ASTER GROUP

Key **highlights**

Environmental, Social and **Governance** (ESG) **Report 2026**

This is our seventh
Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Report, reflecting an ongoing commitment, having published our first report in 2020.

This year, we've mapped out our achievements against the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for social housing, providing greater transparency and insight into our work.

The ESG highlights from this year demonstrate how these priorities are not only aligned with our values but are actively delivering impact across all three ESG themes.

Ahead of finalising our new Sustainability Strategy in 2026/27, we've got some great examples of **Environmental work in action** across our Group:

- We began a three-year retrofit programme, supported by the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund. The £20 million programme is helping to reduce energy use and emissions, improve comfort and affordability, and support more sustainable communities
- We remain committed to delivering energy-efficient homes while balancing affordability:
  - 100% of new homes achieved an EPC rating of B or above
  - over 450 new homes included low-carbon technologies such as air source heat pumps and solar panels
- At Enham Resource Centre, we installed an 84-panel solar PV system, predicted to generate around 40MWh of green energy per year and expected to save around £6,000 per year in energy costs
- We've taken steps to comply with new Heat Network regulations. These changes will strengthen customer protections, improve transparency, signpost customers to the Energy Ombudsman where needed, and support more efficient shared heating systems
- Through our Strategic Partnership with Homes England, we secured funding to deliver 39 homes using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Category 2a. We have significantly exceeded this target, with 248 Category 2a homes completed and a further 125 compliant homes in construction
- Several of our community land trust (CLT) schemes are being built to high energy efficiency standards. Two developments currently on site will be delivered to EPC A and are partly built from recycled materials
- We've formed a partnership with local residents and conservation action group North Wiltshire Swifts (NWS) to protect swift nesting sites in Wiltshire
- We began work on a biodiversity project to discover and protect the wildlife in Enham Alamein and throughout the grounds of Enham Trust, providing more spaces for the local community to connect with nature. Wild About Enham will help us develop a longer-term plan to increase biodiversity in the village, with changes co-designed with customers. The findings will help inform how we manage our spaces across other Aster estates
- Through our waste management arrangements, 99.5% of our waste was diverted from landfill
- We continued to work with Procurement for Housing (PfH) and their framework to ensure sustainability and social value is embedded in our contracts. Our materials suppliers prioritise products made from recycled content and utilise recycling and circular economy initiatives to divert waste from landfill.

As a housing association, we're committed to making a **positive social impact on our communities:**

- We have strengthened how customers influence decisions at a strategic level, introducing a new Customer Engagement Framework and added a customer Chair and customer Member to the Customer Voice Committee (CVC), which forms part of our governance structure
- We brought reviews of our Damp Mould & Condensation (DMC) policy and procedure forward to ensure each is appropriately reflective of Awaab's Law. These were proactively informed by a DMC-focused Customer Scrutiny 'Bootcamp' in February 2026, which explored customers':
    - understanding and information provided through the DMC journey
    - assessment of our performance and risk
- Strengthen our approach to damp and mould, and through our Healthy Homes Transformation Programme, we are reviewing how all housing hazards are identified, assessed, prioritised, managed and reported
- Our homes remain affordable compared to private rental markets and Local Housing Allowances, helping people stay in their communities, maintaining efficiency and reducing inequality
- Our overall satisfaction scores in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) improved for the second year in a row. With 2,918 customers surveyed, satisfaction in rental accommodation was 79.9%, while for low-cost homeownership it was 56.0%
- We remain the UK's leading housing association provider of community land trusts (CLT) partnerships. At the end of March 2026, nine schemes were on site, which will deliver 182 homes
- Across 2025/26, the Aster Foundation supported 2,387 people. This included financial wellbeing and inclusion support, such as benefit case support and vouchers; providing mental health and wellbeing support through training mental health champions, offering one-to-one sessions and developing spaces and networks for wellbeing; and support into work through supported employment, the Into Work Officer and our Digital College
- 52 roles were supported through Enham Trust's Employment Plus service, which helps individuals build the skills, confidence, and resources needed to move into longer-term employment. This included roles within our gardening, domestic, and care services, and picking and packing roles within E3PL (the charity's social enterprise). Enham Trust also delivered disability and neurodiversity awareness sessions and training externally, with Sparsholt College, Test Valley Borough Council and Lionel Hitchen food manufacturers
- We are progressing the refurbishment and redesign of Landale Wilson Hall in Enham Alamein, a key village landmark facility which was originally opened in 1926. Our wider Enham 110 Transformation Programme is a master planning project which will positively impact the village through providing housing and care; commercial assets and activities; employment and contracting activities and new homes.

We're committed to maintaining **strong and robust Governance:**

- Following an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in spring 2026, we are proud to have received the highest possible grading of C1 for compliance with consumer standards, in our first assessment under the new standards. This was confirmed outside of the 2025/26 period of reporting, in July 2026. The C1 rating shows we're delivering good outcomes for customers including the provision of good-quality homes, keeping customers safe and giving customers meaningful opportunities to have their say. Our G1 governance grading – the highest possible grade, and one we have held since the regulatory grading system came into force – and V2 gradings were also reaffirmed
- We began work with a new audit partner in September 2025, our previous partner having stepped down after reaching the end of their tenure to be considered independent. This will ensure we continue to uphold the highest standards of independence and objectivity in the auditing of our accounts
- In December 2025, work began to adopt the updated 2024 UK Code of Governance, with reporting against the code starting from 1 April 2026. This work reinforces our commitment to transparency, accountability and long-term sustainability
- We launched a refreshed People and Culture Plan focused on creating an environment where colleagues feel at home doing their best work. Centred on trust and flexibility, supportive leadership, belonging, wellbeing and reducing unnecessary hassle, the plan reflects our commitment to being a great place to work and delivering excellent services to our customers. We further strengthened our culture through the relaunch of The Aster Way and Culture Handbook, aligned with the CIH Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics. Our progress in Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) was recognised in 2025 when we achieved a silver Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) benchmark award, awarded by Onvero (formerly the Employers' Network for Equality and Inclusion). We also maintain our Disability Confident Leader status and received Pledge Pioneer accreditation from the HouseProud Pledge, demonstrating our commitment to supporting LGBTQ+ colleagues and customers.
- Our 'Language Matters' guide to inclusive language was reviewed and updated in 2025, with contributions and suggestions from our colleague networks to aid inclusive and accessible communications
- An Inclusive Recruitment e-learning course was developed in 2025 and forms part of our Leader Playbook
- We expanded our physical and mental wellbeing offer to colleagues, offering free flu jabs, a range of wellbeing sessions and access to the BUPA Menopause Plan for colleagues who are struggling to access good GP support. We also continued to implement our Trauma Incident Management (TrIM) support system, designed to assist colleagues who may be affected by potentially traumatic incidents in the workplace
- We continued to support colleagues in their professional development, including:
    - 96 colleagues actively completing apprenticeships through the apprentice levy
    - 16 colleagues undertaking the Women in Leadership apprenticeship
    - 30 colleagues studying for Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) qualifications
    - Introducing a CIH club for colleagues
- Together, these achievements reflect our deep-rooted social purpose and our drive to build a future where everyone has a home - and where that home contributes positively to society and the planet and where strong governance, responsible decision-making, and a positive employee experience create lasting value for all our stakeholders.