



**Black Country
Housing Group**

Environmental Strategy



This strategy sets out how BCHG will make homes warmer, safer and more affordable to live in, while reducing our impact on the environment. It supports BCHG 2030 by linking environmental responsibility to quality homes, resident wellbeing, value for money, new development and long-term asset sustainability.

BCHG has a strong foundation in sustainable social housing. Our previous Environmental Management Strategy 2021-24 set out an early commitment to sustainable, affordable and efficient homes, recognising the direct impact that energy costs, carbon reduction and fuel poverty have on residents. It established the need for a clear road map to improve energy performance, reduce carbon emissions, make best use of grant funding and embed environmental thinking into stock investment, new homes, business operations and procurement. This strategy builds on that work and moves BCHG into the next stage: a clearer 2030 pathway, aligned to BCHG 2030, the Quality Homes Strategy and the Development Strategy, with stronger data, assurance and measurable outcomes.

BCHG has already taken practical steps to support more sustainable social housing, through early commitments to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) improvement, fabric-first investment, retrofit pilots, low-carbon heating, energy benchmarking, resident energy support and more sustainable development standards.

The strategy is informed by BCHG's verified 2025/26 carbon baseline, stock condition and EPC data, resident insight, Sustainable Homes Index For Tomorrow (SHIFT) advice, national expectations for social housing energy performance and our annual Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing submission. It is designed to work alongside the Quality Homes Strategy and Development Strategy, so environmental outcomes are consistent across investment in existing homes and delivery of new homes.

2030 Vision

By 2030, BCHG homes will be warmer, safer and more energy efficient, with 100% of homes achieving EPC C or equivalent as a minimum where required and achievable, and a clear pathway towards higher performance over time. We will reduce carbon emissions, target fuel poverty risk and make sure environmental decisions support decent homes, resident wellbeing and long-term asset sustainability.

Output Measure

Percentage of homes EPC C or above and annual progress against BCHG net-zero pathway.

Perception Measure

Independent Sustainability Assessment Score.

Strategy

We will reduce BCHG's environmental impact by improving homes, using better data and targeting investment where it makes the greatest difference. Our focus will be safe, warm and decent homes, lower fuel poverty risk, reduced carbon emissions, better understanding of environmental performance and clear assurance for residents, Board and regulators.

Resident Commitments

Our residents have told us that investment in existing homes remains a priority, and that homes should be safe, well maintained, warm and affordable to live in. We will use resident feedback, complaints, damp and mould learning and performance data to shape investment and improve services.

We will be clear with residents about our environmental priorities, the choices we need to make and the impact of investment. Resident impact will be measured through satisfaction after works, reported improvements in warmth and comfort, reduced repeat problems and evidence that investment reaches homes and residents with the greatest need.

Equality and Diversity Commitments

We will use data and resident insight to understand where environmental investment can reduce inequality, fuel poverty risk and poor health outcomes. We will prioritise residents most affected by cold homes, damp and mould risk, vulnerability and accessibility needs, and monitor whether improvements are fair and inclusive.

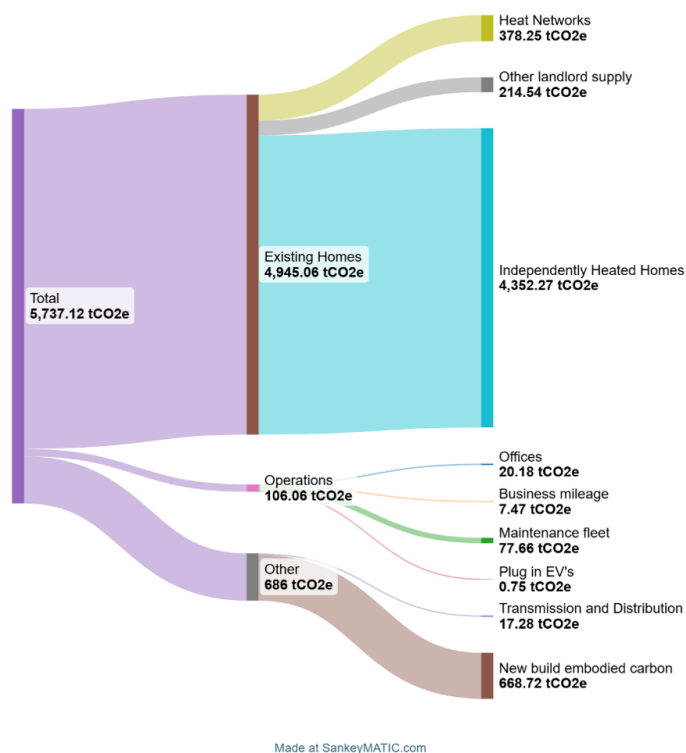
Value for Money Commitments

We will make best use of every pound we spend by aligning environmental investment with asset performance, Decent Homes requirements, resident impact and long-term cost reduction. We will use stock condition data, EPC data, carbon reporting, Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS) reporting and funding opportunities to prioritise works that improve homes, reduce future risk and support financial sustainability.

Baseline and Current Position

BCHG's 2025/26 Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) gives a verified carbon baseline of 5,737 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) and confirms where our biggest environmental impacts sit. Emissions from homes in use are the largest source, followed by heat networks, communal energy, fleet activity and new build embodied carbon. This gives BCHG a clearer starting point for measuring progress, prioritising investment and reporting against the BCHG net-zero pathway.

The next stage is to strengthen property-level data and use it to target action more effectively. This includes identifying homes below EPC C or equivalent, understanding hard to treat homes, reviewing heat networks and linking energy performance with damp, mould, excess cold, rent arrears, fuel poverty risk and defect trends. This will also support more consistent annual reporting through the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing.



Detailed actions, timescales and annual targets will sit in the Environmental Innovation and Improvement Plan. This keeps the strategy focused on long term outcomes, while delivery can adapt to resident voice, regulation, funding and asset data.

Strategy Pillar 1

Improve the Energy Performance and Sustainability of Existing Homes

Goal

We will improve the energy efficiency, warmth, comfort and long-term sustainability of existing homes through targeted investment and a phased retrofit approach. Investment will be informed by stock condition, EPC data, Decent Homes requirements, damp and mould learning, resident insight and funding opportunities, with priority given to homes and residents with the greatest need or risk.

Measurable Outcomes

100% of homes to achieve EPC C or equivalent by 2030 as a minimum where required and achievable. A phased retrofit programme will prioritise homes below EPC C, electrically heated homes, hard to treat properties and homes where poor energy performance overlaps with damp, mould, excess cold, rent arrears or fuel poverty risk. Annual reporting will cover homes improved, costs, funding secured, resident impact and progress towards BCHG's net-zero pathway. Resident reported improvement in warmth, comfort or affordability after works.

Strategy Pillar 2

Reduce Operational Emissions

Goal

We will reduce emissions from BCHG controlled activities, including communal energy, offices, fleet and business travel, with a clear route to delivering net zero for Head Office operations.

Measurable Outcomes

Year-on-year reduction in controllable operational emissions, measured against the 2025/26 SECR baseline, including progress towards net zero for Head Office operations. Priority areas include heat networks, communal electricity, office energy, waste management, fleet emissions and electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure to support the trial and future use of electric vans.

Strategy Pillar 3

Year-on-year reduction in controllable operational

Goal

We will build new homes that are energy efficient, affordable to live in and designed to avoid future retrofit liabilities.

Measurable Outcomes

All new homes to achieve at least EPC B, with EPC A targeted where viable and all schemes assessed against whole-life cost, resident running cost, low carbon heating, solar photovoltaic (PV), EV provision and future retrofit liability. Defect days and post-occupancy feedback will be used to understand whether new homes are performing as intended.

Strategy Pillar 4

Responsible Supply Chain and Waste Management

Goal

We will work with contractors, suppliers and development partners to reduce environmental impact through procurement, contract management, waste reduction, local supply chain opportunities and support for a lower carbon Head Office.

Measurable Outcomes

Environmental expectations built into relevant procurement and contract management arrangements, including waste, energy and supply chain choices that support BCHG's Head Office net-zero route. Improved waste data and reporting, with year-on-year learning on construction, repairs and operational waste where data is available.

Strategy Pillar 5

Strengthen Data and Insight

Goal

We will improve the quality of environmental, stock and resident data so investment decisions are better targeted and easier to assure.

Measurable Outcomes

Improved data completeness for stock condition, EPC, carbon, retrofit, heat networks, PV, waste, vulnerability, damp and mould, defects and investment data by 2030. Hard to treat homes register and environmental data dashboard in place to support investment decisions, assurance and reporting.

Governance and Reporting

Updates on strategy delivery will be made to BCHG Board twice per year, aligned to reporting on the Quality Homes Strategy and Development Strategy so outcomes remain consistent. Where environmental delivery affects compliance, safety, damp and mould, Decent Homes, minimum energy standards or asset risk, assurance will also be reported through the appropriate Board and Committee routes.

Progress will be tracked through the Environmental Innovation and Improvement Plan, with annual targets, actions and risks reviewed through the BCHG performance and assurance framework.

Annual reporting will include progress against EPC C by 2030, movement towards higher EPC performance, operational carbon reduction, retrofit delivery, new build EPC outcomes, resident impact, data quality, heat networks, EV charging, supply chain and waste management. This will align with BCHG's annual Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing submission and wider ESG reporting.

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