

PORTFOLIO: HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

GREENER HOUSING STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Panel Members note the progress made to deliver the priorities and actions in the Greener Housing Strategy 2022-32.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Greener Housing Strategy details the 4 main priorities and actions the Housing Service will deliver on over the next 10 years. These are:
- i. Strategic Priority 1: Reduce Carbon Emissions in the Council Housing Stock
 - ii. Strategic Priority 2: Council Housing New Build Standards
 - iii. Strategic Priority 3: Private Sector Housing Decarbonisation
 - iv. Strategic Priority 4: Housing Service Operations
- 2.2 Through delivery of the strategy the Council seeks to improve the energy efficiency of existing council homes, develop new council homes which do not require future retrofit, take action to address decarbonisation of buildings and reduce the impact on the cost of living associated with cold inefficient homes. The strategy incorporates renewable energy generation and sustainable transport across the district.
- 2.3 This is the first annual report providing an update on progress toward achieving the aims of the Strategy. A table of agreed actions from the strategy, with progress reports can be viewed at Annexe 1.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The UK is particularly challenged as it looks to retrofit its existing buildings. As a nation England has some of the oldest housing stock in Europe, with an estimated 27 million homes requiring some level of retrofit to meet net zero by 2050. Therefore, improving the quality of existing homes through retrofit is essential.
- 3.2 In response to this, the Government's Clean Growth Strategy 2017 set new targets for the housing sector. Using Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) as the benchmark for domestic retrofit, the strategy requires all social housing to reach EPC band C by 2030.
- 3.3 A Task and Finish group was set up in 2021 to deliver a new 10-year Greener Housing Strategy, which was approved by Council in July 2022.
- 3.4 The first action was to appoint a Greener Housing Development Manager. This post was successfully recruited to in November 2022, with the appointment of Sophie Tuffin, who has been leading on the implementation of the strategy.

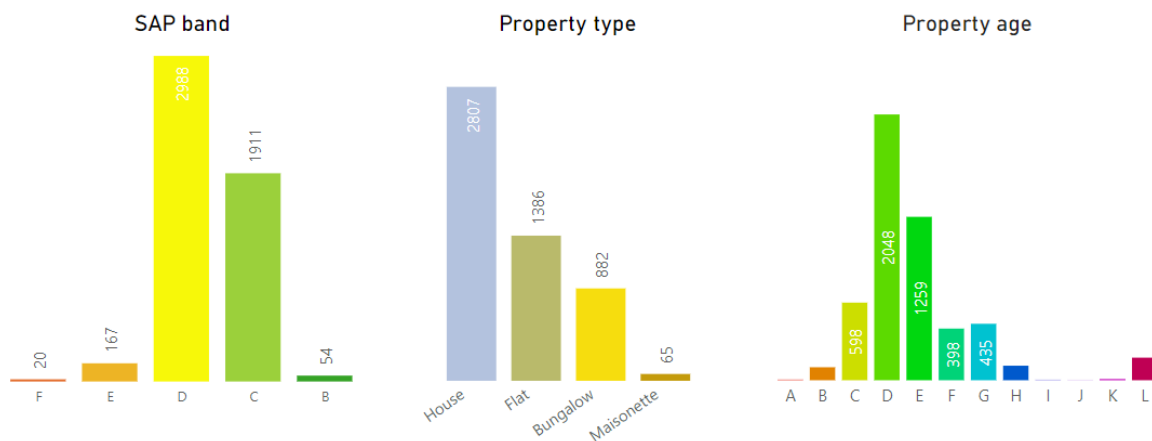
4. Strategic Priority 1 – Reduce Carbon Emissions in the Council Housing Stock

- 4.1 A key deliverable focussed on obtaining full and accurate condition data of the housing stock to establish a long-term plan of retrofit programmes to meet the two specific

Government targets. The first target is to improve the efficiency of the worst performing properties by raising the energy performance rating to a C by 2030. The second is for the stock of Council owned properties to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

- 4.2 In the first quarter of 2024 the full stock condition survey programme will be completed which captures condition data on all external and internal elements of the home. A new 10-year Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) will be provided for every home. This information will give the Council accurate information on the quality, condition, and energy performance of every home.
- 4.3 To inform the improvement plans to 2030 the Council has purchased a specialist software tool which is already being used to model the stock condition data captured to date, which will help inform the 30-year housing revenue account (HRA) business plan and Council's medium-term financial strategy of 10 years.
- 4.4 In addition, the software identifies levels of district-wide fuel poverty, estimated carbon dioxide emissions and assesses the viability of solar photovoltaics (PV) to allow efficient targeting of resources and to support other Council initiatives such as cost of living schemes.
- 4.5 Figure 1 below displays the Council's housing stock by EPC performance, type of residence and property age (A represents the oldest homes with L representing the newest).

Fig.1 Housing stock data



- 4.6 The total current carbon footprint of the Council's social housing stock has now been calculated as 12,017 tonnes CO2/ year, with 49% homes having gas central heating. Full implementation of the retrofit packages required could see total carbon emissions reduced to 2,433 tonnes / year, representing a 79.5% reduction in emissions. This means that netting off the remaining emissions will require additional actions in due course.
- 4.7 A plan to improve energy efficiency of the whole house on a fabric first basis in every instance is currently being formulated which will combine planned, decent homes and cyclical replacement programmes. This will include increasing ventilation to improve air quality and reduce damp and mould, whilst repairing property defects and improving insulation to minimise heat loss. This will reduce heating related fuel consumption, keep homes cooler in summer and meet longer-term decarbonisation goals.

- 4.8 A range of technologies are being considered due to the Council's rural spread and age of homes. This includes solar PV, battery systems, infra-red heating, and thermal hot water stores. For communal buildings feasibility studies using ground source heat pumps are underway. The Greener Housing Manager is part of national and regional networks including the review of innovative pilot schemes.
- 4.9 Whole house monitoring has been established to allow the Council to remotely monitor the ventilation, heating, and moisture levels of a building, whilst at the same time collecting accurate measures in cost and energy reduction. This technology is being trialled at the Council's first Future Homes Standard development at the new Penman House development of 12 flats.
- 4.10 New hot water thermal stores to improve efficiency and reduce the cost of providing hot water are being piloted at Lime Tree House, Lymington. This work will be complemented by replacement windows and improved insulation. Work commenced on 11th September and will finish in October 2023.
- 4.11 Upskilling Council staff has been a key priority in the last 12 months. It is vital the Council can effectively maintain its buildings and service new technologies in the long term. Monthly surveyor training has taken place since December 2022. These sessions aim to increase surveyor knowledge of new technologies, changes in legislation and increase understanding of retrofit.
- 4.12 The Council has already been successful in obtaining funding for 3 members of the Housing team to study level 4 & 5 Diplomas in retrofit. These qualifications are necessary to undertake and manage retrofit programmes to the Government's standard PAS 2035. All grant funding is dependent on having qualified personnel working on and signing off retrofit schemes.
- 4.13 The Greener Housing Manager is exploring all external sources for potential grant funding. Properties with an EPC E and F are the most energy inefficient properties. They impose unnecessary energy costs on occupants and are most likely to present a poor health outcome. The OFGEM run ECO4 scheme requires utility companies with over 100,000 customers to offer funding to improve the energy efficiency of poor performing buildings and who are on low income. A menu of financing options is being established which includes carbon credits, long-term finance options now being offered by utility companies to spread the cost of district heating systems; and other methods for offsetting residual emissions.
- 4.14 Under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund 2.1 (SHDF 2.1), the Council was awarded £560,000 of funding, which was matched by the council to improve 70 homes within the district to EPC band C. Unlike other waves of funding, wave 2.1 focuses on multiple improvements in a whole house approach. Many of these 70 homes will have 3 or more different types of works completed to include cavity wall insulation, ventilation, new windows, loft insulation and ASHP. This scheme is expected to start imminently and complete in March 2024.
- 4.15 As the scale of works begins to increase it will be more cost and management efficient to partner with a single contractor, or small number of contractors. The Greener Housing Manager is working with Procurement colleagues to set up a framework or contract with the aim of having a long-term contractor in place by April 2024, ready for funding windows.
- 4.16 The Council has procured a new digital tenant engagement platform which assists officers manage maintenance projects, keeping customers informed at each stage of their retrofit works. In addition, Officers are working with technology manufacturers to increase the self-help available to residents. Easy to read user guides, videos and

advice will shortly be added to the Council's website for homes with renewable technology, remote monitoring and those having undergone a whole house retrofit.

5. Strategic Priority 2 - Council Housing New Build Standards

- 5.1 The Council procured the Testwood Social Club site in Totton (renamed Penman House) and committed to delivering new homes to the increased energy efficient Future Homes Standard. The 12 homes built will maximise energy efficiency for residents, demonstrating high levels of sustainability and climate resilience when they become occupied in October 2023. The Council will monitor domestic fuel usage and the use of technology alongside residents to inform future schemes.
- 5.2 The Future Homes Standard will come into effect more generally from 2025. As a successful early adopter of this standard the Council can work and share knowledge with local contractors to increase understanding and knowledge to benefit future development opportunities.
- 5.3 Electric Vehicle Charging points are also being installed at all new housing schemes for wider resident use.

6. Strategic Priority 3: Private Sector Housing Decarbonisation

- 6.1 The Council holds a unique position of responsibility to engage, not only with 5,200 council owned properties but with the wider district. The government has committed to upgrade as many private rented homes as possible to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2030. The Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations means that, subject to certain requirements and exemptions, all privately rented homes must hold an EPC of E or above. Those that don't meet this level of efficiency, cannot be let.
- 6.2 The Private Sector Housing Team is currently working with local landlords, lettings agents and partner landlords who lease their properties via the Council's Private Sector lease (PSL) scheme. Through the Landlord Forum and regular visits to Letting Agents officers are promoting opportunities to upgrade homes and access funding. The September Forum welcomed the National Residential Landlord Association (NRLA) and two key speakers with extensive retrofit and funding experience.
- 6.3 The council will also be launching 'Cosy Homes New Forest' in September which aims to help owner occupiers and landlords improve the thermal performance of their homes. This scheme allows customers with a New Forest postcode to start their retrofit journey via an interactive tool which simulates types of insulations, heating and other improvements to suit an occupier's home and budget. Letting agents will be able to sign post their landlords or prospective landlords where homes don't meet MEES standards.
- 6.4 The Council is a member of Retrofit Hub Steering Group run by Hampshire County Council and a member of the Retrofit Academy which aims to improve supply chains and support an increase in the numbers of locally qualified operatives, which helps boost the local economy.
- 6.5 The Council is working with local advice centers like Citizens Advice, local food banks and the Environment Center who offer help and advice to those on low incomes or struggling with fuel poverty. Where individuals meet a criterion, they are signposted to

the Warmer Homes Consortium led by Portsmouth City Council, and which the Council is a member, to receive funding through the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG).

Fig.2 The Number of private homes within the district which received energy improvements under HUG1 and Local Authority Decarbonisation (LAD) funding.

Scheme	Properties completed	Funding
LAD	200	£1.1 million
HUG1	52	£600,018

6.6 In January the consortium was successful in securing an additional £41.4m for the southern region. The council has received a further £4,500 funding to fund software and promote HUG funding within the community.

7. Strategic Priority 4 - Housing Service Operations

7.1 The Housing Service has complemented the approach to reducing the carbon emission impact of its operations by integrating actions with the corporate approach commenced by the declaration of a climate change & nature emergency. The service has already commenced several key initiatives outlined in the Greener Housing Strategy.

7.2 Sustainable procurement: A Housing Operational working group has been launched with the aim to review supply chains, specifications, and tender documents, including the carbon impacts of contracts and operatives involved in delivery.

7.3 Paperless operations and communication: In February 2023 the Housing Service completed a year-long project to launch a bespoke software package (Locata) to replace the legacy Orchard software that held tenant information. This package also combined tenancy management with homelessness, Homesearch and private sector housing systems in to one system.

7.4 This system provides digital contact methods for communication with tenants and electronic transfer of work to colleagues. Officers are reviewing the remaining standalone systems to further improve efficiencies and converting paper-based processes to digital.

7.5 Officers are to begin a procurement exercise soon to capture contact information for all tenants to improve the ability to communicate digitally and reduce the Housing Service's carbon footprint where appropriate.

7.6 Tenant Engagement Software: The Housing Service has procured a digital engagement tool to help gain useful tenant feedback on a range of other services like on street EV parking and other energy improvements.

7.7 Electrification of the vehicle fleet: Officers are working with vehicle fleet managers across the Council establish a scheme to replace the housing fleet of 61 vehicles with electric vehicle replacements and provide charging facilities by 2027.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The greener housing budget for 2022/23 is £1.1 million, made up of £560,000 of matched funding from the social housing decarbonisation fund. The budget setting process for 2024/25 will take account the number of homes requiring improvements by 2030, the available government funding opportunities and existing capital and revenue housing budgets, along with the Council's future commitments to development budgets and other financial burdens in the medium and long term.
- 8.2 The Housing Revenue Account Greener Housing Budget will need to take account of projected additional spend of £9,332,000 required to upgrade homes by 2030 and an additional £115m to decarbonise the stock ahead of 2050.
- 8.3 In addition, the delivery of decarbonisation will include internal staff time, procurement, health & safety, legal, planning and building regulations and customer facing roles adding additional cost due to the complex multi-measure whole house approach required. External Impartial retrofit roles, resident engagement and other compliances and specialist surveys and repairs will increase the cost associated to achieve 2030 and 2050 targets. These will be factored into budget setting at the appropriate time.

9. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None arising from this report.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Greener Housing Strategy and the delivery of the actions agreed within, are designed to complement the Council's climate change and nature emergency action plan, and have a positive impact on the environment, due to reduced carbon emissions.

11. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The measures associated with greener housing aim to have a positive impact on vulnerable residents of the district by helping to alleviate fuel poverty and make services greener and less polluting, benefiting both health and the environment.
- 11.2 Tenant and resident engagement remain a key component of delivery, to reduce any negative impact on residents through development schemes or significant change to their homes or the local environment or neighbourhood. Therefore, Offers will seek views and concerns through specific engagement exercises and equality impact assessments.

12. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Data protection implications are evaluated on an ongoing basis, utilising the Corporate Information Governance and ICT Security Teams for each new scheme or project. Data sharing agreements and privacy notices have already been implemented where appropriate.

For further information contact:

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Background Papers:

[Greener Housing Strategy 2022-32](#)

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ANNEXE 1

GREENER HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - SEPTEMBER 2023

Priority	Action Required	Progress Achieved	Target Completion Date
Strategic Priority 1 – Reduce Carbon Emissions in the Council Housing Stock	Produce a business case to seek approval for a Greener Housing Project Manager to lead and manage the Council's approach to net zero in Housing Services.	Greener Housing Delivery Manager commenced employment on 27 November 2022	November 2022 COMPLETE
	Complete 100% Stock Condition Surveys of the Council Housing stock by January 2024.	An external contractor was appointed to undertake both stock condition and energy performance certificates (EPC) to 100% of the stock.	January 2024 ON TRACK
	By April 2024 establish the model of retrofit packages to install in all property archetypes and dwelling types to meet net zero 2050, particularly regarding the criterion for the installation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo Voltaic (PV) panels on individual house roofs • Heating and hot water 	Stock condition and EPC was modelled in August 2023. A range of archetypes and technologies are considered.	April 2024 ON TRACK
	Commission an internal working group to establish an appropriate alternative heating source(s) to off gas heating systems by April 2024, ahead of the EPC C target date of 2030. Agree an action plan by April 2024 to retrain the gas servicing operatives on new and replacement technologies	Work underway with gas & electrical teams. First commissioning of thermal stores taking place in September 2023. Monthly manufacture and new technology training now offered to improve knowledge. Undertaking market engagement to establish the corrected courses, costs and phasing of training. Using funding where available.	April 2024 ON-GOING
	Target all Council Housing Stock with an EPC of lower than C with individual plans to improve energy efficiency to achieve EPC Band C by 2030:	EPCs E, F & G identified for improvements. Working with external contractor to identify funding under ECO4. Budget request for April 2024. Aims to remove	Sub Action November 2023

	<p>Programme retrofit actions to 2030 by November 2023</p> <p>Review the new Greener Housing budget annually to ensure it meets cost projections to 2030.</p>	<p>E, F & G homes from stock. Retrofit plan to achieve 2030 target in place.</p> <p>2024-2025 budget planning underway and ongoing yearly.</p>	<p>31 December 2029</p> <p>ON TRACK</p>
	<p>Establish a cost ceiling level where existing stock may be classed as unviable to retrofit.</p> <p>Establish an options appraisal for stock meeting these criteria.</p> <p>Combine this with natural depreciation costs and future maintenance/replacement projections to produce a report to Cabinet seeking approval for disposal, if required</p>	<p>Underway, meeting with internal and external stakeholders to establish homes which fit these criteria. This will enable a considered long-term plan to be considered.</p>	<p>November 2023</p> <p>ON TRACK</p>
	<p>Combine Asset Management strategy/replacement programmes with the total retrofit requirements to ensure property works are planned efficiently by April 2026</p> <p>Combine replacement years and plan geographically to provide value for money and limit carbon emissions.</p>	<p>Work commenced. Consideration of wider impacts to teams to include increases in resident engagement, budget, and other regulatory requirements. Workshops underway with teams effected.</p>	<p>April 2026</p> <p>ON TRACK</p>
	<p>Align Asset Management Strategy with HRA Business Plan and Development Strategy by November 2023.</p>	<p>Currently underway</p>	<p>November 2023</p> <p>ON TRACK</p>
	<p>Continue to canvas the Government for national and regional funding to support retrofit schemes toward net zero.</p>	<p>Actively taking part in District Council Network (DCN) discussions.</p> <p>Members of HCOG Retrofit hub steering group – Looking at skills shortage.</p> <p>Attended several events over the summer. Members of the Retrofit Academy attending industry leading events throughout the year.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>

		<p>Retrofit hub – run by Turner & Townsend.</p> <p>These working groups give a voice to those in positions able to make change. Involving other district councils, MP's, manufacturers, consultations etc.</p>	
	<p>Explore consortium approaches to funding on all Government funding schemes</p>	<p>Continuing to explore all funding being released and expected dates to engage with others. Officers are currently talking to local HAs with housing stock in the areas.</p> <p>Attending regular consortium meetings to continue to build relationships locally.</p>	ONGOING
	<p>Affordable Warmth Programmes – Educate and promote energy efficiency to tenants and residents to reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions.</p> <p>Link with local partners – Citizens Advice/HCC</p> <p>Promote initiatives and measures in each Hometalk magazine.</p>	<p>Established a small working group to enable more self-serving from the council's web pages.</p> <p>Creating a resident page giving advice on retrofitting of homes.</p> <p>Hometalk being utilised along with new resident engagement platform Citizens Lab.</p>	ONGOING
	<p>Assess the Housing Services' wider carbon footprint by April 2026</p> <p>Embodied carbon in retrofit and demolition activities</p> <p>Material production, delivery, and installation.</p>	<p>Innovative solutions are being investigated. Carbon credit release for retrofit programme and using latent heat from data centres.</p> <p>We are exploring the benefits of procuring a long term retrofit partner which will enable the delivery of lower carbon intensive materials and address whole life cycles, with the added benefits of using local teams to increase jobs and skills locally. These partnerships would invest in residents to increase social value.</p>	<p>April 2026 ON TRACK</p>
	<p>Commission an internal working group to establish an appropriate</p>	<p>Working with internal stakeholders looking at a range</p>	<p>April 2027</p>

	alternative heating source(s) to gas fired boilers by April 2027, ahead of the 2035 installation cut off.	of delivery options and financing models: Ground Source heating for communal buildings. Using waste heating from data centres. Along with a range of suitable electric solutions for single occupancy. Linking heating with alternative hot water solutions and wider implications of upskilling the workforce, availability of products on the ability to undertake repairs and expected lifecycle implications for financing.	ON TRACK
Strategic Priority 2 – Council Housing New Build Standards	Complete the Future Homes Standard 2025 pilot scheme (Penman House) by 2023.	Project is well underway, due to complete in October 2023.	October 2023 ON TRACK
Strategic Priority 3 – Private Sector Housing Decarbonisation	Fully support the Warmer Homes Consortium led by PCC to promote LAD 3 and HUG funding in the district through to March 2023 with a joint communications and marketing plan.	Consortium was fully supported within the council until its end date in March. HUG2 has now been released with a new opportunity to gain funding to promote retrofit across the district.	March 2023 COMPLETE
	Train Housing Standards Officers on energy efficiency measures, alternative methods of heating and energy provider switching services by October 2022, to provide advice and assistance to landlords and residents as part of ongoing activities.	The Council were successful receiving 3 x 70% funded places to train 2 x retrofit coordinators and 1 x Retrofit Assessor Further training will be requested to train other colleagues in key areas to increase knowledge and customer support from April 2024.	October 2022 ON TRACK

	<p>Promote Affordable Warmth Programmes and activities.</p> <p>Educate and promote energy efficiency to tenants and residents to reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from July 2022</p> <p>Link with local partners – Citizens Advice/HCC/NFDIS and foodbanks</p> <p>Establish a communication campaign alongside the Council's new Climate change Manager by August 2022 and refresh annually.</p>	<p>Shortly releasing Cosy homes New Forest. Initially, a tool that will help new forest residents with their retrofit journey. Longer term this area will be a way to communicate help and advice, develop future campaigns.</p> <p>Engaging with local partners to help promote available funding.</p>	<p>August 2022 ONGOING</p>
	<p>Continually identify, where available, and bid for funds to promote energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty for private owners and landlords.</p>	<p>Procured software to help model homes within the district that are eligible for the available funding streams to allow the council to take a targeted approach linking with the cosy homes tool to increase the take up of retrofit and maximise funding.</p>	<p>ONGOING</p>
	<p>Attend, support and enhance the existing New Forest Partnership Forum of Voluntary agencies.</p> <p>Target fuel and food poverty</p> <p>Provide specialist training and integrate the new Local Campaigns Manager with Council workstreams where appropriate by March 2023.</p>	<p>Work underway with private sector housing teams.</p> <p>Funding awarded under HUG3 will enable further targeting of food banks and other public buildings and services.</p>	<p>March 2023 ONGOING</p>
	<p>Attend, support and enhance initiatives and activities of the Home Energy Efficiency Programme (HEEP – including HCC and other Hampshire Local Authorities) to develop regional initiatives which benefit residents of the New Forest.</p> <p>Consider an initiative to create a 'Safe' Contractors list of appropriately certified local installers and support them link with residents.</p>	<p>Attendance to the HEEP group continues.</p> <p>The introduction of Safe contractors list has not been established. Although the Council will assess contractors under ECOflex. Instead, the cosy homes trial will begin shortly, where successful the tool can link suitably qualified contractors and quotes to create a one stop shop for customers. General advice will be given at this time.</p>	<p>March 2023 ON TRACK</p>

	Through Housing Standards work continue to ensure landlords are compliant with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) regulations, reviewing performance annually.	January 2023 Reviewed homes with F and G rating, those rented homes received a letter from the council, giving advice on funding and MEESE regulations.	ONGOING
	Hold a standing Greener Housing agenda item at each Landlord Forum	Greener housing was introduced at the April forum. September's forum will focus on current funding, Cosy Homes tool and Key speakers talking about the challenges of retrofit.	ONGOING
Strategic Priority 4 – Housing Service Operations	Quantify the operational carbon footprint of key activities by April 2026.	Work underway to be completed by 2026.	ON TRACK
	Through 2022 monitor the energy usage of communal areas across the social housing stock to assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peak demands ○ Average usage ○ Reason for use ○ Alternative provision which reduces costs and carbon emissions. and set service charges for 23/24	Underway. Officers understand the energy usage for NFDC communal blocks for gas and electric and the split between personal and communal usage. This will form the basis of consultation to set future charges. This information will in turn influences future renewable technology and changes to heating sources.	November 2022 ON TRACK