

# Corporate Social Responsibility

VE-POL-0829-v3.0

## Introduction

Vital Energi Utilities Ltd is a socially and environmentally responsible organisation committed to our vision to be leaders in the construction and development of a sustainable future. By placing emphasis on a sustainable future, we aim to ensure the long-term success of the business by contributing economically, environmentally, and socially across the regions in which we operate.

Our activities have an impact across the complete spectrum of society which means we have to adhere to rigorous ethical and professional standards to deliver investment, design, construction and operation and maintenance services to ensure we achieve a sustainable environment for the future whilst at the same time remaining competitive.

Vital Energi Utilities Ltd works closely with its employees, sub-contractors, supply chain partners, clients and end users to strive to balance short and long term interests to integrate social, environmental and economic considerations into our decisions.

This statement forms the basis of our policy for managing our corporate and social responsibilities and is the base-line for developing our procedures in this area.

## Stakeholders

We are committed to treating our employees, clients, supply chain and the wider community with respect.

## Our Employees

We are committed to the welfare and development of our employees and as such recognise the need to be able to attract, recruit and retain employees with the experience, skills and potential necessary to promote the continued growth and development of the business.

- **Wellbeing:**

Health and Safety is at the forefront of our business and we are committed to continuously improve the occupational welfare of all of our employees, sub-contractors and the wider community who come into contact with our activities.

- **Equality:**

We are committed to providing a working environment where all employees are treated with courtesy, dignity and respect and where they feel valued irrespective of gender, race, sexual orientation, disability or age and where the principle of equal opportunity in employment applies to everyone.

- **Development:**

We are committed to an active training regime whereby all employees are equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge to maximise their potential and subsequently that of the business and its objectives.

## Our Clients

We work in partnership with our clients to develop sustainable solutions to meet their needs, deliver quality projects on time, safely and with due regard to the environment.

## Communities

Our aim is always to promote good community relations wherever we undertake our construction activities. We proactively ensure that our work causes the minimum of disruption to our neighbours and the wider community. We aim to become involved in community initiatives thereby further promoting good company relations.

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## Environment

Vital Energi Utilities Ltd acknowledges its responsibility to future generations in all of its activities.

- **Environmental Management:**

We continuously strive to improve our environmental performance by proactively reviewing our operations in all departments and at all levels so as to minimise our environmental impact.

- **Energy Management:**

We will take all reasonable steps to improve efficiency in the use of our energy and resources and we are committed to regularly reviewing our business practice and performance and those of our stakeholders to identify how we can reduce our requirements for energy, transport and water. We promote good practice in respect of recycling and waste minimisation and where possible use alternative materials or methods to optimise the use of resources.

## Innovation

Innovation is essential for the development of our business and for creating sustainable solutions and with our unique position as leader in this field we aim to create sustainable solutions that balance environmental, social and economic issues.

Vital Energi Utilities Ltd are fully accredited with ISO 14001 and ISO 5001, the decision to invest in this accreditation has focused our thoughts on improved reporting, including Corporate Social Responsibility.

## Social Value

- **Supporting occupational Health and Wellbeing:**

Vital's occupational health programme includes communication channels such as health assessments, workshops, toolbox talks, noticeboard displays and posters to raise awareness and management of mental health for our personnel on our schemes. Vital supports a positive culture to promoting health and well-being, on this scheme we will implement measures such as: supplying fruit and vegetables, lunchtime walks etc this will support team bonding and provide a healthier culture.

- **Modern Slavery and Ethical Compliance:**

Vital have policies in place for the protection of human rights, fair trading and employment and our senior management team ensure these and the construction charter are implemented into our working practices across Vital and our supply chain. Vital work in accordance with industry labour standards, fair pay, terms and conditions to our workforce and we do not operate zero-hour contracts.

- **Equality:**

Vital operate in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and will conduct an equalities impact assessment within the pre-construction stage to ensure our policy is implemented appropriately and promotes equality to the scheme.

## Employment and Training

With over 20 years extensive public sector experience, Vital has a strong commitment making not just positive changes to buildings but to demonstrate commitment to the local economy and community, including environmental, health & safety, training, development, involvement, engagement and creation of opportunities.

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Client collaboration has resulted in the development and delivery of employment/ skill plans and skill learning projects, aiding in the development of recognised skills, training and qualifications which benefit both the community and project.

## Our projects ensure corporate social responsibility by:

- Providing worthwhile and satisfying employment
- Dealing fairly with suppliers and providing responsibly sourced, quality products
- Making a positive difference to the communities where we do business
- Reducing environmental impact and promoting good environmental practice

Vital promotes mechanical, electrical and energy management amongst the younger generations and this is evidenced by the apprenticeships, training development plans, work experience opportunities, annual graduate programme and work within the educational facilities.

- **Apprenticeship Scheme:**

We ensure our apprentices are appointed a suitable educational mentor on commencement of employment. Objectives are set and detailed training plans are established and implemented for the duration of the training period, ranging 1-3 years.

Regular review meetings take place with the reporting manager and educational mentor to ensure targets and objectives are being achieved in line with the training plan.

- **Graduate Scheme:**

Imperative to our sustained growth and extremely successful over the past 5 years, over 20 graduates have joined Vital and progressed within the company to become essential members of our team.

We implement an all-round training programme, combining theory with practice. Spread over a 3-year period, it helps us to recruit quality graduates for all business areas.

- **Work Experience Placements:**

We offer work experience placements within the office/ low-risk environments to help individuals determine their career path; giving an insight into our industry as well as a detailed overall company perspective. On completion, we assess their skills learnt and collect feedback on their gains from this experience period. We utilise this feedback to continuously offer relevant and beneficial placements.

- **Student Learning and Site Visits:**

We offer this on a number of schemes including:

- Site tours to gain practical understanding of the technical operation of large-scale sites and to engage students regarding the issues faced on such projects
- Presentations, including pictures, walk rounds and interactive Q&A sessions
- Updates to enhance subject knowledge and project evolution according to different challenges faced through key phases

We invite local schools to site visits/ educational open days and have (and continue to) receive positive feedback on projects where we have implemented these.

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- **Notification of Vacancies**

Our HR Department ensures appropriate recruitment tools are used to source potential employees. Job vacancies/ descriptions are advertised through various methods, including local councils and job centres (if appropriate) to ensure we recruit locally first before moving to a wider area if required.

We have successfully employed a CLO on previous schemes from the local community, developing both employment and training opportunities within the area.

Our network for national projects and long-term contracts ensures we remain local in all areas of the UK, which then enables regular local recruitment.

- **Contractors and Subcontractors**

Through self-delivery, Vital aim to limit the use of subcontractors. Where specialist contractors are required, we have developed a Vendor Approval Procedure which ensures the stability of the contractor/subcontractor whilst also ensuring our environmental responsibilities.

## Addressing Social Issues such as Fuel Poverty and Energy Saving

Vital Energi's metering and billing portfolio currently consists of working with many housing associations where we provide both credit billing and pre-payment solutions. Some of our contracts are for servicing areas of low socioeconomic status.

Vital work with these associations in addressing social issues such as poverty, ethnicity status, occupancy/overcrowding and language barriers to name a few. We work with our clients to create a vulnerable resident register which identifies the needs of individual residents who may have these particular barriers that could contribute to the inability to manage or pay bills.

We assist our clients with tariff setting and provide clear pricing policies to all residents which explains how the tariffs are calculated and when they will be revised. Ensuring our bills and supplementary information is clear and that our customer service operatives provide concise information to residents helps to build a better understanding of how communal heating systems work and helps answer queries regarding why residents cannot choose their supplier, a common issue we find with residents who haven't lived in a property served by a communal heating network in the past.

By having a team of customer service staff and local engineers, we are also able to respond quickly to issues with meters and the metering system to prevent communities from developing bad perceptions of their heat bills and educate them around how to conserve energy and reduce their bills.

Our bills also give residents a comparison between their energy consumption and others on their scheme. We also have a customer portal that gives the resident information about their bill and energy consumption and compares their usage to other similar size properties on their scheme and others throughout the country.

## Economic

### Living Wage:

Vital comply with and Scottish Procurement Policy aspirations and objectives and its obligations under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012.

At the current time, Vital Energi guarantees to pay the National Minimum Wage (NMW), National Living Wage and Real Living Wage rates to all directly employed members of staff (in line with the minimum age limits appropriate to each National pay structure). Apprentices are not required to receive the Real Living Wage; we do however pay each of them significantly higher than the NMW and ensure pay rises over the course of the apprenticeship are well above inflation. We also actively monitor our supply chain on this practice.

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## Review of procedure

This policy was reviewed on the date referred to below. The company will endeavour to review the detailed within and the process undertaken by the company on an annual basis.



Chairman – Vital Energi Group of Companies

17<sup>th</sup> March 2022



CEO – Vital Energi Group of Companies

17<sup>th</sup> March 2022

*The original signed copy of this document is retained by the HR office*  
**Next Reviewed Date: February 2023**