Plus Dane Housing

Sustainability Strategy 2025/28

Be a green, clean housing provider creating affordable, warm, energy efficient homes and green spaces

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Welcome to our Sustainability Strategy

Plus Dane has a strong record of serving its communities, from our early beginnings in the 1970s as a 400-home landlord, to today with more than 30,000 customers living in over 13,500 of our homes across 14 local authority areas.

Our vision for the future is to deliver **quality homes, great services** and **vibrant communities,** balancing affordability challenges with investment in new and existing homes, responding to a continually evolving economic picture as well as responding to an increase in demand for services from a range of complex scenarios.

This is set against the backdrop of sustainability and related targets. Climate related issues are a key factor in how we deliver our services and sustainability is an ever important focus for customers and funders. Whilst climate issues are impactful and a concern for all generations, it's a particular important driver for Generation Z, generally defined as those born between 1996 and 2012, who are now a significant part of the global workforce and who are often driven by climate anxiety. As we think about our workforce of the future, a well-crafted approach to sustainability could be a key factor in recruiting and attracting talent from this and future generations.

Our approach to sustainability to date has been largely focused on our homes both new and existing, they make up 95% of our emissions, But we know that we need to evolve our approach through a number of key themes in how we work, in order to meet government set sustainability targets, but more importantly our desire to become a more sustainable organisation and to play our part in tackling a global climate problem.

We can play our part in tackling the crisis. We have a strong social purpose and know the impact we can have through our approach to sustainability on customers, communities and colleagues. This is finely balanced however with our recognition that change takes time and through this strategy, our ambition will not be realised in the first three years; this initial strategy will create the necessary platform for us to deliver our vision in future years, recognising that the technological landscape for sustainable initiatives is often untested and expensive. As more organisations adopt sustainable approaches, this will reduce and help our vision become more of a reality.

Now

Our Corporate Plan was launched in April 2024; its objectives have sustainability embedded within them:

- **Customer experience** providing support services which meet customer need and improve health and wealth.
- **Vibrant communities** safe, well maintained and warm homes in communities where people choose to live.
- **Sustainable organisation** we will become a leaner, more efficient organisation through technology, process and data as part of our Innovation Framework.
- **Colleague experience** making sure colleagues are valued and accountable to support us to deliver our corporate plan and all aims within it.

Our homes

In domestic homes, a minimum EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rating of C is required for new tenancies by 2028, and all existing tenancies by 2030. We have made good progress over the past two years to meet the Government's target, increasing the data we hold and taking steps to improve energy efficiency through a range of measures.

This is supported by our Growth Strategy to build homes to a minimum of EPC B so that as we grow, we do so in a responsible way that supports new customers to have a warm and efficient home. This has included coming off gas in some new schemes. This however is a small step towards our 'off gas' approach as currently **95%** of our homes are heated by gas in individual homes and through community gas systems. This means over **12,000** customers will be impacted by changes to heating systems as future government targets to reduce fossil fuel usage crystalises.

Plus Dane Homes	2022	2024	2025
Number of homes EPC D or below	4817	2561	2226
Number of homes EPC C or above	7134	10350	10430
Number of homes with unknown data (addressed through stock condition surveys)	1980	1514	35

Over the past two years, we've successfully used the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (SHF) to target homes that we know are lower performing in terms of their EPC rating and more importantly which our customers find more expensive to heat and run. We identified in 2023 that over 20% of our damp and mould reports were coming from homes in the Liverpool 8 (L8) with a similar pattern in L15.

As a result, we used the SHF and self-funding, to complete a £10m project benefiting over 600 homes. The results have been 95% satisfaction, 100% of homes moving from below EPC C to EPC C and above, a reduction in damp and mould reports by **30%** in L8 and **40%** in L15 when comparing the number of cases to the previous year. This is a good indication of the impact the investment has, and this approach will continue for the remainder of wave 2 and wave 3 programmes, to tackle our worst performing homes for energy efficiency.

As we launch the strategy, changes in EPC calculations with the introduction of new methodology in RDSAP 10 is impacting our current position, which we will continue to explore in 2025/26.

Our way of working

We use SHIFT, an independent assessment and accreditation scheme, provided by Suss Housing, which helps organisations demonstrate they are delivering against challenging science based environmental targets.

Performance for Plus Dane Housing has dipped over recent years, with the 2023/24 assessment achieving a Bronze accreditation, with a score of 34.51%, ranking 39th out of the 40 most recent SHIFT assessments.

This position is largely due to the absence of a Sustainability Strategy which provides clarity on our future direction coupled with data collection challenges, giving us a baseline for performance.

Areas for challenge also exist in terms of stakeholder engagement and communications, this is around our supply chain and supporting customers with greener initiatives. We have seen challenge from customers about retrofit works and often refusal due to the impact of works on the home or the way of living. There can often be fear with new technologies such as solar panels and, as we seen with the completion of our gas fire removal approach, change takes time. When we implemented that policy, for the right reasons, some of our customers took time to adjust, removing a standard item that had been in homes for years.

We currently use a mixed model of delivering our repairs and maintenance service with our inhouse team completing the majority of gas service and boiler replacement programmes. This is delivered by **32** gas engineers and one apprentice gas engineer. Seven of the gas engineers have done solar thermal training and two gas team leaders have done a green skills bootcamp. We're working with the gas and electrical teams and a local provider to develop a green skills training package bespoke to our needs, to include areas such as solar and air source heat pumps. As we have started looking at what our future workforce will look like, we have found that there is a concentration on green installations but not necessarily training and development for maintaining new technologies which is an ongoing requirement of Plus Dane.

To put this into context, a PWC report in 2022 stated that “To support the demand for green energy technology in new-build homes and retrofitted existing homes, there is a need to recruit an additional 260,000 skilled workers into the UK sector by 2050, as well as retaining current levels of expertise.

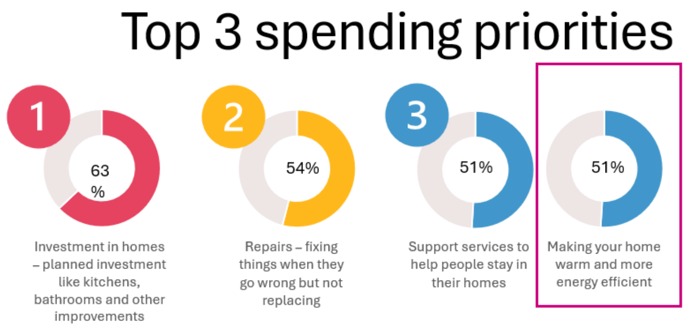
Our plans include building 730 new homes and investing £62m into existing homes in the period 2024-27, the ability to install, service and repair green energy technology will be critical to our strategic success. Recognising that the green energy skills market is limited and competitive, we have developed an approach to develop existing colleagues with the relevant skill sets and accreditations as part of our People and Growth Strategies.

This approach provides development opportunities that colleagues tell us consistently, through our annual colleague survey are important to them.

Our inhouse team means that we have a fleet of over **70** vehicles. The current annual CO2 emissions are **583.71** tonnes per year. We will investigate through fleet management, how this can be reduced.

Through the development of the strategy, we met with some of our current external contractors to discuss their approach to workforce planning and sustainable working practices. It became clear that for small, local contractors, it is often challenging to deliver greener principles in the way they work. Supply chains for responsibly sourced materials are expensive and electric fleet management is challenging due to EV charging stations and depth of travel for works.

Our customer experience of sustainability



When we developed our vision for the future, we talked to over 1600 customers to identify their spending priorities. In the top three, customers placed making homes warm and more efficient. In the bottom three, was meeting governments net zero climates. This has helped shaped our understanding of not just priorities but work that we need to do to raise awareness of climate change and the targets set for landlords like us.

We talk above about **95%** satisfaction for our works in L8 and L15 to make homes warmer and more cost effective to run however as part of that programme we have experienced refusals from customers for the retrofit works. This has largely been attributed to loss of space through internal wall insulation works. This gives us insight into how we can better support customers to understand the benefits of works and minimal impact on the space in their home.

We implemented a cost-of-living task & finish group in 2022 to support customers through challenges such as rising costs like gas, electricity, fuel and food. This included issuing a range of measures around energy advice, crisis support, welfare and benefit advice to name just a few of the measures. We also reviewed our data, which identified cohorts of customers living in our lower energy performing homes so that we could target advice in a tailored way. Sadly, we have also supported and directed customers to ‘warm hubs’ which provide a place to get warm, and get a hot drink, food and access activities.

Food security continues to be a challenge; we have supported several local food pantries to provide lower cost access to food and provisions as well as issuing food bank vouchers. To move towards more sustainable food provision, we are increasingly signposting customers towards social supermarkets and pantries as long-term use of food banks is unsustainable.

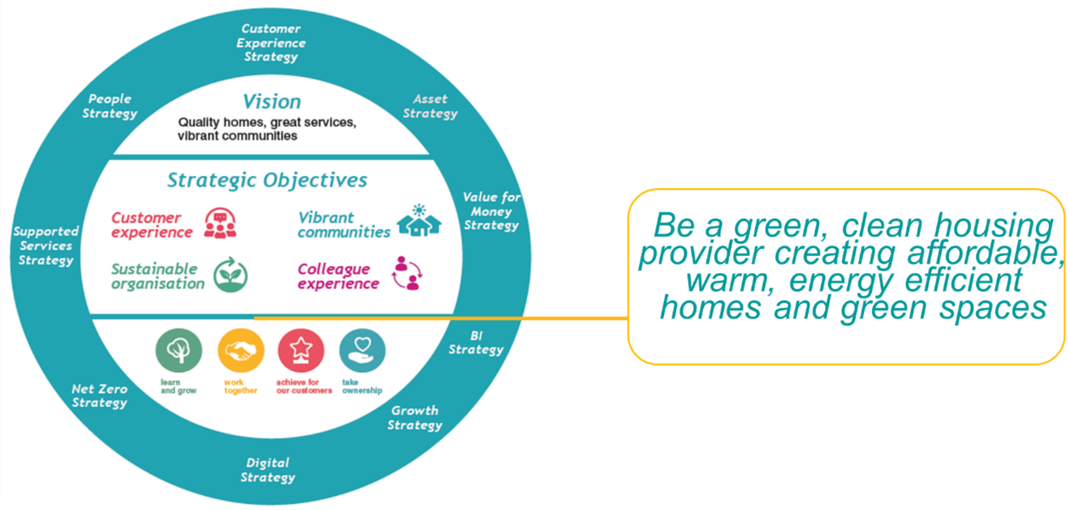
What our customers said

We asked Plus Dane Voices to engage with us in developing this strategy. Here’s what they told us:

- **10%** expressed the need to ensure the vision is to the point, simple and easy to understand.
- That the strategy needs to be realistic and take a common-sense approach.
- Most voices suggested solar panels to help Plus Dane be more environmentally friendly.
- Other suggestions included supporting customers to make informed choices (14%), installing heat efficiency measures (7%), less maintenance of greenspaces and using electric vans (7%).

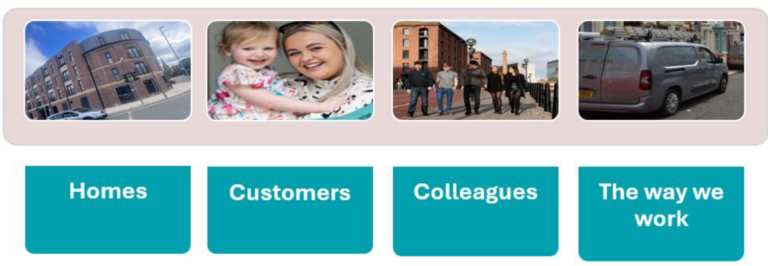
We will continue to engage with customers as we embed and deliver the Strategy’s action plan to ensure that we continue to meet its priorities.

Into the future



The strategy vision was developed as part our corporate plan to enable our corporate vision of quality homes, great services and vibrant communities. We have worked with our Sustainability Group, membership consisting of colleagues, Board and independent members, to develop the vision which we then tested with customers. We have also worked with customers to refine the strategy and objectives to make sure we can deliver our ambition and maximise customer benefit.

Key themes will help drive action to deliver the required strategy vision:



Homes

Whilst our Asset Strategy determines how we will invest in homes, this strategy supports it by ensuring that technologies, data and ways of working combine to bring the asset vision to life. Our hierarchy of making homes warmer and more energy efficient is detailed below:

Fabric First & Renewables

- Install an appropriate level of fabric upgrades to make them cheaper to run for customers and to be ready for fossil fuel free heating

- Install appropriate renewable technology, most likley solar panels

Heating

- Give all customers in communal living the opportunity to control their own heating systems

- Move all our homes off fossil fuel heating

One of our key actions from this strategy is to enhance how we measure the success of sustainability works in existing homes but likewise we need to understand this better for our new homes. This is about measuring how customers use heating and other technologies and what impact it has on their way of living and costs for heating and living in the home.

We also need to dovetail data from our Asset and Growth strategies to drive improvements not just in investment decisions but also to support customers understanding of benefits and use of new systems and technologies.

In terms of overall investment in homes we also need to:

- Support our supply chain to be better prepared for both this and future iterations of this strategy by firstly submitting data to us about working practices and then taking step changes to reduce their carbon emissions.
- Better understand the impact of our waste management approach during works to home and how we can be more sustainable in its management.
- Consider how our Homes service can embrace more sustainable working practices and material supplies.

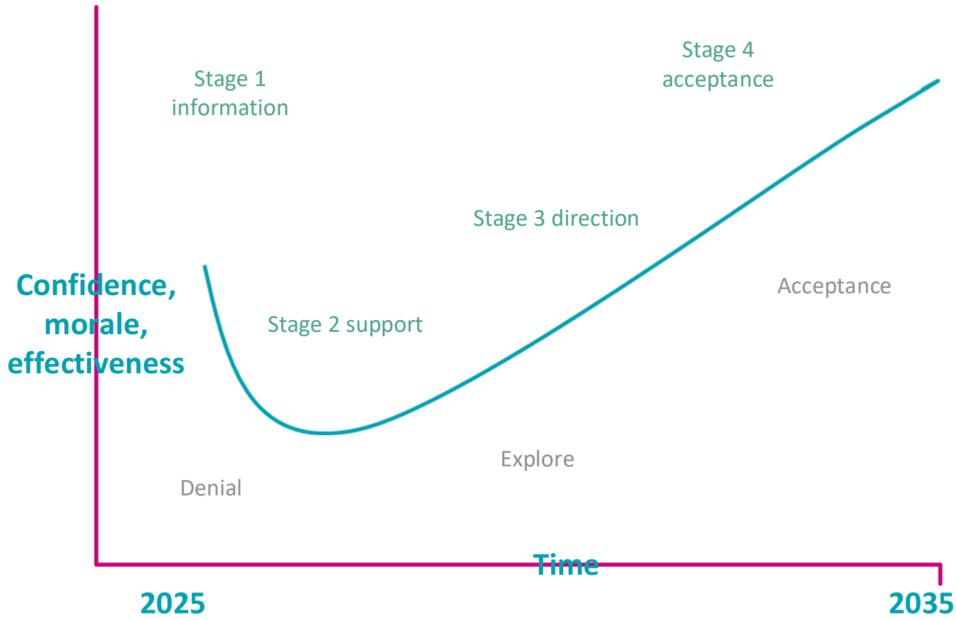
We will develop this platform in the first three years knowing that labour has been challenging since Covid and geopolitical issues continue to impact on goods and materials; inflation and pricing have presented challenges. By the end of this strategy, we will be more informed through data collection on homes and the costs of delivering works, which means that moving into the next iteration, we may have to make some decisions about how far we can go in all areas of our practice, to reduce our emissions and that of our partners.

Customers

Earlier in this strategy we talk about cultural change; the first three years will be about preparing for that change. Whilst we do make some assumptions about the impact of the strategy on customers, we know from data and experiences with previous change processes, that change can take time to embed and accept.

Communications and engagement with customers, particularly around barriers to adoption of new technologies and behaviour change requirements for households to become more sustainable will be a critical aspect of this strategy. Testing levels of awareness, understanding and attitudes will help shape our future approach to plugging knowledge gaps and being able to frame an offer that meets the long-term needs of customers.

In preparing for change, we know that it will help us be more efficient as we move forward with off gas for example by reducing the no accesses we experience when completing works which will also enhance the customer experience. The process will broadly follow a traditional change curve as detailed below and later in our roadmap to 2035 but will be supported through working with a partner to identify if nudge theory can help us through the curve.



As part of stages 1 and 2, we will support and train those customers who wish to take part, to be sustainability champions helping to champion change; we know from engagement for this strategy, we have customers who would be interested in this role.

As we work through the change curve, our ambition is to design out the support we currently provide to customers, as we deliver warmer homes which cost less to run, customers should not need to access warm hubs; reducing our crisis prevention offer, not to deliver efficiencies but to reinvest in more community led activities which support the ambition of the strategy. In 2024/25, we spent **£124k** on this type of crisis prevention. This feels very much like an outrageous ambition at this point with the work undertaken in the first three years, leading to this ambition becoming more of a reality in future years.

In the first strategy cycle, we want to transform at least one land space into a sustainable garden growing food and other items to promote local food production and reducing food miles. The space would also encourage sustainable practices like composting and support community resilience. We envisage this to be run and developed by local volunteers. We also plan to work with one of our partners, through their social value arrangements to develop a ‘Green Fund’ for community partners and groups to access small amounts of funding to improve their locality, acknowledging our role as an enabler in improving local spaces.

Our final ambition is to support customers to take advantage of green skill opportunities. This is a growing industry, and we know the level of investment is not currently matched by a growing workforce. We have over 30,000 people living in our homes. We want to collaborate and work with others to upskill our customers to take advantage of what is a growing industry. We also recognise the number of fully funded green skills training currently available for people who meet certain criteria such as unemployed, in receipt of specific benefits.

Colleagues

There are two elements to this theme; there is wider colleague engagement and awareness which will support cultural change for customers and there is the requirement to develop our workforce to deliver the changes that will be required through new technologies and coming off gas.

In terms of colleague engagement, we will enhance carbon literacy awareness across Plus Dane and our Sustainability Group will become the champions of change both at Board and officer level. This will include working with partners to champion sustainable practices in how they work too.

As detailed earlier, we have started to prepare our workforce for new ways of working, particularly when we move away from fossil fuels however, we need to be aligned in this approach. Alongside the People Strategy, this strategy needs to align our five- and ten-year investment in homes plans with our workforce requirements both from initial installation through to long term maintenance requirements. This will require an upskilling of current colleagues through our approach to talent management but will also require a more defined approach to attraction. Aligning asset management and growth data will be essential to support this approach.

There is also a requirement for us to better baseline our data around colleagues. We broadly understand our emissions for example in our offices and of our fleet, but as we have moved to a more agile working environment there are some unknowns in terms of emissions created through home working that will support us to understand our overall working footprint.

Additionally, as well as our owned fleet, we need to establish our position on our grey fleet drivers. Understanding what the grey fleet consists of in terms of fuel and usage to see if we can incentivise other modes of transport, we already have a cycle to work scheme.

As with any strategy that we launch, particularly where change is required, we need to communicate this in a tailored way for our colleagues, supporting the Sustainability Group to drive real change. We cannot expect customer change if our colleagues are not on that journey with us.

The way we work

Our current SHIFT assessment does not align with what we are aiming to achieve through this strategy. Quite simply, we need to use it as a benchmark for change and need to be better at collecting the data to inform the assessment, treating it exactly as we would a regulatory return. Data confidence will be an essential part of this strategy delivery to enable us to make better decisions. Whilst not chasing a 'badge', our ultimate aim through this strategy cycle is to move to a silver position and gold by the next iteration. That may seem a long target, but it is a stretch one considering the scale of change we need to deliver.

Our VfM strategy is considering efficiency around office accommodation. This needs to be linked to our aim through this strategy to baseline our emissions from our office facilities and reduce their carbon footprint.

Through this strategy we have talked about our partners aligning working practices to our sustainability ambitions, through our approach to procurement and contract management, we will support this to be a key thread in how we procure and manage contracts and relationships and importantly, how this can be measured. Additionally, through our procurement service, we will continue to review and improve energy procurement and align this to investment plans to prepare for reduced reliance on fossil fuel.

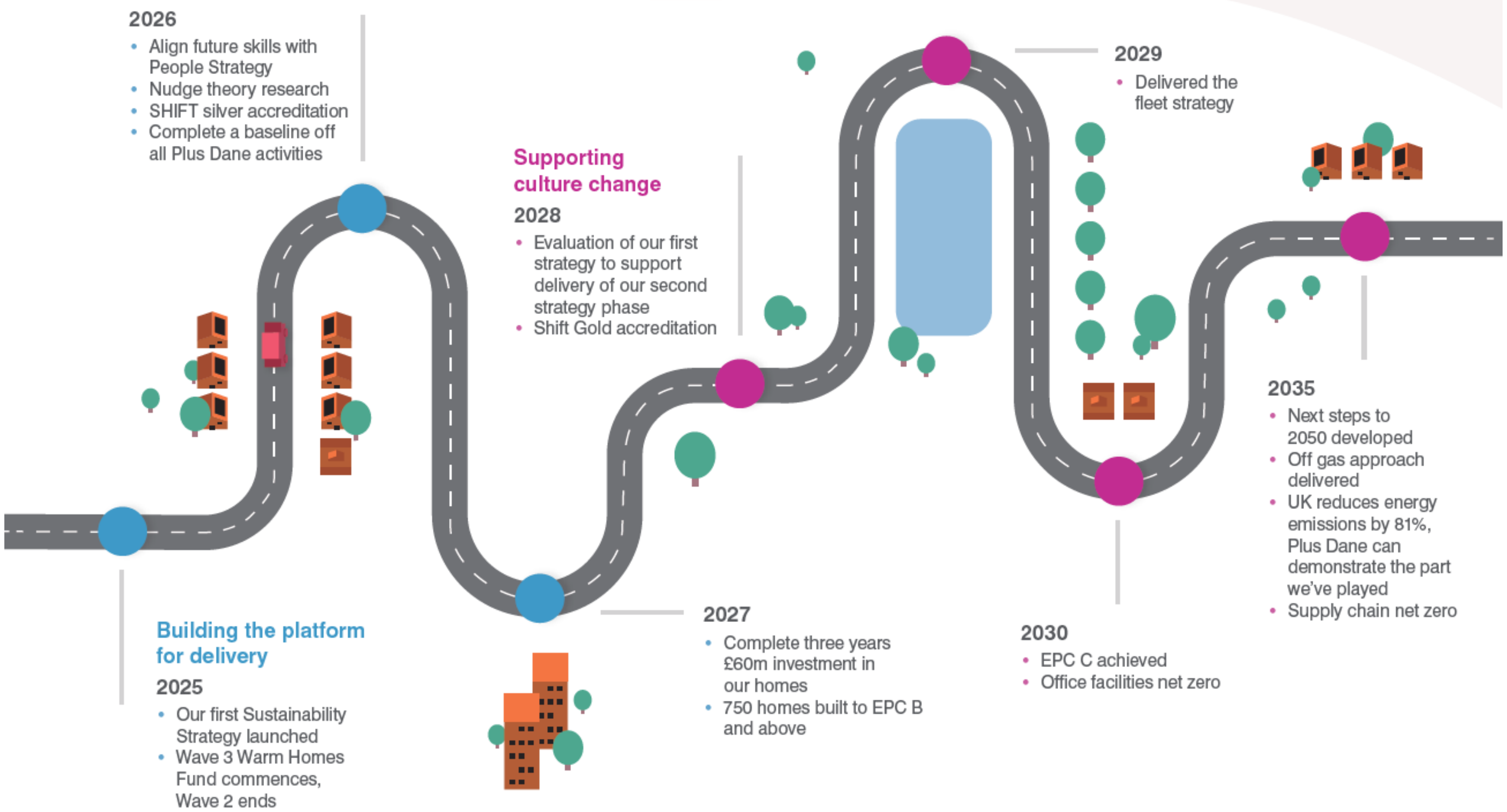
Through the first three years, we will baseline all our service delivery elements in terms of our emissions and ensure full alignment with our strategies. For example, our Digital Strategy is due for review, we need to consider how our ICT provision can support us to work more sustainably.

Roadmap to 2050

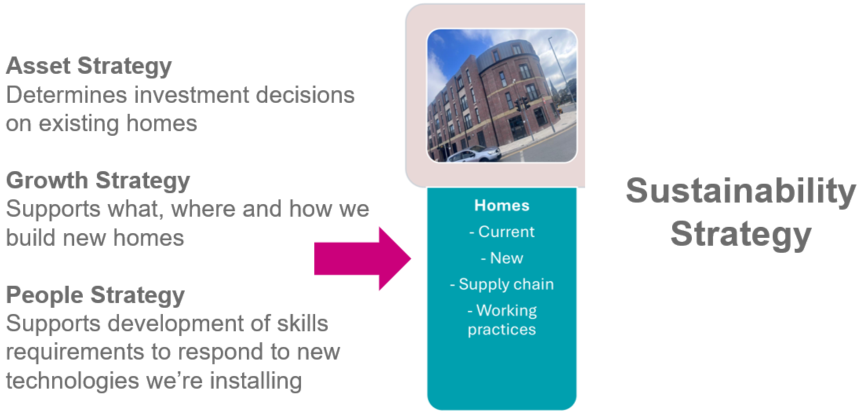
Earlier in the strategy we talked about this part of the road, 2025/28, being foundational as we know some of the change required for this strategy will take time whether that be cultural shifts or setting baselines of data. Having said that, we know that beyond that there are key targets that we need to deliver. That's why our strategy approach is short-term, but our roadmap takes a longer term of the whole journey as detailed below.

Plus Dane Housing

Sustainability Roadmap to 2050



Links to other strategies



The Sustainability Strategy does not operate in isolation, it crosscuts all our corporate strategies and the way we work. The key strategies are shown above but as we have discussed throughout this document, sustainability will be aligned to everything we do.

Ownership & measuring success

There are key metrics which have been set by government which will support us to deliver our ambitions set out in this strategy. We will be agile to any government changes in approach, which we have seen with previous administrations.

Here are some of the key metrics we will use to review our success in our approach to sustainability which will take us over not just the three-year strategy cycle, but beyond.

EPC C by 2030 and all new builds B and above	**All homes off gas**	**Develop a change management approach for customers**	**Deliver at least one communal garden**	**Achieve SHIFT Gold**

Role	Responsibility
Board	Approval of the strategy, ongoing monitoring and ensuring financial and other plans are aligned to the strategic aims of this strategy
Executive Management Team	Strategy delivery
Sustainability Group	Six monthly review of strategy and members taking on a championing role
Colleagues	Championing a more sustainable future for Plus Dane

Communication as the key to success

We recognise that this strategy will mean different things to different audiences; we recognise that and will produce a shorter version of the strategy to take account of the feedback from customers. We'll also publish the progress through our Financial Statements so that we can continue to support the ESG principles which underpin some of our debt portfolio.

We know that for some stakeholders, we are changing hearts and minds in what is a changing and sometimes volatile environment, we need to be alert to that and adapt our communication and approach appropriately to achieve the vision and aims of the strategy.

Additionally, we are clear that the interests of different stakeholder groups may create a tension in what we're trying to achieve; this strategy aims to relieve that tension where possible but being clear why, on some occasions, we can't achieve that.


Customers - adapting to new sustainability tecnhologies & approaches in their homes
Communities - making communities greener and supporting upskilling to respond to opportunties created
Colleagues - adaptating to a greener way of working and ensuring our workforce of the future can deliver the strategy aims
Funders - using ESG principles to meet applicable loan requirements and reducing cost of debt
Governance / regulator - demonstrating VfM and viability in achieving government targets
Contractors & Suppliers - supporting Plus Dane's sustainability vision and principles in their ways of working

Action Plan

No	Strategy aim	Action	Expected Outcomes	Output	Ownership	Due Date
1.	Homes	Enhance how we measure the success of sustainability works in new and existing homes	Improve measurement of energy usage of customers using heat networks	Switch 2 report for heat metering impact on energy usage Post completion reviews to include cost in use feedback from customers	Sustainability Manager Head of Growth	Q4 2026 Q4 2026
2.		Continue to dovetail investment, development and retrofit data to drive improvements	New homes compliance with legislation on biodiversity, water and drainage management, Future Homes Standards and potential use of MMC	New homes specification to include specific requirements Discussions held with contractors and consultants to identify specification initiatives which could be used.	Head of Growth	Q2 2025
3.		Consider how we can support our partners to deliver more sustainable working practices	Sustainability initiatives clearly identified for each procured new homes scheme including biodiversity	Procurement exercise to reflect sustainability statement requirements	Head of Growth	Q4 2026
4.		Improve our waste management arrangements from our Homes service	Reduce volume of waste to landfill	Procurement exercise to reflect sustainability statement requirements	Director of Homes Procurement Business Partner	Q4 2028
5.		Identify our carbon footprint on development, considering how it can be improved	Clear measurements of carbon footprints for each new scheme	Carbon footprint statement for each procured scheme	Head of Growth	Q4 2026
6.		Consider how our Homes service can consider more	Reduce carbon emissions from vehicles.	New repairs zone introduced, and electric vehicle trial completed	Head of Repairs and Head of	Q4 2027

No	Strategy aim	Action	Expected Outcomes	Output	Ownership	Due Date
		sustainable working practices and materials	Sustainable material used on planned programmes.	Procurement exercise to reflect sustainability statement requirements	Asset and Delivery	
7.		Identifying roles within the Homes directorate which require additional carbon literacy training as part of their role to support customers use of technology and general energy efficiency	A clear mapping of roles across the Homes directorate that intersect with customer-facing energy efficiency and technology support responsibilities	Training requirements to OD	Sustainability Manager	Q4 2026
8.	Customers	Support and train customers to be sustainability champions.	Clear understanding of what a sustainability champion would do backed by a Communications Plan, Training Plan and Selection Criteria	• Role profile • 1 champion appointed across each neighbourhood	Head of Social Value	Q4 2026
9.		Identify an opportunity in Merseyside and Cheshire to develop a sustainable community space with the local community and deliver green improvements	Review of our vacant land bank with our Development team including vacant garage sites to assess suitability	• Launch of one green community space • Launch of green fund	Head of Social Value	Q3 2026
10.		Develop an upskill plan for customers to meet skills gaps and help pursue employment opportunities in a growing industry	Understanding of the opportunities that currently exist through our supply chain and developing a pathway.	Customers into green jobs and the provision of work placements/experience to help customers who are interested in a career in Green Jobs	Head of Social Value	Q2 2026
11.		Consider how we can support community centres to be	Review of existing arrangements and scope	Reduction in energy costs and reduced overheads	Head of Social Value	Q4 2025

No	Strategy aim	Action	Expected Outcomes	Output	Ownership	Due Date
		more energy efficient and deliver sustainable ways	to install energy measures in each community centre			
12.		Identify a research partner to consider if nudge theory can support behavioural change	Clear understanding of options available to effectively influence changes in customer behaviour and encourage positive engagement with new, sustainable ways of living in our homes	Engagement plan with evidence-backed recommendations	Director of Customer Experience	Q3 2025
13.	Colleagues	Align future skills requirements with the People Strategy	Colleagues are better skilled and feel valued and invested in. Customers benefit from colleague skills.	Green energy in homes serviced and maintained effectively by in-house teams	Head of OC	Q4 2028
14.			Generate buy in from colleagues and contractors about sustainable practices	Colleagues and contractors consistently consider sustainability in working practices	Head of OC and Senior Procurement Business Partner	Q4 2027
15.		Enhance carbon literacy awareness across Plus Dane	Greater understanding and buy in from colleagues	Impactful training and communications are delivered to identified teams and subsequently to customers.	Head of OC	Q4 2027
16.		Effectively capture primary business mileage data and consider how this can reduce our carbon footprint	Ensure colleague mileage claim data is accurate, captured effectively and can be reported on with the aim of developing options for	Visibility and understanding of colleague/travel related carbon footprint..	Head of People Partnering and Ops (data)	Q1 2026

No	Strategy aim	Action	Expected Outcomes	Output	Ownership	Due Date
			how mileage claims can be reduced.			
17.	The way we work	Review requirements under Environmental compliance, waste management to ensure meeting all obligations	Compliance with obligations	Plan for improvement	Director of Governance & Assurance	Q4 2025/6
18.		Evaluation of components in business plan v's sustainability	Use data to move stress testing sustainable works to actual business plan position	Understanding of impact of a sustainability led business plan	Director of Finance	Q4 2025/26
19.		Deliver the SHIFT assessment as a regulatory return to enhance data quality and ownership	Silver SHIFT accreditation	Annual SHIFT return completed with enhanced accuracy	Director of Governance & Assurance	Q4 2025/26
20.		Review opportunities relating to the carbon footprint of our facilities	Reduce their carbon footprint of office facilities	Primary data on sustainability measures for all office facilities	Director of Governance & Assurance	Q4 2025/26
21.		Review procurement and driving at work practices	Review driving at work emissions	Sustainable vehicle strategy	Commercial Manager (Homes)	Q4 2028

No	Strategy aim	Action	Expected Outcomes	Output	Ownership	Due Date
22.		Green options for procuring energy – balance between additional cost and longer-term strategy	Reprocurement of energy broker with consideration for greener options. Energy sources demonstrable to customers and transparency of renewable approach.	Energy procurement strategy	Senior Procurement Business Partner	Q4 2025/26
23.		Consider how procurement practice can enhance the sustainability of our supply chain	Clear approach through procurement for responsibly sourced maintenance materials	Agreed approach to measuring sustainability of our supply chain	Senior Procurement Business Partner	Q4 2025/26
24.		Consider how the digital strategy can support more sustainable working practices	Reduce IT carbon footprint	Develop a baseline position for ICT carbon footprint New digital strategy to include sustainable practices.	Director of Digital & Innovation	Q4 2026 – Baseline developed Q4 2027 - Reduction achieved