our new homes we will:

Integrate ambitious sustainability measures into the new 'Platform Standard'.

Test and trial new low carbon technologies through innovation and research.

Integrate digital and smart technologies into our new and existing homes.

Our Existing Homes

The homes we manage have the biggest impact on our carbon footprint. In 2023, 26% of our homes were below Energy Performance Certificate Rating C. Improving the energy efficiency of our existing homes through a fabric first, whole house retrofit approach is crucial in reducing our carbon footprint and reducing energy bills for our customers. Addressing Fuel Poverty will be a key driver to the improvements we make to our existing homes.

We will:

Improve our Asset Data to aid more effective sustainability improvements.

Develop a Retrofit Plan and Programme.

Effectively manage sustainable and renewable energy assets.



Theme 2: Communities

Our Neighbourhood and Estates

We don't just build and maintain homes; we invest in our communities. We want our customers to thrive in the places they live, and we commit to working closely with all of our customers to co-design community plans based on shared visions. In our neighbourhoods and estates, we will:

Maximise our land and green spaces.

Promote reuse and recycling initiatives.

Support sustainable travel plans.

Our Customers

Understanding our customers and the needs and priorities in each community is crucial in delivering our mission; by investing in people and places, we will build a stronger, more sustainable future. We understand that customers must be at the centre of everything we do and will develop resources that enable our customers to guide us on how we can make their lives more sustainable.

Sustainability and Social Value are intrinsically linked, improving prosperity in our communities through better wellbeing, quality of life and healthier environments creates better outcomes for everyone. In supporting our customers and creating social value, we will:

Work with our customers to reduce environmental impact.

Reduce fuel poverty.



Theme 3: Business

Colleagues

We want to create an ambitious sustainable and ethical business our colleagues are proud to work for and new recruits will be attracted to. We want to support our colleagues and raise awareness in the business, so everyone understands they have a role to play in supporting and contributing towards our sustainability goals. We aim to build on our culture and embed sustainability into everything we do.

For our colleagues we will:

Embed sustainability objectives into all areas of the business.

Communicate effectively on Sustainability and ESG.

Develop internal training programmes.

Operations

We want our business to operate in a way that is sustainable, efficient and minimises our impact on the environment. We will develop an integrated approach to sustainability performance and environmental management.

For our operations we will:

Monitor our sustainability performance, including our pathway to net zero carbon by 2050.

Access competitive, low-interest sustainability finance.

Map our supply chain and engage with our stakeholders.

Reduce our travel-related carbon emissions.

Maximise resource efficiency and waste reduction.



Delivering and Monitoring

Platform has created a governance and reporting framework that enables consultation with customers and colleagues across all directorates to support the development, oversight and delivery of the strategy across each theme.

There are three working groups – Homes, Communities and Business – and each working group focuses on the two sub-themes relevant to that group.

Each working group feeds back to the Sustainability Forum, who report to the Senior Leadership and Executive Teams, and the Assets and Sustainability Committee (which is a dedicated Board level sub-committee).

Customer and colleague representative groups will feed into the respective working groups to ensure we not only monitor our performance but continue to deliver on our commitments in the most impactful way.

A comprehensive action plan accompanies this Strategy to support day to day delivery and continues to be developed and reviewed through the above. The Action Plan includes key milestones and targets and details how these will be achieved as well as identifying areas of responsibility for each part. Further information on this can be found in Appendix A.

In addition to our Sustainability and ESG action plan, this strategy will be supported by a Retrofit programme which aligns closely with our Asset Management Strategy and our Growth and Development Strategy, as well as having close links with our Social Value, Equality Diversity & Inclusion, and Procurement plans.

