



Environmental Sustainability Strategy & Plans

2025 - 2030

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1. Our vision for a sustainable future

The climate emergency is here and affects us all. Extreme weather events are increasingly common. Sea levels are rising. Plants, animals and microorganisms are disappearing forever at an alarming rate.

The UK Government has set a target to achieve net zero greenhouse emissions by 2050 (and a 78 percent reduction by 2035).

As part of Squared's ongoing ambitions to reduce carbon, and to actively participate in Luton Borough Councils 2040 vision to be a net zero town by 2040, Squared are committed to a range of activities which will contribute towards the overarching vision of a healthy, fair and sustainable town where everyone can thrive and not live in poverty.

Squared's Environmental Sustainability Strategy has been produced in response to the climate emergency and will align with our Business Plan. Squared recognises that it has a responsibility to the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements.

We're committed to reducing our environmental impact and continually improving our environmental performance as an integral part of our operating methods. We will encourage all team members, customers and suppliers to do the same.

We recognise the importance of environmental sustainability to:

- meet national and local policy and target requirements
- provide affordable homes that reduce fuel bills increasing efficiency and reducing fuel poverty for our customers
- be an association of choice for customers, local authorities and investors

2. What do we want to achieve

Squared is aware it has an obligation to review its operational impact on the environment and the activity of its customers across its housing portfolio.

Squared's aim is to be as environmentally sustainable, as practically possible. Keeping under review the environmental and carbon reduction performance of the organisation on its journey to net zero by 2050. We will achieve this by futureproofing working procedures and practices and ensuring that our team members are fully committed to the aims and objectives of our strategy.

Our aim is to achieve:

- Net zero carbon in our day-to-day business operations by 2050
- Minimum EPC C for all our rented homes by 2030
- Greener, healthy and sustainable personal and communal spaces where customers can thrive alongside nature by 2030
- A sustainability plan that provides value-for-money for both the business and our customers by 2030

3. Our journey to 2030 and beyond

Squared has a diverse portfolio of owned homes, 736 general needs, older persons and supported housing assets in Luton. Fifty percent of our general needs properties are older, terraced homes across Luton, with 45% of those built before 1930. This age profile has resulted in ??? of our properties having an energy performance rating of less than EPC C.

We will be looking at how we can improve our older homes to make them fit for the future, as well as improving the performance of any properties falling below EPC C rating. Our target is for 100% of our homes to be EPC C or above by 2030.

This will be achieved through investment and upgrades to ensure our customers' homes are as comfortable and energy efficient as possible, resulting in lower energy bills, while also reducing the risk of damp, mould and condensation, through better insulation and ventilation.

We will also align our energy performance work with our planned investment programme to deliver improvements more efficiently. Minimising disruption to customers and ensuring every penny is spent effectively. By combining sustainability improvements with our other day-to-day improvements and repairs, will make gains in both the energy efficiency and quality of our customers' homes by adopting a whole home approach.

4. Creating a sustainable business

We've made some progress in reducing the environmental impact of our offices to reduce energy demand. To support our objectives to reach our target of net zero carbon across our offices and business practices by 2050, we recognise that we need to plan a staged approach.

In order to achieve this, we will need team member support and changes in behaviour and working practices. We will endeavour to create a culture that encourages team members to show initiative in making environmental improvements with team members encouraged to share their ideas regularly at team meetings where efficiency and environmental savings will be a standard item on the agenda of all staff meetings.

We must give consideration to external specialist support to address any gaps in capacity and expertise.

Good quality data on our offices and business practices is essential in monitoring our waste, water and energy use. This will help us reduce consumption and emissions by 2050.

Managing Properties

We will aim to:

- Explore sustainable procurement to minimise our environmental impact and meet our business needs while achieving value for money.
- Look into procuring our energy from sustainable sources, as far as possible.
- Continue to assess the sustainability of our offices to ensure we're using our buildings as efficiently as possible
- Consider converting our vehicle fleet to electric or alternative sustainable fuels by 2030
- Provide training on sustainability and carbon literacy to all team members by 2026
- Engage team members and customers in sustainable practices
- Reduce the use of water and energy and the amount of waste across the organisation
- Collect data to benchmark the environmental performance of the organisations to enable us to develop and set measurable KPIs

Office Supplies and Consumables

We will continue to:

- Adopt a digital first approach to communication minimising the use of printed communication for example the use eg use of DocuSign
- Promote a clear desk policy in our offices
- Print in black and white and double sided where possible
- Recycle toner cartridges and batteries
- Always seek to buy recycled and recyclable products while maintaining quality and cost levels
- Re-use and recycle all paper
- Minimise the use of paper towels where possible in kitchens by using tea cloths instead
- Use ceramic crockery rather than disposable items
- Bulk order to minimise transportation cost where possible

Energy & Water

In order to reduce the amount of energy used, as much as possible, we will continue to request and encourage team members to:

- Switch off lights and electrical equipment when not in use
- Adjust heating with energy consumption in mind ensuring that outside doors are closed when not in use
- Ensure that all taps are turned completely off after use and any dripping taps are reported and repaired as soon as possible
- Take into account the energy consumption and efficiency of new products when making new purchases

Cleaning materials and waste

- We will continue to use cleaning materials that are as environmentally friendly as possible sourced in bulk to maximise efficiency.
- Use licensed and appropriate organisations to dispose of waste and maximise recycling.

Transportation

We will, continue to:

- Encourage sustainable travel - walking, cycling, and public transport to and between workplaces.

- Reduce the need to travel by promoting the use of other means of communication such as MS Teams calls and agile working practices in line with business needs.
- Make additional efforts to accommodate the needs of those using bicycles
- Share transport where travel is necessary, eg travel together to events, and walk when going to nearby locations.

5. Biodiversity

Squared are mindful that green spaces have a positive impact on customers' health and wellbeing.

While Squared have limited green spaces we are aware that customers may have a desire for more wildlife, plants, gardening and spaces to grow food.

Through our grounds maintenance programmes, we will aim to deliver improvements through consultation and involvement of our customers at minimal cost.

6. Technology

New technologies are forever evolving and developing. We'll seek to understand and implement technological best practice wherever possible in the management of our homes and office spaces.

We will explore what technology we need to use to manage compliance and reach our targets of minimum EPC C for all our homes by 2030.

We will investigate technology that will reduce the risk of damp, mould and condensation in our customers' homes.

Embrace technology developments to improve efficiencies using cleaner energy.

7. Working with our customers

We recognise that the journey to achieving net zero and mitigating the impact of climate change is a shared journey. It's about the choices and decisions we make collectively as well as the behaviours and attitudes of the organisation and people we work with and involves a cultural shift.

It's essential that everyone has their say and is involved in work to improve the sustainability of our customers' homes and neighbourhoods. We need the support and involvement of our customers to enable us to reach net zero so we will need to find better ways to engage and listen to what customers tell us.

Our aims is to:

- Support people with their energy use by improving their homes to make them more sustainable for the future
- Raise the environmental awareness of our customers to help them become more efficient in managing their energy use
- Communicate our plans and their benefits
- Work in partnership to build trust in using new technologies and services
- Co-design, where possible, solutions across key environmental areas such as waste, water use, gardening and food growing

8. Risk, reporting, measurement and governance

The Board should retain full responsibility and oversight of this strategy and plans ensuring that the identified improvements, initiatives, progress, and momentum is clear within the organisation.

An overarching working group will need to be set up within Squared and sponsored by a member of the Board and consulting with the Customer Engagement Group. The purpose of the group will be to keep under review the workstreams and progress of initiatives, providing feedback to team members and wider organisational audience, including the Board.

We will aim to:

- Report quarterly on our initiatives and progress to the Board
- Carry out a carbon footprint assessment every year alongside risk mapping to identify the most effective ways of reducing our emissions

9. Value for money

- We'll assess the most efficient way to finance the investment in energy efficiency improvements.
- We will make use of any available Government and external funding.
- We'll align our environmental sustainability initiatives with our planned maintenance programme.
- We'll ensure our sustainability investments not only reduce our environmental impact but add to our service offer.
- We'll base decisions on the 'whole life' costs, future sustainability and safety of our homes, in order to drive long term efficiency, good practice and improved customer satisfaction.
- We'll aim to get things right first time and maximise efficiency in delivery and operation.
- We'll integrate sustainability into our business to proactively begin a culture change.

10. Environmental sustainability definitions

- **What does environmental sustainability mean?**
Positive actions to reduce harm to the environment, conserve resources, and promote the wellbeing of both people and the planet.
- **What is net zero?**
The balance between the greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere and the carbon removed from it. The UK government is aiming to be net zero by 2050.
- **What is carbon neutral?**
Releasing the same amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere as we remove from the atmosphere.
- **What is a carbon footprint?**
The amount of greenhouse gas, including carbon dioxide, produced.
- **What is a greenhouse gas?**
Gas that traps heat and raises the surface temperature of the planet. The most common greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide and methane.
- **What is meant by energy efficiency?**
Doing things in a way that uses less energy. For example, using less energy to heat and run appliances.
- **How will we improve the energy efficiency of our homes?**
By adding insulation into walls and roofs and changing some windows and doors to prevent heat being lost.
- **How do we measure the energy efficiency of our homes?**

- EPC - The Energy Performance Certificate will show a grade between A (very efficient) and G (inefficient). A high rating means lower energy bills, a warmer and more comfortable home and a lower carbon footprint.
- SAP - The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is how the Government assesses and compares the energy and environmental performance of buildings, including homes. The higher the SAP rating, the lower your fuel costs and associated emissions of CO₂. The rating will usually be between 1 and 100, with 100 meaning zero energy cost. Above this means you have energy to spare. This rating feeds into the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).
- **What is a greener home?**
A home that's designed to be environmentally sustainable by using energy, water and building materials efficiently.
- **What is biodiversity and why does it matter?**
It's the name given to the variety of life in the communities we live in and across our planet. This includes the quality of our natural environment and range of trees, plants and animals that flourish together.

We rely on a wide range of life to survive and have a healthy place to live. Not only do we need fresh water, clean air and healthy food, but biodiversity in our communities also helps capture carbon and reduces the risk of flooding, overheating and air and noise pollution. Without it, our future, our children's future and the future of the planet will look very different.

11. Actions Plans

Squared will work collaboratively with customers, team members, and partner organisations across the town over the next two decades to increase climate resilience and introduce emission reduction initiatives and projects. Our Environmental Sustainability Plans will be built across three individual categories initially; however these are not exhaustive and will be under continuous review. Initially the categories will include the following:

1. Residential Buildings
2. Non-Residential Buildings
3. Transport, Active Travel and Working Practices

Each category will have a clear action plan which will provide a headline action, an action description, and either anticipated timeline, or review date. The actions will be clearly assigned to delivery owners and in some cases a combination of delivery owners and delivery partners.

The action plans for each category can be found in the tables below

Table 1

Action Plan Residential Buildings

Headline Action	Action Description	Delivery Owner	Delivery Partner	Timeframe
Disposal Programme progress	Identify homes that need substantial investment to raise the energy efficiency rating and consider disposal	Property Services Housing Services	Stock condition surveyors / EPC ratings	Business as usual
Retrofit Homes- External Wall Insulation	Identify low energy efficient homes suitable for retrofit	Property Services	Energy Consultant Building Services Consultant	2030
Energy efficient boiler programme including communal stock	Programme of efficient condensing boilers	Property Services	Heating contractors	Business as usual
Window and door installation programme	Programme of A - rated window and door replacements	Property Services	Window and Door Contractors	Business as usual
Exploration of new technologies heating systems renewables	Identify properties that may benefit from ground source/air source systems	Property Services	Heating Consultant Heating Contractor	Business as usual
Common Area LED light programme	Improvement programme of common area lighting	Property Services	N/A	Business as usual

Table 2**Action Plan Non-Residential Buildings**

Headline Action	Action Description	Delivery Owner	Delivery Partner	Timeframe
Exploration of new technologies heating systems renewables	Identify offices that may benefit from new technologies for heating and hot water	Property Services	Heating Consultant Heating Contractor	2030
Reduction in energy usage non-residential spaces	Staff awareness of energy consumption when at work	People Excellence	All team members	2025
Infrastructure for Electric Vehicle Charging Points	Identify if Bramingham Office requires the infrastructure of EV charging points	Property Services	Renewables Consultant	2030
Pilot Solar PV installation programme	Carry out solar feasibility studies across non-residential stock	Property Services	Renewables Consultant	2030

Table 3**Transport Active Travel and Working Practices**

Headline Action	Action Description	Delivery Owner	Delivery Partner	Timeframe
Electric vehicles	Undertake fleet review develop a pathway for future replacements to include EV's or other alternative fuel	Property Services	N/A	2030
Working from Home/Agile working	Continue to encourage agile working practice in accordance with business need	People Excellence	N/A	Business as usual
Active Travel	Encourage car free days, car share, and alternative forms of travel such as bicycles.	People Excellence	N/A	Business as usual
Carbon reduction targets embedded into procurement activity.	Consider embedding carbon reduction targets into all new contracts	All departments	N/A	2030
Paperless systems/Portals	Continue to promote paperless portals and hubs – this should include all activity, and should be subject to customer consultation if it effects how customers interact with Squared	Digital Services	All departments	2025