



Environmental Vision 2021

Protecting our Communities

Approved by	SMT
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Strategy developed by	Director of Property

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Introduction

1. Purpose

1.1 We recognise that the way we conduct business has an impact on the environment in which we operate locally and globally. By adopting new approaches to how we; invest in our homes, build new homes, manage our business, manage our colleagues, reduce waste and consumption we can reduce our carbon footprint and therefore our impact as an organisation.

1.2 Our Corporate Plan Objectives are set out under the following priority themes:

- Commitment to our Communities
- Customer focus
- Our people
- One Connexus
- Well governed, resilient and financially sound

This Environmental Vision responds to our Corporate Plan by setting out how we will; reduce fuel poverty for our customers, develop a carbon neutral approach for our new build homes, increase the energy efficiency of our existing homes, rationalise our office space and work in more efficient ways to reduce our carbon footprint, improve the efficiency of our services and respond effectively to external factors such as climate change, environmental standards and government policy. Our target setting included in this vision will predominantly be limited to the next three years, in line with our Corporate Plan timeline, but will also focus on future targets.

1.3 This vision also enables us to clearly communicate our objectives to our partner Local Authorities, Herefordshire Council and Shropshire Council, who have both have declared a Climate Emergency in their areas of operation.

1.4 This vision is aligned with our Asset Management Strategy, New Homes Strategy, Customer Involvement Strategy, Housing and Support Strategy, Procurement Strategy, Repairs Policy and Neighbourhood Policy and our Environmental Policy Statement, which are all interlinked. Together these Strategies and Policies will enable us to operate in a sustainable way for our communities and the environment.

1.5 **Scope:** The vision applies to the whole of the Group. This means Connexus Homes Limited, (ultimate parent) and all of its subsidiaries.

2. Strategic Objectives

This vision links to the following relevant objectives included in our Corporate Plan:

2.1 **Commitment to our Communities:**

- Deliver our Warmer Homes Project, funded by a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) allocation, to significantly increase the energy efficiency of identified existing homes. We will use the evidence from this to develop a roadmap for all of our homes to be a minimum SAP Band C by 2030 and carbon neutral by 2050.
- Pilot a carbon neutral approach for both the refurbishment of existing homes and for our new

build homes that responds to the carbon neutral targets set by government.

2.2 **Customer Focus:**

- Develop our current Connexus Investment Standard to reduce fuel poverty for our customers. This Standard will also consider how we will contribute to the environmental sustainability of the communal areas in our ownership and work with stakeholders to influence and contribute to wider communal area improvements.

2.3 **Our People:**

- Develop apprenticeship and graduate employment programmes in conjunction with our partners to deliver opportunities for people in our homes and communities to work with us.

2.4 **One Connexus:**

- Deliver one Head Office based in Craven Arms, supported by hubs in Hereford and Wern, delivering services to our customers in the two counties. We will offer flexibility to our colleagues around where they work to reduce commuting and to enable them to increase their wellbeing through work/life balance.

2.5 **Well Governed, Resilient and Financially Sound:**

- Deliver our European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) allocation to significantly increase the energy efficiency of identified existing homes.
- Identify efficiency savings for our services that reduce our carbon footprint.

3. Context

3.1 The 2008 Climate Change Act established the world's first legally binding climate change targets. The introduction of this act saw a government target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050, from the 1990 baseline. This has now been amended through a Decarbonising Plan and the UK is the first G7 Country to commit in law to zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

3.2 The government's recently launched (November 2020) ten point plan includes; producing enough offshore wind to power every home, generating low-carbon hydrogen for industry, transport, power and homes, increasing production of electric cars and phasing out new petrol and diesel cars by 2030, targeting the installation of 600,000 heat pumps every year by 2028 and planting 30,000 hectares of trees every year.

3.3 We recognise that our activity alone, will not achieve the UK targets, however we can make a significant difference locally and will aim to influence other stakeholders as we work through the implementation of our objectives.

4. Assessing Our Carbon Footprint

4.1 We last assessed our Corporate Carbon Footprint in 2017, we will now revisit this assessment, to confirm our current baseline carbon footprint in 2020, considering the following:

- Combustion of fuels in our head office (The Gateway, Craven Arms)
- Combustion of fuels in any vehicles owned or leased by us (repairs fleet already Euro5 with adblu)
- Combustion of fuels by equipment in our operation (e.g. grounds maintenance)
- Business travel
- Colleague commuting

Our Corporate Carbon Footprint assessment does not include the homes we own and manage as these are subject to separate targets. We have committed, through our Asset Management Strategy, to improving the energy efficiency in our homes to meet SAP C by 2030 and to be net zero by 2050.

4.2 Once we have confirmed our carbon footprint we can set milestone targets for each area of energy usage to contribute towards our overall aim of achieving net zero carbon by 2030.

5. Delivering this Vision

5.1 Set out below are a number of key objectives and tasks that we will deliver to achieve our vision. We recognise that these objectives cannot be delivered by one specific team within Connexus, therefore we have identified a Climate Action Team to represent all areas of our organisation and champion our cross team approach.

2020-2023			
Strategy Task	Key Objective	How We Will Measure Success	Corporate Plan Objective
1	<p><u>Carbon Footprint</u> Measure our Corporate Carbon Footprint and reduce it by 35% by end March 2023. With an overall aim to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.</p> <p>This will include the impact of our fleet vehicles and Craven Arms office. We will look to widen this out in future approaches.</p>	<p>Reduce our Carbon Footprint by 35% by 2023, using our Carbon Footprint baseline as at January 2021.</p>	
2	<p><u>Warmer Homes Project</u> We will deliver our Warmer Homes Project, which will pilot a new approach for off gas and rurally located homes.</p>	<p>Delivery of the Warmer Homes Project by end July 2022.</p> <p>Roadmap for achieving SAP C by 2030 by end September 2021.</p>	<p><i>'Commitment to our Communities'</i></p> <p><i>A quality home vision that is defined and agreed with our stakeholders and is manageable within our financial constraints.</i></p>

			<i>Developed a roadmap for all homes to have a minimum energy performance rating of Band C by 2030 and carbon neutral by 2050.</i>
3	<p><u>Office Strategy</u> Connexus currently has 3 main offices across Hereford and Shropshire. We will reduce this to one head office, with smaller hubs in Hereford and Wem, to provide flexible working space for our colleagues.</p> <p>We will ensure our main office and two hubs achieve net carbon zero by 2030.</p>	<p>A clear office use and investment/ disinvestment <u>plan</u> for our own offices by end March 21.</p> <p>Offices plan delivered by 31st March 2023.</p>	<p><i>'One Connexus'</i></p> <p><i>One Head Office based in Craven Arms, South Shropshire with hubs in Hereford and Wem delivering services to our customers in the two counties and through agile working under conditions dictated by pandemic restrictions.</i></p>
4	<p><u>The Connexus Investment Standard</u> Connexus recognises that achieving the Decent Homes Standard is not enough. We want our tenants to live in warm homes they can afford to heat.</p>	<p>We will engage with our customers and use the learning from our Warmer Homes Project to develop our existing 'Connexus Investment Standard' by end Sept 2021.</p>	<p><i>'Commitment to our Communities'</i></p> <p><i>A quality home vision that is defined and agreed with our stakeholders and is manageable within our financial constraints.</i></p>
5	<p><u>Procurement</u> We will ensure that environmental sustainability is a key consideration in our procurement processes.</p>	<p>We will consider the environmental impacts of contracts at the outset of the procurement and by asking suppliers to tell us what they are doing to manage their environmental impact where it is appropriate to do so (<i>Draft Procurement Strategy 2020</i>)</p>	
6	<p><u>Reduce use of paper, printing and increase digital engagement</u></p> <p>We will launch a communications plan to signpost customers to our online resources - this is with an aim of reducing the number of newsletters we print but would also enable us to identify how customers want to receive information too e.g. email rather than letter</p>	<p>Roll our communications plan during 2021/22 to signpost customers to our online resources.</p> <p>We will launch our ERDM solution by end March 2022.</p>	<p><i>'Customer Focus'</i></p> <p><i>A customer service approach that enables more support and resolution at the first point of contact. A service that embraces technology to respond to our customers via phone,</i></p>

	<p>We will roll out our ERDM solution to enable our colleagues to access all documentation digitally and remotely.</p> <p>We will promote paperless and online meetings.</p>	<p>We will launch our customer portal by end June 2021.</p>	<p><i>social media, online and live-chat but does not exclude those who do not have access to technology. Core services digitally enabled and accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.</i></p>
7	<p><u>Water Usage</u> We will identify the amount of water we used in 2019/20 in our Craven Arms head office and set targets to reduce for 2021/22 onwards.</p>	<p>Review of water usage to be completed by end June 2021. Targets to be set by end September 2021.</p>	
8	<p><u>Waste</u> We will identify the amount of waste we sent to landfill across all activities in 2019/20 and set targets to reduce for 2021/22 onwards.</p>	<p>Review of waste to landfill to be completed by end June 2021. Targets to be set by end September 2021.</p>	
9	<p><u>VFM</u> Identify a toolkit to measure VFM savings created through moving to net zero carbon.</p>	<p>Identify or develop a toolkit to measure savings by end June 2021.</p>	<p><i>'Well governed, resilient and financially sound'</i></p> <p><i>A clear understanding of the performance of Connexus with a focus on continuous improvement through performance dashboard scrutiny and an embedded cost improvement programme.</i></p>
10	<p><u>Environmental Awareness</u> Increase environmental awareness across the organisation (customers and colleagues)</p>	<p>We will promote environmental awareness to our colleagues at least monthly through our H&S and Environmental Bulletins. To be implemented by end March 2021. We will embed environmental awareness into our Colleague Journey by including reference to the topic in job adverts and through our Colleague Induction Process. To be implemented by end March 2021.</p>	<p><i>'Well governed, resilient and financially sound'</i></p> <p><i>A clear understanding of the performance of Connexus with a focus on continuous improvement through performance dashboard scrutiny and an embedded cost improvement programme.</i></p>

		We will promote environmental awareness to our customers through our quarterly newsletter, website and social media. Communications campaign to be set out by end March 2021 for delivery in 2021/22.	
11	<u>Environmental Near Misses and Accidents</u> Increase reporting of Environmental Near Misses and Accidents through our AMS. This will enable us to identify service improvement actions that ensure we remain compliant with all regulation and legislation around waste.	Via our communications plan above we will raise awareness of the need to report environmental near misses and accidents. Communications campaign to be set out by end March 2021 for delivery in 2021/22.	<i>'Well governed, resilient and financially sound'</i> A clear understanding of the performance of Connexus with a focus on continuous improvement through performance dashboard scrutiny and an embedded cost improvement programme.
12	<u>Re-wilding and Trees</u> Explore opportunities to re-wild areas in our ownership and consider the planting of trees to offset carbon, where there is community support for this decision. Consider linking to the Connexus Community Days.	Work with our Customers, Grounds Maintenance, Housing Management and Asset Management colleagues to identify potential locations by end March 2022.	
13	<u>Performance Measures</u> Create a suite of Environmental KPIs	Create a suite of KPIs that allow us to monitor performance against this vision and identify VFM savings.	<i>'Well governed, resilient and financially sound'</i> A clear understanding of the performance of Connexus with a focus on continuous improvement through performance dashboard scrutiny and an embedded cost improvement programme.