

Update: Climate Change Strategy 2024-2029

Housing Services



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Aims of the Strategy:

- Achieve net zero carbon across our housing stock by 2050.
- Reach the national requirement of meeting a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C throughout all homes by 2030.
- Apply a 'fabric first' approach to retrofit works to upgrade the energy efficiency of our homes.
- Foster an environment of reduced carbon emissions and energy consumption to improve the comfort and health of our tenants in their homes and the wider community of Darlington.



Actions taken 2024/25: Retrofit

- We secured funding of £1.27m from the government's **Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1**.
- We have used this money, alongside DBC's matched contribution of £1.27m, to roll out retrofit works to 130 homes. This work is due to be completed in May 2025.
- The energy efficiency measures applied to each home depend on property type. Measures include: external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, roof extensions, loft insulation, upgrades to doors, and low energy lighting as required.



SHDF 2.1 Works (Before)



SHDF 2.1 Works (After)



Actions taken 2024/25: Retrofit Continued

- In September 2024, we applied for further funding under the government's **Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (WHSHF) Wave 3**. DBC will also contribute funding to this project.
- Depending on property types, our WHSHF project will include works of external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, upgrades to doors and windows, and roof extensions as required.
- The outcome of our bid is due to be released in March 2025. The number of properties to be upgraded will depend on the funding we receive, and we will match-fund this amount.
- Alongside bidding for funding, we have committed over £4m each year over the lifetime of the MTFP for energy efficiency works.



Actions taken 2024/25: New Build Homes

- Our new build properties are built to a standard of EPC B. Final EPC assessments are yet to have taken place at Sherborne Close, but with the increased efficiencies involved in the works here, these properties may even reach EPC A.
- As part of new building regulations, we will include Solar PV and ASHPs to properties as standard.
- We will also install EV chargers (either individual or communal) to houses and apartments in line with new building regulations.
- We are constantly working with contractors to implement the newest energy efficiency innovations into our housing projects.
- For instance, windows on our Neasham Close new build site are fitted with an insulation collar. This provides an insulating barrier around the window frame, which keeps rooms warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer, ultimately reducing energy bills and carbon emissions for residents.



Sherbourne Close: Recent Contractor Report



Neasham Road: On Site



Neasham Road: Recent Contractor Report

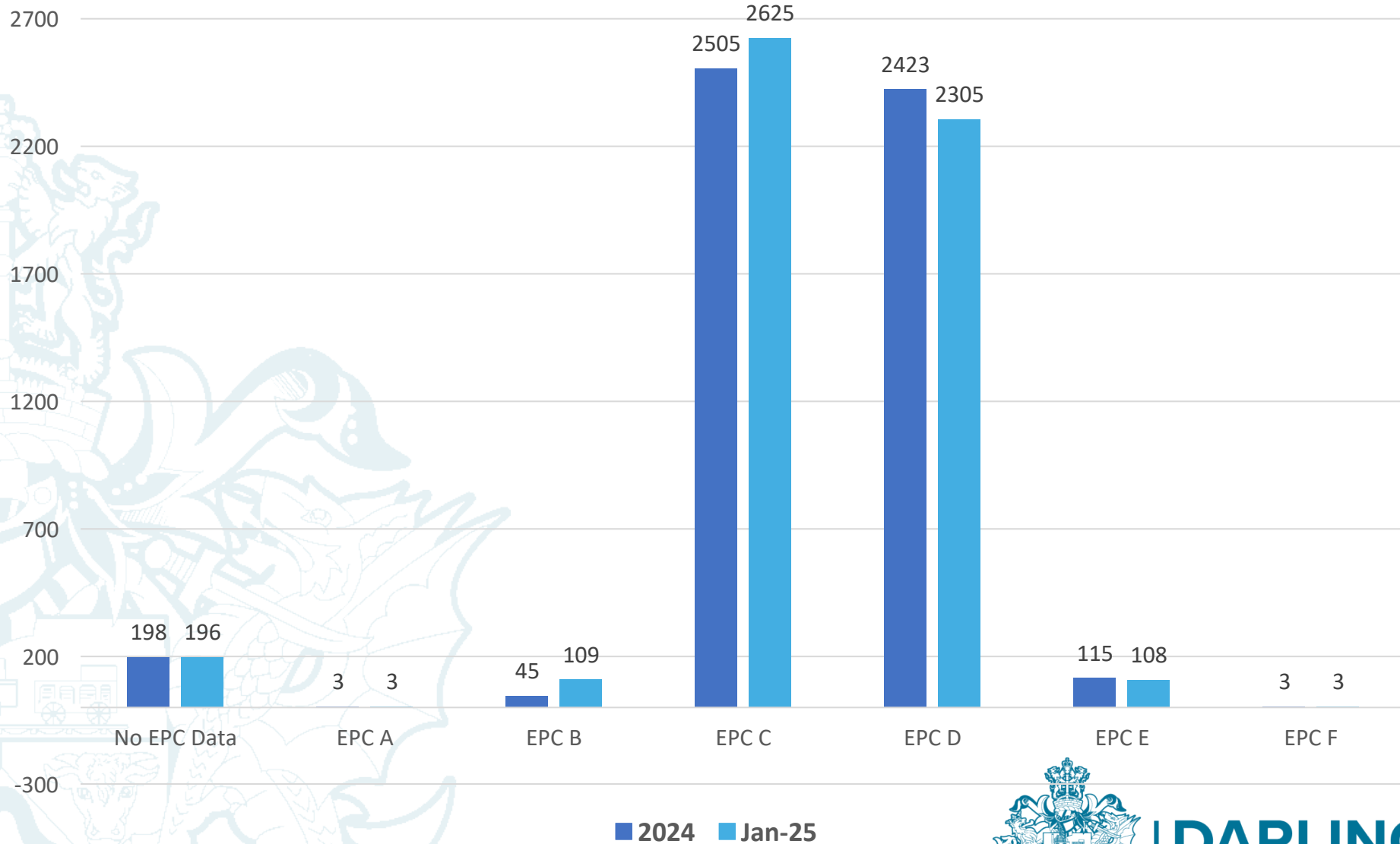


Planned and Responsive Maintenance

- All our flats are having energy efficient fire doors installed.
- All our properties now have double glazed windows.
- Our contractors, *Anolian*, recycle the old windows that comes out of our properties and use this recycled material as a base for the trims that go back onto our new double-glazed windows.
- Loft insulation is upgraded as part of our roofing programme.
- Through inspections, we sometimes identify energy measures required in homes. We carry out these improvements on an ad hoc basis.
- Our inspection and building repairs team apply a technology called thermal plastering to our homes. Thermal plastering minimises heat loss in the winter and slows down heat gain in the summer. Therefore, reliance on high-energy usage systems like heating and air conditioning decreases. This decreases heating bills by up to 15% and reduces carbon emissions.
- Each year, 240 energy efficient boilers are being installed through planned maintenance. Around 110 energy efficient boilers are being installed through responsive repairs and voids.
- We are upgrading our maintenance vans to electric in 2025-26.



EPC Data - 2024 & Jan 2025



- From 2024 to Jan 2025, an increase of 184 homes have reached EPC C or above.
- From our SHDF 2.1 project, we expect a further 130 homes to reach EPC C and above.
- With the major works planned, we anticipate a further c. 1300 properties to reach EPC C and above by 2030 (75% EPC C).
- We have currently c. 1400 properties which are high-scoring EPC Ds, so will only require minor works to get them to EPC C.
- This will cover the remaining 25% of homes we need to get to EPC C to achieve 100% by 2030.

We now have 51% of our properties at EPC C or above.

	2024		Jan-25	
EPC Band	%	Total	%	Total
Band A	0.06	3	0.06	3
Band B	0.85	45	2.04	109
Band C	47.33	2505	49.07	2625
Band D	45.78	2423	43.09	2305
Band E	2.17	115	2.02	108
Band F	0.06	3	0.06	3
No EPC data	3.74	198	3.66	196
Grand Total	100	5292	100	5349



Plans for 2025/26

- Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (3-year project).
- We are carrying out stock condition surveys to over 1700 homes during the next year.
- This data will enrich our understanding of the condition and requirement of our properties and will inform our planned programmes.



Plans for 2025/26: Biodiversity

- We have championed the Council's **Tree and Woodland Strategy** by including trees, wildflower meadows, and other green spaces in our programmes to encourage a biodiverse Darlington.
- Our landscape plan for Neasham Road reflects how the importance of biodiversity is upheld in Housing projects.



Neasham Road: Landscape Spec



- KEY**
- EXISTING RETAINED VEGETATION
 - EXISTING SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND RETAINED AND ENHANCED 12,030m²
 - PROPOSED MEADOW GRASS MIX 18,170m²
 - PROPOSED LOW GROWING POLLINATOR GRASS MIX 5,810m²
 - PROPOSED WET MEADOW GRASS MIX 1,930m²
 - PROPOSED SWALES / DITCH WITH 70% WET MEADOW GRASS MIX 1,920m² AND 30% MARGINAL / AQUATIC PLANTING 825m²
 - PROPOSED NATIVE WOODLAND BLOCKS 6,525m²
 - PROPOSED NATIVE HEDGE AND HEDGEROW TREES
 - PROPOSED POND AREAS 1,558m² WITH MARGINAL / AQUATIC PLANTING 359m²
 - PROPOSED SPECIMEN TREES / AVENUE TREES

- PROPOSED SMALL STREET TREES
- PROPOSED WOODLAND EDGE PLANTING 1,652m²
- PROPOSED ORNAMENTAL SHRUB PLANTING 241m²
- HEDGEHOG HIBERNACULAR
- AMPHIBIAN HIBERNACULAR
- FENCE AROUND POND TO DBC STANDARD SPECIFICATION
- WATER MAIN EASEMENT
- RESPONSIBILITY HOMES BY ESH, NOT DBC.



Action Plan Progress

Data Quality and validation

- We have carried out a refresh of our stock condition survey to ensure all regulatory requirements are captured.
- We are in the process of validating and transferring the information across to the new survey.
- We have links to our EPC information which will validate our EPC SAP ratings in light of the changes.

Fabric First

- We are changing the specifications of our planned works (e.g. windows, doors, roofing) to help move towards higher efficiency buildings.



Action Plan Progress (Continued)

Funding Bidding and Capital Programme

- We have continued to bid for funding.
- We are reviewing the life cycles of properties.
- The Asset Management Strategy has been implemented, and we continue to bid for funding. We are awaiting decisions from government for WSHF.

Retrofit, Technology and Biodiversity

- We have been exploring new technologies and products as part of our ongoing commitment to energy efficiency.
- Once they have been trialled, we will decide whether they become a part of our core approach to retrofit.
- We are doing the tree planting and wildflower planting on our new estates and will be reviewing our open spaces to identify further opportunities in this area.

