

July 2023



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Introduction

Throughout the year we assess our performance and the difference we are making not only for our tenants but across our communities too.

Our Storyboards have 4 key themes:

- Sustainable Homes
- Sustainable Communities
- Sustainable Planet and
- Our Business

All are aligned closely to our Corporate Plan.

For each theme, local outcomes have been developed with key stakeholders including our staff and tenants.

We work with an independent group of tenants and associate members known as the Academy to review the outcomes of our work and provide feedback through several Storyboards.

The local outcomes for all four themes, as decided by the group are:

- We deliver value for money to make the best use of our resources
- We are accountable to our customers
- Customers have opportunities to make a choice

We act on our customers' feedback and are committed to continuously improving our services:

- We understand our customers and deliver services that meet their needs
- Our tenants and members are able to influence decision making and shape our services

The Academy felt these local outcomes should be a 'golden thread' throughout all Storyboards and should be visually prominent within each.

This Storyboard captures work we are doing in our communities and has five local outcomes:

- 1.** Customers are proud of their neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 2.** Our communities are safe places to live.
- 3.** We create and sustain local employment and create training opportunities.
- 4.** We have a positive impact on our communities through active engagement.
- 5.** We work with our partners to deliver services that matter to our customers.



Customers are proud of their neighbourhood as a place to live

Summary

We have continued with our major works programme, embarked on an initiative to make our empty homes more energy efficient and have 110 new homes being built across the borough.

All of this helps make our communities more attractive, which in turn makes tenants proud of where they live.

Academy Feedback

The Academy were pleased with the continued investment being made on existing and new homes, making a huge difference to the look of their communities.

They were also pleased to hear about the sense of community at Haven schemes across the borough.

Major Works - External Wall Insulation (EWI) and Green Voids

This year our fabric programme has continued to improve our homes, making them more energy efficient with EWI, which also improves the look of our homes.

Thanks to an optimised retrofit scheme, called ORP 2.2 and part funded by Welsh Government, we have retrofitted 45 empty homes to make them more energy efficient for new tenants.

Our team looked at homes on an individual basis before energy efficiency measures such as external and internal wall insulation, new windows, solar panels, new heating, battery storage, increased ventilation or insulated floors were introduced with the aim to get these homes to an EPC A rating. An average household has an EPC C rating which produces an average of 6 tonnes of CO₂ per year. In comparison, an EPC A home will produce 0.82, so the end result is more energy efficient homes for new tenants while we get much closer to our carbon neutral goal.

Completed since April 2022



EWI - 150

Green voids - 45

Recognition at a national level

In recognition of our approach to retrofit works we were successful in winning the Regional Energy Efficiency Award in May 2022.

As a result, we were put forward to the National Energy Efficiency Awards where we came 3rd place in the 'Best Landlord of the Year' category.



Award-winning team



Installing external wall insulation

Phase 1 County Flats development

The first phase of our County Flats development in Sandfields is now complete.

Existing homes have been upgraded with a series of environmentally friendly features including thermal upgrades, solar panels, insulation and double-glazed windows.

The newly built properties have also benefitted from air source heat pumps, a system that absorbs heat from the outside air and uses it to heat the homes and hot water. Phase 2 is now underway.

Tenant feedback:

“

“I love going for walks along the beach, so I couldn't have asked for a better location. I have been taking photographs as the construction work progressed, so it's been exciting seeing how the blocks have developed over the last 18 months. The change is remarkable.”

”

Resident feedback:

“

“Extremely impressed with the site set up for the redevelopment and the excellent team involved. Everyone has been continually considerate and the attention to information provision by door knocking and letters was very impressive. Also, the way all involved ensured there was access to homes even when using large equipment.”

”

Investing in our properties

Tai Tarian spent approximately **£22m** in 2022-23 on major works and new developments.

Of this, **£11m (51%)** was invested directly with NPT based contractors.

A further **£9.4m (43%)** was invested directly into South Wales based contractors.



County Flats, Sandfields

Biodiversity in our borough

Over the last 18 months our Neighbourhood Team have been working hard to improve biodiversity in the borough. Our grass has been cut less, encouraging native flowers to spring up.

Allowing these flowers to flourish not only brings lots of vibrant colour to an area, it plays a far more important role in attracting bees and other pollinators, searching for food, nutrients and nectar.

Letting our verges and grasslands grow has allowed us to create meadow areas which has really given nature a boost.

We are building on partnership work undertaken with Neath Port Talbot Council to help develop a joint approach to encouraging biodiversity. Our goal is to continue this so both organisations have a consistent approach.

Grant funding secured

We have secured grant funding for cut and collect equipment, which will allow us to create diverse meadow areas on our land in a much more effective manner.

Biodiversity training

Our Neighbourhood Team have been working with the ecology team at the local authority to develop biodiversity training for our staff.

There are two levels of training, beginner level for front line staff who wish to enhance their knowledge to help them answer queries, and more advanced training for staff improving or factoring in biodiversity in their day-to-day work.



Managing our land



A sense of community at Haven

Our 15 Haven housing schemes across Neath and Port Talbot are home to over 400 tenants and each has a real sense of community.



Offering a mix of 1 or 2-bedroom flats or bungalows, Haven is designed for tenants aged over 55 who wish to live independently in a safe environment.

Our Independent Living Officers (ILOs) oversee day to day management and maintenance of the accommodation but more importantly they build relationships with tenants. They encourage them to socialise, take part in activities and because of established relationships they can spot signs that a person may need additional support.

There is a real sense of community at Haven, tenants are proud of where they live and often encourage friends and family members to come to Haven.

Some tenants have no family or friends so living in this community takes away the isolation and gives security that there is always someone nearby.

Being in Haven promotes independence but residents are always looking out for their neighbours, letting us know if they are worried about how a fellow tenant is managing.



Haven Homes



Meet Glen

Glen was struggling with the upkeep of managing a large home in later life.

She discovered Haven and made the decision to move, or in her words 'close the door and never look back.'

It took some months for Glen to adjust to living in Haven, however during COVID, the community spirit at her scheme really kept her going. She created a bubble with her neighbours, and they would phone each other daily to keep spirits up. Fast forward 4 years, Glen is now thriving in her scheme.

She is a regular face at coffee mornings and Haven activities, one of the main contributors to discussions and is always encouraging her neighbours to participate in activities to keep away the loneliness and keep active!

For Glen's family, they are reassured that their mum is living in the safety of a community and feeling less isolated.

Having the lifeline system, and having a staff member on site also gives piece of mind that help is always close by should Glen need it.

Glen said:

“

“At Haven you have your independence and it's a happy place. You have neighbours who you see every day that you can say hello to and chat with, and lots of activities to keep you busy, its lovely here.”

”



Meet Glen

Creating Community Orchards

The Orchard Project gifted us an orchard of fruit trees to plant at the Haven Housing scheme, Riverside Court.

Residents from the scheme volunteered to plant and nurture the trees, with support from our Neighbourhood Officers.

This was a wonderful opportunity for everyone involved to join together to plant and learn how to maintain the orchard trees in the future.

We will continue our partnership with the Orchard Project and aim to work with them on future projects across our communities.



[Watch our video here:](#)



A new way to apply for housing

Our new digital lettings portal is now live and provides a new way to apply for housing, replacing our expressions of interest process.

All those who had previously expressed interest with us were contacted and encouraged to apply directly – so far we have had a 25% response rate.

The new portal allows prospective tenants to apply for housing themselves, instead of waiting for an assessment to be carried out over the phone by our Applications Team. We still ask for all the important information up front, but we will now be able to give a decision much more quickly, with many applicants now on the waiting list within 2 weeks of completing their application online.

The information we ask for hasn't changed so completing the application can take around an hour. Evidence is still important, so we have the option for people to save their application and go back in if they need to find medical information, bank statements or other key documents. We have included helpful information on each section to answer any questions that may arise as the application is completed.

Whilst this is a real positive that the process is much easier and quicker, demand for housing is still very high.

 **3399** live cases

 **694** in progress

 **300** to verify

[Check out our how to apply video here](#)



Academy Question

Q: If people don't have access to technology is there support available?

A: Yes, the applications team will be able to carry out applications over the phone for those without access to technology or support from family/friends.

Garden competition proves popular

We had a great response to our garden competition last year and were so impressed with the way people had transformed their outdoor spaces.

The competition returns for 2023. We have three categories:

- Best grow your own
- Best wildlife garden
- Best overall garden
- Plus a special award for the best 'Haven Housing' garden.



We work with our partners to deliver services

Summary

As a landlord we do more than just provide a home, we also help tenants to sustain their tenancies.

Thanks to partnership work we are able to signpost our tenants to other specialist providers, also vital in our community work.

Working with partners is key to helping us deliver this.

Working with our contractors to deliver community benefits has also had a huge impact with local projects and groups. They have seen enhancements to their facilities, donations of equipment or financial contributions made.

The group felt our partnership

Academy Feedback

work with other providers was a real positive.

They were really impressed with our community benefits obligations, and recognised how valuable the partnership portfolio will be for staff and tenants were appreciative of the work that had gone into its development.

Working with partners on decarbonisation

We are committed to becoming carbon neutral (net zero) by 2030. As one of the largest housing associations in Wales we want to use our influence to bring change.

A large proportion of our carbon footprint comes from our 9000 homes, offices and a large fleet of vehicles.

New technology is driving what we do to reduce carbon omissions in our homes, something that green voids and our retrofit work is looking to address.

We are actively looking at new technology on a regular basis, using government grants and working with partners such as Sero who are a key player in retrofit work here in Wales.

Making homes cleaner, reducing energy costs, using and omitting less carbon is the goal so trialling new technology is a priority.

Our fleet



In 2020

2020 we introduced **5** electric pool cars for staff to use.



Since then...

16 additional electric vans have arrived.

One challenge we have encountered is that there are limitations with the number of charging points in Neath Port Talbot, combined with a long lead in time for delivery of electric vehicles.

The priority for us is to deliver repairs on time and as efficiently as possible, whilst balancing our environmental impact.

Academy Question

Q: How does the cost of electric vehicles compare to traditional?

A: They are 25% more expensive to buy/lease than their traditional equivalent, but we can also make savings by the way we choose to charge our fleet ie by using solar panels to help charge the vehicles.

Greener vehicles



Partnership portfolio completed **Community benefits**

To help our tenants get the right support for their specific needs a portfolio has been developed outlining what support services are available locally and how a referral can be made.

The portfolio has become the go to bible for housing staff and gives detailed information on support available for mental health, domestic and substance misuse, tenancy support services, tenant and family welfare, homelessness prevention, befriending and loneliness.

Community benefits are built into every tender to ensure that our contractors give something back.

Whether that's providing training or employment opportunities for local people, helping with community projects or providing financial contributions to community groups.

This ensures that everyone can benefit from the work we do.

From April 2022 to the end of March 2023, the total amount given back to our communities was over **£44,000.**



Working in our communities

Knowing our communities

As part of a commitment within our Corporate Plan to understand our communities better:

We have introduced an engagement process that involves researching all of our areas and consulting with key stakeholders before collating all information into a community plan.

Working with community partners and residents will give us a true reflection and understanding of the needs of our communities before an action plan is developed.

Partnership is key

Building relationships with partners is key to helping us engage with our communities. This ensures that everyone can benefit from the work we do.

Below is just a selection of those we have worked with in recent times.

Community feedback:

“A huge diolch yn fawr to Tai Tarian for a wonderful lesson on biodiversity and lots of fantastic resources for our outdoor spaces.”

Ynysfach Primary School



Our communities are safer places to live.

Summary

We know how important it is that our communities are safe places to live.

Anti-social behaviour can have a detrimental effect on people's lives which is why we work closely with partner agencies to deal with such issues in a positive way.

Our major works programme has continued to improve our estates by providing our homes with fencing to help our tenants to feel secure.

Academy Feedback

The Academy were pleased that our approach to anti-social behaviour was solution focused, with partners playing a key role in supporting us to get positive outcomes for all.

An action taken from the last sustainable communities storyboard was that tenants wanted 'more estate walkabouts in our communities'. The Academy were pleased to hear that there is a trial taking place to address this so that we are more visible across our communities moving forward.

Working in Partnership to tackle ASB

Dealing with anti-social behaviour can be challenging, all cases are different and so we need to use a wide range of resources to reach a satisfactory resolution.

Building trust, understanding the person, managing expectations and being honest is key.



Partnership working



Early intervention

Building trust, understanding the person, managing expectation and being honest.



Solution focused

Each case is different so it's essential that we try all options in our toolkit.



Managing the risk posed to victim



Providing information

Signposting and referrals to support agencies for all parties.



Working in partnership

Internal departments and external partners.



Enforcement action

Focused on changing behaviour, a good example would be using an injunction.



Last resort will be to seek possession of someone's home

Housing - key internal partnerships



Income Team

Working closely with our Income Officers, Universal Credit and Financial Inclusion Teams to maximise income for our tenants.



Intensive Housing Management (IHM)

Referral of more complex cases that require more time to be dedicated.



Compliance

Help the Compliance Team to engage with tenants and gain property access to complete health and safety checks for things like gas safety and electrical testing.



Lettings

Sharing information about communities, communal blocks and areas.



Independent Living Officer

Regular visits to Haven schemes and work together on tenant referrals.



Landlords' permission

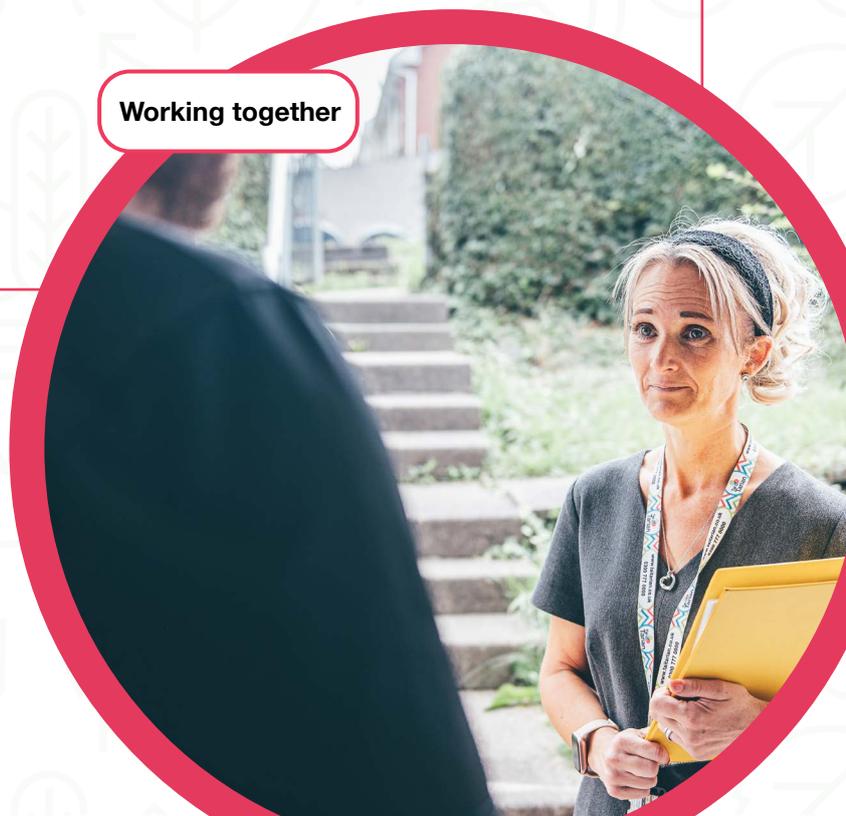
Working with our Compliance Officer to ensure that any work tenants plan to carry out at their home is of a safe standard.



Neighbourhood Management

Ensuring rubbish or fly-tipping is removed together with any items left in a communal area that could pose a fire risk.

Working together



Housing - key external partnerships



South Wales Police

Here we have an information sharing agreement in place where we receive reports of any incidents reported at our properties. We regularly carry out joint visits with police officers to work in a co-ordinated, joined up way.



Key problem solving groups on anti-social behaviour cases that require a multi-agency approach.

MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) – Attendance and work to target properties where our tenant is a victim of domestic violence.

Safer Neath Port Talbot Partnership – Working with NPTCBC in relation to local initiatives and contributing towards the wider goals.

MAPPA – Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements.

Shelter – signposting those at risk of enforcement action to gain independent advice from Shelter.

Prevent and Channel - counter terrorism and risk management of those who are at risk of radicalisation.

Platform – a specialist provider who help us support tenants who are experiencing challenges with their mental health.

Making every contact count

Earlier this year we launched an initiative to ensure our staff make every contact count with our tenants.

Aimed at ensuring that we use every opportunity to identify those we need to help, it involves picking up on any vulnerabilities tenants may have, making appropriate referrals to relevant internal departments or external partners to provide support.

It's all about keeping our tenants safe and building relationships to ensure they're able to sustain their tenancy.

Safer community events

Our Regeneration Team regularly attend 'Safer Community' events across Neath and Port Talbot, to represent the organisation and showcase our work in the community.

This provides a great opportunity to liaise with key stakeholders and network with a variety of partner organisations including the local PCSOs, fire service and councillors.



Making every contact count



Community engagement

We create and sustain local employment and create training opportunities

Summary

We've been able to create and sustain local employment and training opportunities, not only as a large employer in the borough but through our employment initiatives too.

Training on financial health and carbon literacy for staff has proved invaluable to enhance understanding of important topics, while job opportunities via contractors have had a huge impact on local people.

Academy Feedback

The Academy were positive about the job and training opportunities provided.

They again expressed an interest in taking part in the carbon literacy training and becoming ambassadors within their communities.

Employing local people

As a large employer within the borough, we create and sustain employment for many people within our community.



517 staff

75% of staff live locally

Money Mentors

20 staff trained by Tonybee Hall, a leading financial health and advice charity.

Next steps

- More workshops so staff can train colleagues.
- Mandatory annual money mentors training module for all staff.



[Hear from our Money Mentors here:](#)



Carbon Literacy

50 staff trained so far

Commitment to train **80%** of our people, more training to be delivered over the next 12 to 18 months.

Our focus will then move to community roll out.



Carbon Literacy training

Partnership with NPTC Group of Colleges

We have become the first employer in residence at NPTC group of colleges.

This allows us to go into the college to meet those studying a variety of courses give them guidance on what is expected in the workplace and provide advice and support to get them ready for the world of work.

For trade qualifications we are engaging with the college and students early on, knowing that new energy and green infrastructure will be on the rise in years to come.

We are also reaching out to develop our relationship with other colleges, to focus on the housing element of our work and other key areas.

Job opportunities for locals

Targeted recruitment and training (TR&T) is about giving opportunities to local people.

We have been able to work in partnership with our contractors and external partners to share a variety of employment opportunities on our website, complete mock interviews, provide on-site work placements, and apprenticeship opportunities.



Creating job opportunities

The Two Rowan's

Two boys from the Neath valley have been taken on by Hale Construction as they work to re-develop County Flats in Sandfields.

They were employed as part of the company's commitment to employ local people on the project and to give opportunities to young people starting out in their careers.

As well as the two Rowans, Hale have also taken on a further 23 people in a variety of work experience, traineeships, apprenticeships, and full-time jobs.

David Harry, Managing Director at Hale Construction said:

“

“The County Flats development is a landmark project for both us and Tai Tarian. As a result, we wanted to give local people the opportunity to develop their careers with us.

“The two Rowan's are a fantastic example of this, and we are really pleased to see how they have both grasped their opportunity and are developing both professionally and personally.

“Given how far they've progressed so far, I'm sure they both have long, prosperous careers ahead of them.”

[Read more about the two Rowans here:](#)

A circular photograph showing two young men, Rowan Thomas and Rowan Lovering, standing outdoors at a construction site. They are both wearing bright yellow high-visibility safety vests over their casual clothing. They are smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows construction equipment and scaffolding.

**Rowan Thomas
and Rowan Lovering**

We have a positive impact on our communities through active engagement

Summary

We recognise how important it is for us to have a positive impact within our communities. Making donations to local good causes, undertaking special projects and engaging across our communities is really making a difference

Our Fusion project, which uses arts and culture to encourage learning, has also made a huge difference to local people, especially those of school age.

Academy Feedback

The Academy were impressed with the positive impact we have had on local communities using a variety of methods.

Action



The Academy would like to get involved in future fundraising. More promotion of the work of community regeneration.

Our Fusion Project

Our Fusion project which began in 2017 has built strong partnerships with local schools in Port Talbot, as well as working closely with members of the community and our tenants.

The financial literacy programme uses arts, heritage and culture to inspire pride in young people and to convey important life skills. The aim is to give people an understanding of money, digital skills and a more positive attitude to learning. In the last year we have worked with Flying Start, Awel y Mor Primary School, Ysgol Cwm Brombil, St. Joseph's and Ysgol Bae Baglan secondary schools.

The project has regularly engaged with **20 families** and **110 school pupils.**

Christmas wreaths link with budgeting

In partnership with Woodlands Trust, we worked with a group of people to make Christmas wreaths in the run up to the festive period.

Not only a nice social experience but the opportunity to explore the prospect of selling the items, considering materials, costs, time and what profit could be made. The workshop was about engaging in financial literacy using the hook of a real-life scenario.

Feedback:

“Thank you for all of your lovely sessions over the last year! They have been amazing and we've been really grateful for your guidance and support.”

The Wednesday group at YBB

Fusion Project



Acts of Kindness continues

The Acts of Kindness fund was set up in 2021 thanks to a commitment from Tai Tarian staff to make monthly payments to support local good causes.

Since then, a proportion of the money has been used to support tenants who have fallen on hard times or may be struggling to buy everyday essentials, with the rest of the pot allocated to community donations and local good causes.

Feedback:

“

“Thank you so much for the £15 Tesco Gift Card and to everyone who nominated me, you have all made my day today thanks”

”

From April 23 – July 23
£14,000 has been donated
to our communities through
our Acts of Kindness Fund.

(£44,000 from April 22-March 23)



Raising funds



Food bank donation

Community Challenge

The annual **Community Challenge** brings our staff and contractors together to provide a day's free maintenance or building work to local schools, community groups or sports clubs.

Last year two facilities benefited, NSA Centre in Sandfields and Giants Grave Boys and Girls Club in Briton Ferry.

NSA Centre

Our staff and representatives from Hale took part in the Community Challenge in Sandfields, Port Talbot. The free day's maintenance included clearance work, gardening and painting the external areas of the building.

Giants Grave Boys & Girls Club

These works included fully decorating the internal sports hall. The facility will be used for community engagements and to generate a small income for the club through venue hire.

Both challenges made a positive impact in our communities and feedback from the centres management teams were incredible, they could not thank us enough.



Special project thanks to Welsh Procurement Alliance (WPA)

Funding secured through the WPA was utilised to complete a biodiversity project on the external grounds at Canolfan Maerdy in Tairgwaith.

As a result of this work the community centre now aims to provide a 'Food Cooperative' to grow and produce a small amount of fruit and vegetables, which can be allocated to their food bank and donated to the community.



NSA Before



NSA After

