



2023

Environmental, Social & Governance Report

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We are Cobalt Housing

Cobalt is a community-based housing association in Liverpool, that celebrated its 20th birthday in 2023. We own and manage just under six thousand homes in Fazakerley and Sparrow Hall, Croxteth, and Norris Green, and are an independent organisation with our customers, communities and colleagues at the heart of everything we do.

We understand the importance of community and place. We are ambitious and determined to ensure the success of our significant investment and commitment to our neighbourhoods. Through our role as a community catalyst, we are determined to improve outcomes in customer satisfaction, increased incomes, jobs, training, health and wider community support.

In 2023 we launched a brand new five-year corporate plan and renewed our purpose and vision to demonstrate our commitment to our customers, homes and communities.

View our [Corporate Plan](#) >

Our Purpose

We will provide quality homes and services, and maximise the positive impact of our investment for the communities we serve

Our Vision

Everyone deserves a community they can call home; a place to make their own, feel safe and secure and set down firm foundations. The right home will help people to live well, realise their potential and achieve the things that are important to them.



A woman with long brown hair and two children are sitting on a grey tarp outdoors, planting flowers in baskets. The woman is on the left, looking down at a basket. A girl in a dark blue hoodie is in the middle, also looking down. A boy in a red vest and grey hoodie is on the right, holding a small plant. They are surrounded by various plants and soil. A large yellow semi-circle is in the top right corner.

What are our priorities for the next five years?

We have developed four corporate priorities which will help us focus on delivering our ambitious plans

Provide excellent customer service

Support thriving communities

Invest in quality homes

Develop positive people

[View our Corporate Plan >](#)

Our ESG story

We have adopted the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for Social Housing as the basis for reporting on our ESG performance in a consistent, transparent and comparable way.

This standard comprises 12 ESG themes, which are:

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1 | Affordability and security | 7 | Ecology |
| 2 | Building safety and quality | 8 | Resource management |
| 3 | Resident voice | 9 | Structure and governance |
| 4 | Resident support | 10 | Board and Trustees |
| 5 | Placemaking | 11 | Staff wellbeing |
| 6 | Climate change | 12 | Supply chain management |

Within these themes there are 48 ESG criteria against which we provide quantitative and qualitative responses.

This second annual ESG report sets out the progress made in 2022-23 against the set criteria and highlights the work we still need to do. It also includes our targets for the future.

We hope you find this information interesting, enlightening and evidence of our commitment to people, place and the planet.



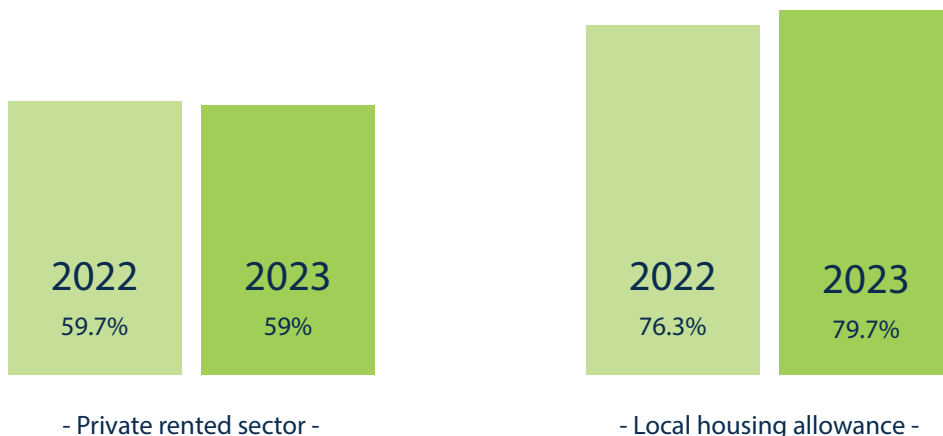


1. Affordability and security

Providing affordable housing to those who cannot afford to rent or buy in the open market is our core purpose. The security of tenure we offer is a key differentiator between Cobalt and the private sector. This security makes a huge difference to people's lives and their ability to find work, access informal and formal local support networks and services, and build family lives.

C1

How does our average regulated rent compare with the median private rented sector and local housing allowance?

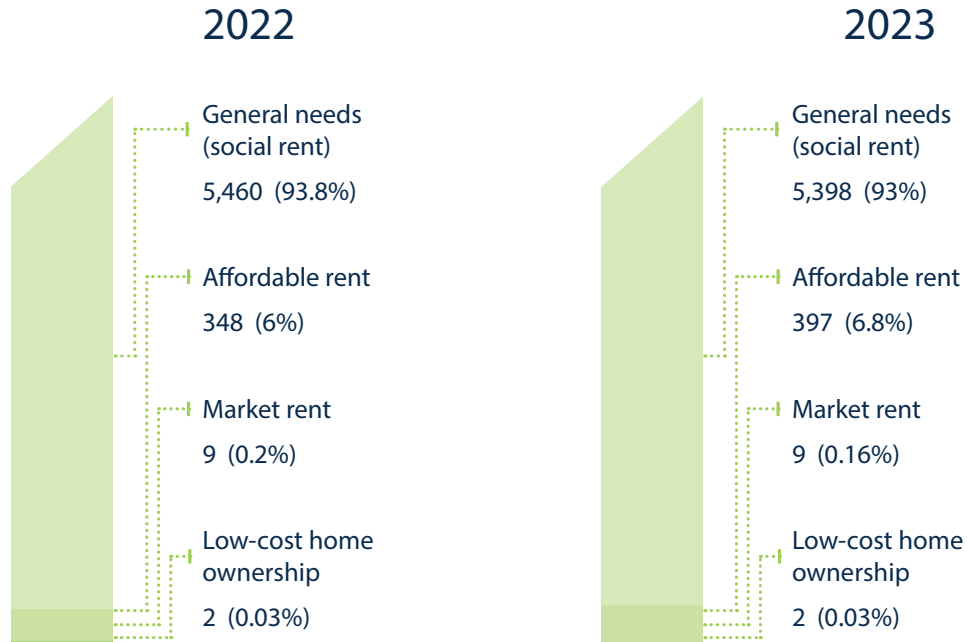


Target:

Our target is to set rents that balance securing our financial viability and ability to invest in our homes and services, with affordability for customers.

C2

What type of homes do we own and manage?



C3

What type of homes were completed in the year to March 2023?

Affordable rent | 50 units | 100%

Many of our customers are dealing with significant hardship as economic conditions impact on their ability to afford basic items such as energy bills and food. A secure affordable home has never been more important.

Our average regulated rents increased by 4.3% from £89.58 in March 2022 to £93.45 in March 2023. Our average rents fell as a proportion of open market rents across Liverpool and increased against the Local Housing Allowances which remained frozen.

Target:

Our new Corporate Plan recognises the importance of alternative forms of tenure and providing choice and options for a wider customer base including first time buyers and those struggling to secure a home on the private rental market. Low-cost home ownership will therefore be an integral part of our future development strategy.

C4

How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?

We have secured grant funding from the government’s Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to support a £2.7m investment into improving the energy efficiency of 287 properties to EPC band C. The works are expected to start on site in August 2023 and be completed by March 2025.

A further 200 homes will benefit from loft insulation top ups and low energy light bulbs in the next twelve months with the programme to be rolled out to further properties over the next 5 years.

We use energy modelling software to evaluate the energy efficiency of all our homes and model the impact of potential further investment works. This will help us to plan the most effective interventions on our journey to net carbon zero.

We have installed sensory technology as a pilot programme in 50 homes, to help us understand various issues including temperature, damp, drafts and moisture levels.

We work closely with Energy Project Plus who facilitate grants for those finding themselves in fuel poverty and debt. We also have our own hardship fund through which we allocate emergency payments for those in fuel debt who require help to catch up.

Target:

A further 287 sensors will be installed in properties undergoing SHDF energy efficiency improvements over the next two years. We are also developing the criteria for the further roll out of this technology, considering previous disrepair cases, instances of damp and mould and the energy performance of the property.

We expect to finalise a Sustainability Strategy for 2024 which will set out our plans to improve the energy performance of our stock and the journey to EPC band C and Net Zero Carbon.

C5

What % of rental homes have at least a 3-year fixed tenancy agreement?

2022 | 99.4% 2023 | 99.8%

The majority of our homes are let on lifetime tenancies providing our tenants with the highest level of security. We have no plans to introduce less secure forms of tenure.

2.

Building safety and quality

The safety of those living in our homes is of paramount importance to us and we make every effort to achieve 100% compliance at all times. Keeping our homes in good condition and fit for purpose over the long term is a key corporate priority.

C6

What % of our homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?

99.98%

A single home was overdue for its gas safety check as the tenant did not allow access. Appropriate enforcement action to gain access was undertaken and the safety check has subsequently been completed.

C7

What % of our buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment?

100%

C8

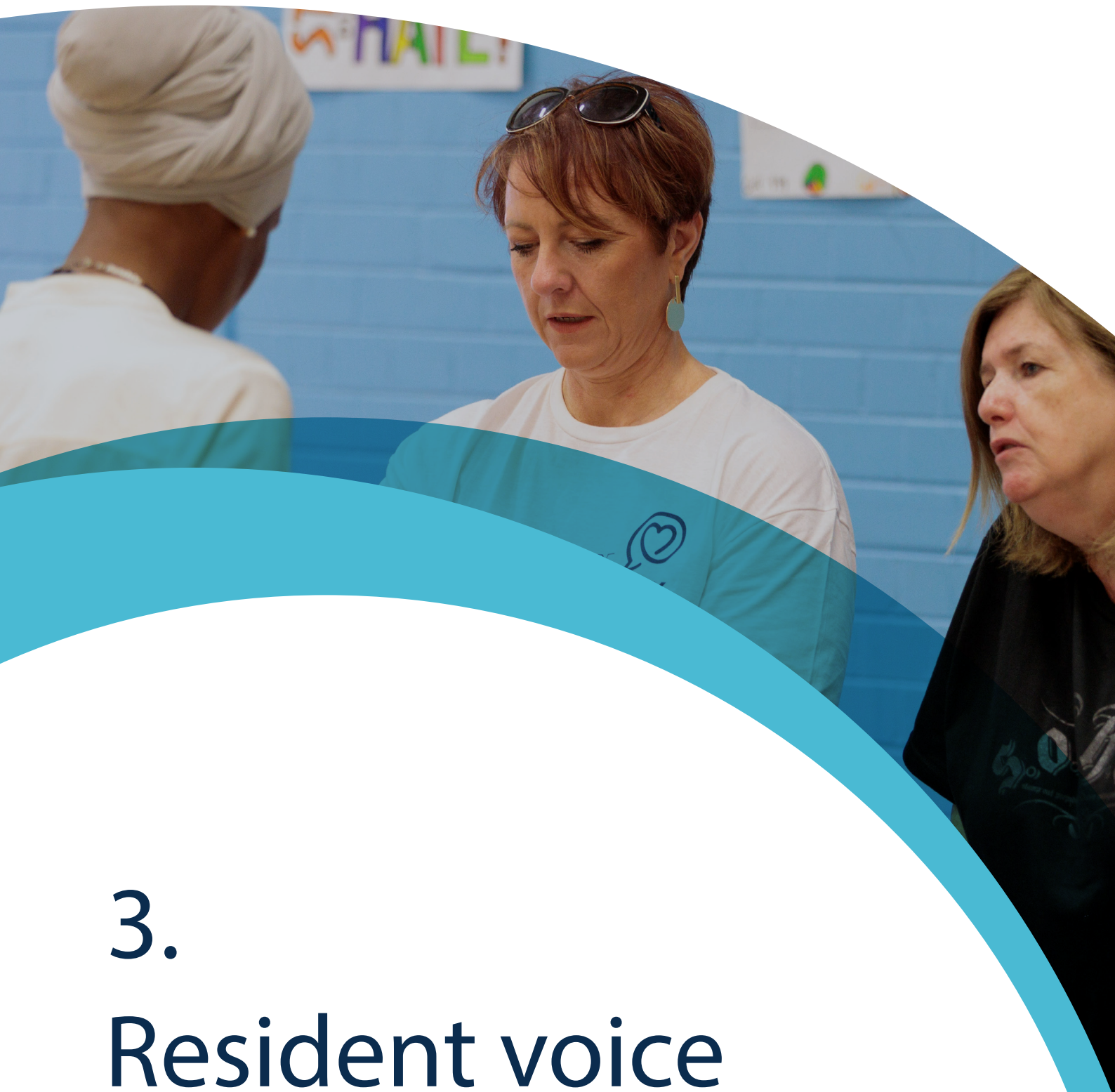
What % of our homes meet the national housing quality standard?

99.5%

Thirty-one homes were deemed to fail the decent homes standard as at 31st March 2023 due to HHSRS hazards being identified by our stock condition surveying programme. All the hazards identified have been actioned by either raising a repair, referring to the neighbourhood housing officer, or are being included on a planned programme.

Target
(for all):

Our target is to achieve 100% for all these criteria during the next year.



3.

Resident voice

Listening, learning and acting on the feedback from our tenants and residents is key to addressing the root causes of our service failures, delivering services that meet our customers' needs, and shaping service improvements.

C9

What arrangements are in place to enable our residents to hold us to account for provision of services?

We are committed to listening to our customers and wider customer, by providing meaningful opportunities to influence, shape, design, scrutinise and improve the services we provide.

Our Homes & Neighbourhoods Committee, which is a direct sub-committee of the Board, includes tenant committee members.

Our Consultative Panel of tenants has representation from each of our neighbourhoods and this panel reviews and provides input to new initiatives, proposed policies, and service changes.

Customers have been at the centre of developing our 'Good Help Hub', using insight to start to develop Cobalt's asset based '20 minute' neighbourhoods.

We have recognised the need to provide additional options for interacting with our customers therefore have launched our new Digital Engagement Platform. Within the first two weeks of the platform going live we had 222 customers registered on the site.

We actively engage with customers who tell us they are dissatisfied (e.g. focus groups, through complaints, surveys or conversations). This ensures we fully understand their issues or concerns, identify the root causes and address them effectively. During the year, customers were involved in:

- The recruitment panel for our new CEO
- Membership of our Community Fund Panel
- Influencing the design and development of the Good Help Hub working model.
- The design and development of our new bespoke Neighbourhood Plans
- Developing new proposed Customer Engagement performance metrics
- An in-depth review of our current customer engagement
- Designing a new Customer Engagement Framework

Target:

To further improve the opportunities for residents to shape our services we will:

1. Implement a new Customer Engagement Framework to remove barriers
2. Develop skills and empower customers to deliver effective tenant scrutiny
3. Establish customer voice channels throughout the organisation and up to Board.

C10

How do we measure Resident Satisfaction and how has it changed over the last three years?

In line with the Regulatory Consumer standards, we offer tenants a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved. We are promoting digital transactions, successfully increasing the number of tenants we engage with and resulting in a return rate of over 30% on our perception surveys.

Transactional satisfaction surveys are in place for key service areas with results reported each quarter, identifying areas for improvement. Since the publication of the Social Housing White Paper in 2020, we have gathered perception satisfaction data in line with the Regulator's new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to allow for cross sector comparable benchmarking.

Throughout 2019-2023, overall satisfaction with transactional services remained high at over 90%. Feedback indicated areas of focus that included increasing the survey sampling rates, completing repairs right first time and with communication with customers.

During this 3-year period, we awarded new repairs contracts and focused on digital and IT transformation to help streamline systems, improve record keeping and enhance the customer journey.

We continue to drill down into all survey results; recent perception satisfaction results indicated lower satisfaction surrounding listening to views, complaints and ASB handling. Satisfaction with our positive contribution to neighbourhoods and communal living increased.

During 2022-23 we have:

- Developed a new Engagement framework that offers a menu of choice for all customers to influence policy and service delivery.
- Developed new bespoke neighbourhood plans which identified key priorities that matter to our customers.
- Improved our complaints handling process.
- Launched our new Digital Engagement Platform to allow for two-way conversations with our customers.
- Developed targeted focus groups providing opportunities for engagement with marginalised customers.

Our target is to improve customer satisfaction rates:

1. Tenant perception satisfaction of 80% across all categories.
2. Transactional satisfaction of 90% across all services.

Target:

C11

In the last 12 months, how many complaints against us have been upheld by the Ombudsman?

In 2022-23 two complaints were upheld against us by the Ombudsman. Both cases found there was no maladministration or service failure on our part.

How have these complaints, or others, resulted in change of practice?

We carry out an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and are fully compliant.

Feedback from the Housing Ombudsman has been used to improve our practices for dealing with anti-social behaviour, processing Right to Buy applications and improving internal communication.

Other examples of changes made in the last twelve months, as a result of complaints include:

- Improving repairs performance by increasing contractor meetings
- Improved complaint handling by streamlining communication and adding triage support
- Developed a Complaint Tracker to ensure outstanding complaint actions are completed in agreed timeframes

To improve our complaint handling further we will:

1. Develop a "You Said, We're Doing" platform, to illustrate how customer complaints have resulted in changes to our business practices and service provision. We want to show that customer feedback is taken seriously and that we want to continue to improve customer satisfaction.
2. Develop a Customer Oversight Group.

Target:



4.

Resident support

As the majority landlord in the area, we are also a community catalyst, actively engaged in a wide range of economic, neighbourhood and community regeneration activities in the area we serve. We are committed to building strong partnerships with local organisations to maximise the impact of everything we do.



What support services do we offer to our residents and how successful are these services in improving outcomes?

As a community-based landlord, we provide a wide range of support for our communities and customers, far beyond traditional landlord activities. Highlights over the last year include:

Our Welfare Benefits Team

Our Welfare Benefit Team handled 1,577 cases, an increase of 53% on the previous year, and achieved just under £1.5 million in benefit gains for customers. We also referred 134 clients for debt advice to Stepchange or Norris Green Debt Advice. Notable results from these referrals included eight Debt Relief Orders writing off debt of £137,358 and two discretionary write offs of £9,682.

Raising Aspirations

We work with and fund 12 local primary schools to work in partnership with Positive Footprints in our Raising Aspirations Programme, creating opportunities for children and young people to discover their potential and develop the skills they need. Over the past 12 months 672 school children have engaged in the programme.

C12

CONTINUED

Good Help Hub

In 2021 Liverpool City Council was awarded £250,000 to deliver a programme for families and individuals with complex needs in the Croxteth area. The bid was developed in partnership with key stakeholders including Cobalt, LCC, Health, Police, and Liverpool University.

The programme aims to empower local leaders to better solve issues affecting their communities and trial new ways of working across local and central government to deliver innovative, locally led solutions to key challenges that communities face.

The Good Help Hub (GHH) was created as part of the bid to and we host themed days as follows:

- Employment and Skills
- Housing and Cost of Living
- Wellbeing Wednesday
- Keeping Safe
- Community and Environment and Bacon Butty Friday

The Hub was promoted widely, with a reach of approx 1,200 on social media during Jan-Mar, culminating in over 350 visitors.

Community Fund

During the year, 29 applications were made to our community fund and 19 projects across our communities received grants totalling £28,900. Projects funded included the creation of a Men's Mental Health Group, Forest Schools and digital skills.

Employment and Training Fund

Eleven tenants were supported back into employment and a new Community Interest Company "Rooting For You" was created to provide support for women suffering from Domestic Violence.

Cost of living

Working with key partners we delivered a range of interventions to support our tenants:

- Funding for local food pantries to enhance the basket of goods including mother and baby essentials and period poverty.
- Funding of the 'Fare Share' subscription across our food led stakeholders.
- A targeted school uniform and winter coat project.
- Assistance with emergency fuel vouchers and referrals to Energy Project Plus.
- Targeted winter food and warmth packs distributed to over 75 families.



5. Placemaking

Our ambitions for our neighbourhoods go far beyond our statutory responsibilities. We seek to bring about lasting positive change in our neighbourhoods, in partnership with the people who live there and other stakeholders.

C13

Where have we engaged in placemaking or placeshaping activities?

In 2018, the Stonedale Estate and adjoining sites were contributing to high levels of anti-social behaviour and fly tipping. It was a burden on the public purse and had a reputation of blight and gangs. A placemaking masterplan was agreed in 2018 that included the remodelling of this 'Radburn Designed' estate to regenerating the estate and build new affordable homes.

The project would require the demolition of existing Radburn homes and the vision was to create a renewed and more welcoming aspect onto the estate, removing blind corners and cut throughs and introduce traffic calming and shared external public space. All new homes on the estate and adjoining sites would be designed with sustainability and adaptability in mind, ensuring we can meet the future needs of our customers. The project would also provide a broad range of property types and sizes, with mixed tenures offering homeownership and first time lets, and encouraging an inclusive and diverse neighbourhood.

Since the initiation of this project and with the financial support of DLUHC, Homes England, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, we have completed 57 new affordable homes and we have recently started construction of 88 new affordable homes on an adjacent 4.5 acre disused carpark site.

Progress to date has taken substantial, concerted and collaborative time and effort by all departments within Cobalt as well as support from partners. The project has been influenced by the whole community and the investment made by Cobalt and our partners will benefit the estate as a whole, not just Cobalt tenants. The success of this project will be measured by the reduction of anti-social behaviour and fly tipping, improved level of satisfaction, more sustainable tenancies and greater demand for the area.

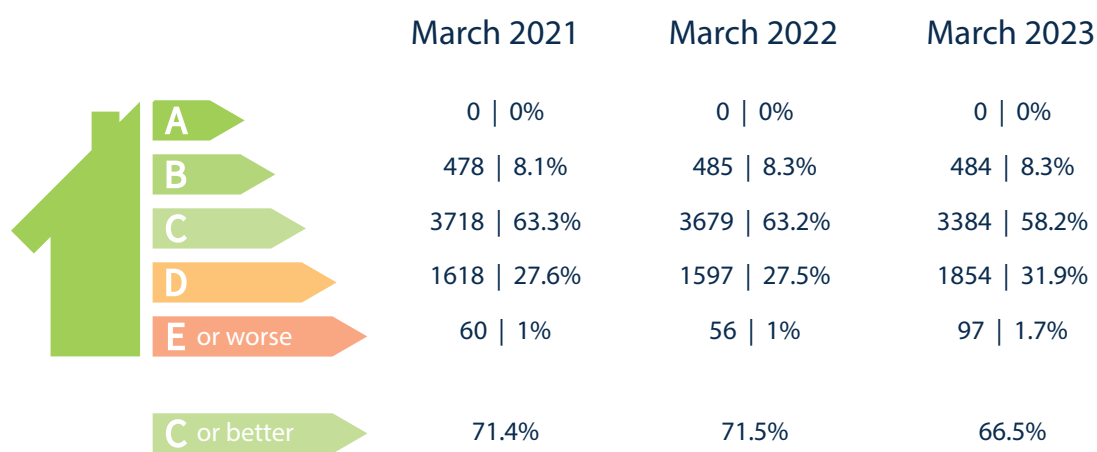


6. Climate change

We are committed to playing our part in achieving the national target for net carbon zero by 2050. We recognise that we are at the start of this journey, but improving the energy efficiency of our homes will reduce climate impact and fuel poverty at a time when many are struggling with the cost of energy.

C14

What is the distribution of EPC ratings of our existing homes?

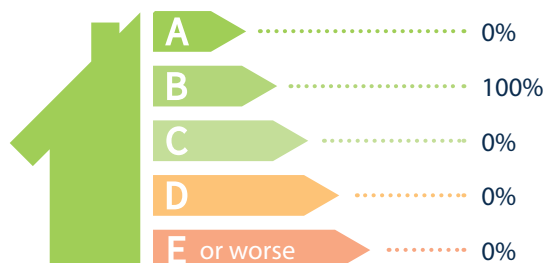


The energy efficiency ratings of our homes are continually updated to reflect the latest property energy performance information available. In the year to March 2023, this has unfortunately resulted in a higher number of homes now being assessed as below band C.

Target: We aim to achieve net carbon zero by 2050 with all homes reaching EPC band C by 2030. We will further invest in housing analytical software to model various energy efficiency improvement scenarios and measures required to improve the performance of our stock.

C15

What is distribution of EPC ratings of new homes completed in the year to March 2023?



All future new homes will meet the requirements of the Building Regulation and Building Act. We will ensure that all new homes reach a high SAP and EPC rating, which will continually help to improve the rating across all our stock

C16

What are our Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions?

We do not currently collect data on our greenhouse gas emissions. This will be considered as part of a wider Sustainability Strategy being developed for 2024.

We have commissioned an independent sustainability assessment to report the current carbon emissions relevant to Cobalt. This will give us an understanding of where we need to improve or better record and report our emissions and give a baseline from which to produce an actionable pathway to reducing our impact on the environment.

C17

What energy efficiency actions have we undertaken in the last 12 months?

We have worked with an external consultant to improve our knowledge of the energy efficiency of our homes. We have also developed the first packages of works to improve the energy performance of our stock and to provide more comfortable, healthier, and sustainable homes for the future.

Target:

Following a successful bid for Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding, we will be delivering fabric first energy improvement works to 287 properties rated below EPC band C by March 2025. We will also be upgrading the loft insulation and installing low energy light bulbs in 200 homes. We will look to expand on the current delivery of energy improvement works by bidding for future waves of the SHDF fund and seeking other funding opportunities to support our commitment to improving all our home to EPC C or above by 2030.

C18

How are we mitigating to the following climate risks:

Flood risk: Flood risk assessments are carried out for all new developments as part of the new build requirement and in areas of flood risk, we incorporate appropriate civil engineering hydrological works in order to increase flood plain capacity. The overall flood risk to Cobalt's existing housing stock is low.

Homes overheating: We have installed environmental sensors in 50 homes as part of a pilot scheme. The sensors detect a range of environmental factors including temperature and humidity, sending alerts for properties at a high, medium or low risk of overheating. As part of the pilot we are developing our use of the information made available and also our response to any alerts. Customers taking part have been provided with an app so they can monitor the conditions of their home. We will manage the risk of overheating during the design stage on new homes, by introducing passive design measures such as; solar glazing, high thermal mass, shading as well as carefully designed mechanical and ventilation strategies.

We review each new development on a case-by-case basis and carry out calculations on typically high-risk dwellings such as those occupied by vulnerable persons or single aspect apartments. This provides a detailed understanding of internal temperatures throughout the day and night, to allow us to introduce measures to mitigate the risk.

Target:

By March 2025, we will have installed environmental sensors to a select number of homes that have had energy improvement works carried out as part of the SHDF. This will allow the impact of the works on fuel poverty, thermal comfort and air quality within the home to be measured.

C19

How do we give residents information about correct ventilation, heating and recycling?

To support the delivery of the environmental strategy and in collaboration with other providers across the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) are establishing a Climate Jury, the aim of which is to increase tenants' knowledge base and for tenants to share information and messages to all tenants and residents.

We have installed Environmental sensors into 50 homes which detect levels of humidity and sends alerts for properties at a high, medium or low risk. As the pilot progresses, we aim to develop and embed monitoring and how we respond to the alerts. Customers with a sensor can access the information about their home through a smartphone app.

In response to damp and mould, we have communicated with residents through social media channels, by email and by letter advising of the importance of properly ventilating their homes. During the winter months we also have a campaign to advise tenants on the best way to heat their homes.

Target:

Our approach will be further developed as part of a new Sustainability Strategy which is being developed for 2024.

7&8

Ecology and resource management

This strategy will consider:

As part of our neighbourhood activities, we work with our existing communities on projects which create a positive environmental impact, while building good relationships and promoting sustainability. This has included various growing projects, such as Karonga Gardens and Fazakerley Library, where Cobalt tenants have come together to grow plants and create habitats for insects and animals that co-exist alongside our communities. These are vital elements of our local ecosystems.

In addition, we will be incorporating open green spaces, linear parks and areas of rewilding across new housing developments.

As we continue to implement our new build development programme, our approach to managing and monitoring the wider ecological impact of our activities will be a key focus. The principles associated with ecology and resource management will be incorporated within our corporate sustainability strategy which will be produced in 2024.

C20

Increasing green space and promote biodiversity on or near our homes

C23

Waste management incorporating building materials

C21

Actively manage and reduce all pollutants

C24

Good water management

C22

Increasing the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building work



9

Structure and governance

Cobalt is a “Community Benefit Society” and a not-for-profit housing provider, regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. Strong and effective governance is key to our long-term success.

C25

Are we registered with the national regulator of social housing?

Yes

C26

What is our most recent regulatory grading/status?

G1/V1

C27

Which Code of Governance do we follow?

National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020

C28

Are we Not-For-Profit?

Yes

C29

How does our board manages organisational risks?

We have a Board approved Risk Management Framework in place which includes:

- A Risk Management Strategy, Policy, approach and appetite
- Risk Architecture (risk roles, responsibilities, communication and reporting structure)
- Risk Protocols (guidelines, procedures and tools to utilise)
- A Risk Management process (identifying, managing and monitoring of risks)

The Board retains overall responsibility for the Risk Management Framework and reviews this at least annually. Ongoing monitoring of risk is delegated to the Audit and Risk Committee with copies of strategic and operational risk registers reported to every meeting. Changes to strategic risks are reserved to Board.

We maintain a comprehensive risk register that sets out for each identified strategic and operational risk:

1. The description of the risk
2. The risk score (likelihood x impact/severity) both before and after controls in place
3. The controls in place to reduce the likelihood and/or impact
4. The target risk and any further mitigatory actions or improvements planned

The risk register is kept live through active horizon scanning with all risks updated at least every two months.

C30

Have we been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?

No



10. Board and Trustees

Our ambitions for our neighbourhoods go far beyond our statutory responsibilities. We seek to bring about lasting positive change in our neighbourhoods, in partnership with the people who live there and other stakeholders.

C31

What are the demographics of our Board and how does this compare to the demographics of our residents?

Our Board representation	2022	2023	Our neighbourhoods
% of Board that are women	40%	50%	52%
% of Board that are BAME	0%	8%	5%
% of Board that have a disability	0%	23%	24%
% of Board that are LGBTQ+	0%	0%	No data
Average age of Board members	55.2 years	56.7 years	21% (aged 0-15 years) 63% (aged 16-64 years) 16% (aged 65+ years)
Average Board tenure	3.8 years	4.7 years	

The board representation at March 2023 more closely reflects the make-up of our neighbourhoods. The March 2023 data reflects changes in board membership over the previous twelve months and more comprehensive responses from board members.

Data source:

1. Liverpool City Council Corporate Intelligence Team, 2021 data in relation to Croxteth, Norris Green and Fazakerley
2. UK Office for National Statistics 2020 data in relation to Croxteth, Norris Green and Fazakerley
3. Census 2011 England and Wales

C32

What % of our Board and management team have turned over in the last two years?

% of board | 28.6%

The standard term of office for board members is six years, although this can be extended to up to nine years. We would expect board turnover of between c.20 to 33% in any two year period.

% of management team | 16.6%

Our previous CEO retired in 2022 after twelve years with Cobalt.

C33

What is the maximum tenure for our Board members?

9 years

The normal maximum tenure is six consecutive years (typically comprising two three-year terms of office). Where a member has served six years, and the board agrees that it is in the organisation's best interests, their tenure may be extended up to a maximum of nine years.

C34

What % of our Board are non-executive directors?

100%

The board has skills and experience in a range of areas including housing, local authority, financial management, construction, property management, healthcare and regulation.

C35

Number of Board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience

2

These board members have extensive experience as employees in senior finance roles in a range of other organisations.

C36

Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?

No

C37

Has a succession plan been provided to the Board in the last 12 months?

Yes

C38

For how many years has our current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?

5 years

C39

When was the last independently-run, Board-effectiveness review?

November 2022

C40

Are the roles of the chair of the Board and CEO held by two different people?

Yes

C41

How do we handle conflicts of interest at the Board?

We have a Conflicts of Interest Policy and maintain a register of board members' interests which is refreshed at least annually or at any time that a board member declares a change in their circumstances to the Company Secretary.

Declarations of Interest is a standing item on the agenda of all board and committee meetings and the Chair, with advice from the Company Secretary, will determine whether a declared interest may represent a real or perceived conflict for the board member and if the board member declaring the interest should therefore exclude themselves from all voting and/or discussions on that matter. Any such declarations are recorded in the minutes of the meeting along with the Chair's decision and rationale.

All staff sign up to a Code of Conduct and in line with this they must declare any relevant interests for consideration by the Company Secretary.

11.

Staff wellbeing

Our staff are our most important asset, without whom we cannot achieve anything. As a caring employer, we invest in a wide range of wellbeing initiatives to help our employees.

C42 Do we pay the Real Living Wage?

Yes

All our employees (excluding apprentices) are paid hourly rates above the Living Wage rate.

C43 What is our median gender pay gap?

2022 | 0% 2023 | 0%

C44 What is the CEO to median-worker pay ratio?

2022 | 5 times 2023 | 4.7 times

C45

How do we support the physical and mental health of our staff?

Forty-four staff are trained mental health first aiders (MHFAs), equipped to deal with potential mental health implications and understand how to support their staff. All MHFAs attended a refresher training day in either 2021 or 2022 to keep their skills current.

We communicate regularly to all staff about wellbeing and mental health, supported by activities that encourage physical, mental and social wellbeing. We run regular webinars for staff to increase resilience coverage topics as diverse as self-awareness, mindfulness, stress management, work life balance and energy management.

To deepen our understanding of how people are coping, we gain insights from multiple sources, ranging from survey data to candid discussions in 1:1s about what is worrying people. This knowledge then informs targeted wellbeing interventions and actions, including changing how we approach our jobs, flexible working, leveraging technology, keeping risk assessments up to date and providing sufficient time to recharge.

We support the physical and mental health of our staff by:

- Running regular “tea and teach” sessions on a wide variety of wellbeing sessions.
- Team meetings, catch ups, social events and bi-monthly all staff update meetings.
- Occupational health referrals to support people quickly.
- NHS has visited our offices to complete a number of liver scans for our colleagues.
- An Employee Assistance Programme.
- Flexible working.
- Phased returns for people returning to work with alternative duties.
- Gym membership.

C46

What is the average number of sick days (both long and short term) taken per employee?

2022 | 10.4 days 2023 | 6.5 days

We are really pleased to report a reduction in sickness absences. Our target is to keep sickness absences below 7 days per employee.



12.

Supply chain management

By working with potential supplier partners, we use our purchasing power to generate extra social value for the benefit of our communities. Our consideration of the environmental impact of our supply chain activity is in its infancy and is something we are keen to develop.

C47

How is social value creation considered when we procure goods and services?

We are committed to acting in a socially responsible way and seek to influence our service providers to do the same. In accordance with the Social Value Act 2012, we consider how the services we commission and procure might improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area. This ensures that we are directing our purchasing power towards transforming people's lives and improving our local community wherever possible.

Where social value (SV) can be effectively and economically leveraged, SV credits will be calculated based in the contract value with a requirement that the service provider delivers these during the contract period.

C47

CONTINUED

The successful tenderer will meet our partnerships team prior to the contract award to agree on a scheduled management plan to deliver the proposed social value outcomes. Contractors who then fail to deliver proposed social value outcomes will face a financial penalty.

C48

How is environmental impact considered when we procure goods and services?

We do not currently have a strategy for addressing the environmental impact when procuring goods and services. This will be considered as part of a wider Sustainability Strategy being developed for 2024.



Cobalt
■■■ Housing