

Making a Difference

Homes for the future

Asset Management Strategy
2025-2030



watford
community
housing

We believe that **everyone** should have a decent place to live, because a **good-quality home** provides the foundations for people to get the best out of life.

By ensuring that our homes are well-maintained and sustainable, we give people the chance to live comfortably and healthily.

Our Asset Management Strategy sets out how we will invest in our properties, meet high standards and take a data-driven approach to asset management, to ensure that our homes are great places for our residents – both now and into the future.



Improving and investing

To deliver for our customers, every one of our homes should be warm, safe and affordable, giving our current and future residents somewhere they want to live.



Improving and investing

With the quality of social housing across the country increasingly under the spotlight, we recognise the need to continue investing in our existing portfolio of homes, to make sure that they remain fit for modern living.

The government has committed to driving improvements for all social housing residents – it is expected to introduce a revised version of the Decent Homes Standard within the period covered by this strategy, and Awaab's Law will come into force from October 2025.

We support these aims and we are committed to continuing to provide homes that are safe, comfortable and in good condition – as well as improving the energy performance of our homes as we work towards the goal of net zero carbon emissions, making them cheaper to heat and reducing their environmental impact.



Working with residents

As a Community Gateway housing association, we are committed to giving residents a voice. We will engage with customers over key decisions relating to proposed works and improvements to homes, making sure that people are well-informed and have the chance to have their say.

‘We recognise the need to continue investing in our existing portfolio of homes, to make sure that they remain fit for modern living.’



Our approach

We want to be bold and ambitious in our approach to asset management, because we are determined to make sure that all our homes meet high standards – they should be safe, energy-efficient and fit for the future.

By ensuring that our properties are well-managed, we will deliver consistently good-quality homes for residents, as well as providing a robust financial and operational foundation for our business.



We will achieve our objectives across two distinct phases:

Brilliant basics (Years 1-2)

By making sure we are getting the basics right every time, we will build a strong platform for strategic asset management, enabling us to be more ambitious in our approach.



From good to great (Years 3-5)

We will embrace more stretching targets, taking an ambitious and innovative approach so that we can work more effectively and provide consistently high-quality, sustainable homes for the future.

Setting the standard

It's vital that we make the right long-term decisions for our customers.

We will work with residents to develop a standard for our homes and agree our investment priorities – for both now and the future.

We will establish a clear approach that is supported by the people who live in our homes.

This will shape our investment plans and priorities, enabling us to make the best long-term decisions about our housing stock.



Setting the standard

‘We will develop and enhance our standards for the condition and maintenance of our homes.’

Sound investment

In consultation with our customers, we will agree a **set of investment priorities** for our existing homes and **standard planning rules** for developing our programme of improvements. We will use these to ensure that the investment we make in our existing homes delivers good-quality housing and value for money for our customers.



We will also develop and enhance our standards for the **condition** and **maintenance** of our homes, reflecting the priorities we have agreed with customers. These will inform our five-year rolling investment programme and our annual delivery programme.

Looking to the future

To guide our long-term decisions about how we invest in and manage our homes, we will devise a standard that we expect our homes to achieve by **2050**. This will help us to anticipate future investment requirements over a longer period.



Safety first

The safety of our homes is always our top priority.

Every one of our customers should be confident that their home meets high standards of fire safety, structural integrity and compliance for gas and electrical services.

Through the skills and knowledge of our teams, and the effective use of data, we will make sure our residents' homes are safe.

We will also maintain a sufficiently qualified and robust supply chain to ensure that rigorous safety standards are embedded throughout our work.





Full compliance



As a key part of our everyday work, we will continue to ensure that our homes are safe and comply with all relevant standards and requirements. We will make certain that we have validated and accurate data on the **compliance** and **safety** of our homes. To provide added reassurance, this information will be reviewed regularly by our Investment Committee and Group Board, and shared with our customers.

For all properties that are classed as **higher-risk buildings** under the Building Safety Act, we will adopt safety reports to identify and manage risk, and any additional management actions that may be required.

Every home in these buildings will have a **building safety case** outlining the main areas of risk and the measures we have put in place to ensure the safety of the building – these will be based on robust data and a resident engagement strategy that is tailored to the individual building.

‘We will explore ways to improve our systems to manage our building safety data.’



Strengthening our golden thread

To give us the strongest possible foundations for the monitoring of safety and compliance, we will explore ways to **improve our systems** to manage our building safety data. This will help us to further strengthen our ‘golden thread’, with comprehensive and accurate information underpinning the actions we take to keep buildings safe throughout their life cycle.

Cutting carbon

We understand the role that housing plays in the climate crisis – and we are determined to play our part in tackling it.

We will measure and manage the impact of our homes on the environment, working towards the UK's ambitious goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions from housing by 2050.



‘We will identify strategies and plans to continue to reduce the environmental impact of our homes.’

Building on success

Building on the success of our Greener Herts collaboration with local partners, we will identify strategies and plans to continue to reduce the environmental impact of our homes and improve their energy efficiency.

As we continue our journey towards net zero carbon, our ambition is to ensure that each home achieves an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of at least band C by 2028, two years ahead of the government’s deadline for social housing providers.



Improving energy efficiency

Our homes will have an EPC rating of at least band C by 2028.

Cutting carbon

Calculating our footprint

As we work to strengthen the data we hold about our homes, we will review the information we have about their environmental performance and establish the existing **carbon footprint** of our properties – giving us a baseline position to build on.

We will continue to survey our homes, keeping up-to-date records of their energy performance. By continuing to invest, we will bring all remaining homes up to at least **band C** by **2028**, cutting carbon emissions from our properties and making them cheaper to heat for our customers.



The path to net zero

To guide our work in the longer term, we will develop a clear roadmap to achieving net zero carbon homes by 2050. This will be central to our approach to improving the environmental and sustainability credentials of our homes, which will recognise wider impacts and challenges including water usage, green spaces, biodiversity, climate resilience and the goal of a circular economy.

To meet these challenges, we understand that we will need to continue building our capacity, strengthening our use of data and embracing best practice.

Planning ahead

Using robust data and the clear approach we have agreed with our customers, we will plan investment in our homes carefully and strategically.

To ensure we are planning effectively, we will use data on the condition and performance of our homes, repairs trends and feedback from residents and our teams.

We will procure competent supply chains with the capacity to deliver investment to the highest standards, safely and efficiently.



Maintaining quality

To ensure we have the resources to maintain great homes for our customers, we will develop clear plans for our housing stock, including a **30-year investment forecast** which will underpin our long-term business planning.

Our **annual delivery programme** will be formed from a **rolling five-year detailed investment plan**. These will be shared with our customers, to provide transparency and confidence in the work we are doing to improve people's homes.

Customer satisfaction will be at the heart of our work, including our procurement decisions. We will work collaboratively with our supply chain partners to ensure they are delivering for residents and achieving **value for money**, and we will use customer feedback to shape the way we carry out improvement works.

Investment in our homes needs to work hand-in-hand with the viability of our business, so we will reconcile our investment plans with our **financial plans**, to ensure that they are affordable and appropriate.

'We will work collaboratively with our supply chain partners to ensure they are delivering for residents.'



Investing in sustainability

The drive to reduce carbon emissions from the nation's homes will have significant implications for housing providers' long-term financial plans. To ensure there is clarity over the future needs of our housing stock and the levels of investment that will be needed, we will develop our net zero carbon delivery plan.



Understanding performance

For our homes to be sustainable, they need to consistently deliver for residents – and for our business.

To ensure that we are investing wisely and achieving value for money for our residents, we need to be confident that our homes can continue to meet people's needs.

We will use data to model both the absolute and relative performance of our homes, supported by appropriate and robust technology.

This will give us the detailed information we need to make the right decisions about the future of our homes.



Understanding performance



In-depth understanding

To continue to build our knowledge base, we will model the relative and absolute performance of our homes on multiple levels – looking at the portfolio as a whole, homes across local community areas, and on an individual property basis. We will use this modelling to establish how our homes are performing across four key areas:

- the customer experience
- financial performance
- operational performance
- environmental performance and energy efficiency

When homes are found to be performing poorly, we will carry out option appraisals to get the best outcome for our residents. We will develop bespoke interventions for homes or areas that are identified as failing, or at risk of failing. These could include redevelopment and disposal where further investment does not offer good value.

Once it is agreed, we will use the long-term investment standard as a basis to model performance across our housing stock.

Reviewing our model

To make good use of our buildings, we will review our Asset Investment Model (AIM) and evaluate alternative models and methodologies. By adopting the right solution, we will ensure that the decisions we take about the future of our homes offer the best value.

Through our drive to expand the data we hold, we will be able to assess the performance of our assets more effectively.



Strengthening our data

Good decisions require good information. To ensure we can manage our homes and other assets effectively, we will continue to strengthen the quality of the data we hold about them.

To inform our decision-making and understand where investment will be needed, we will gather more detailed data on the condition of our homes and how they are performing.

This will help us to ensure we are spending money wisely and identify any alternative strategies that may be needed to achieve the high standards we aspire to.



‘We will use a wide range of operational, condition, environmental and customer data to understand the performance of our homes.’

Accurate information

So that we can be confident in our decision-making, we will work with a third party to review a representative sample of the data we currently hold about the **condition** of our homes, giving us independent validation of the accuracy of our information. If we identify any concerns as a result of inaccuracies in our data, we will respond to them immediately.

We will continue to ensure we have robust data to manage the **safety** and **compliance** of our homes, and we will use this to provide information to both our residents and the relevant regulator.

To **future-proof** the data we hold, we will add additional questions to progressively collect more information on our homes, so that we are ready for new legislation and regulation when it is introduced, such as the revised version of the Decent Homes Standard.



Peak performance

We are committed to playing our part in tackling the climate crisis. To understand the impact of our homes and the improvements that would be needed to deliver net zero carbon emissions by 2050, we will collect more comprehensive data on the **environmental performance** of our housing stock.

As we are looking to take a more sophisticated approach and expand our use of **data**, we will use a wide range of operational, condition, environmental and customer data to understand the performance of our homes and make informed decisions about their future.

To support this, we will also further enhance the **systems** we use to collect, manage and analyse data, and we will invest in developing the **analytical skills** of our in-house teams.



Building our capacity

To deliver for our customers, we invest in our people.

We will continue to build our capacity by enhancing the skills, knowledge and expertise we have across asset management, investment planning, sustainability, and building safety and compliance.

We will take a progressive and forward-thinking approach to managing our homes, developing our teams so that they can do more for our customers and communities.





Investing in our teams

With the increased focus on quality, safety and energy efficiency across the housing sector, individual expertise has never been more important. In line with our commitment to investing in our employees' professional development, which is set out in our People Strategy, we will map the **skills** and **competencies** we need to meet these challenges.



Where it is cost-effective and unlocks opportunities for us to work more effectively, we will support specialist **training** to enable our teams to develop – as well as using **recruitment** to ensure we have all the skills and knowledge we need.

To help our teams succeed, we will make sure we have defined, robust and effective **procedures** to support our people in their daily work. Because the wellbeing of our residents is paramount, we will consider using short-term **specialist support** for matters of building safety and compliance, to ensure that we always have the expertise we need.



Responding to change

So that we keep pace with the changing demands of the housing sector, we will continue to review our needs in line with the latest standards and practices, ensuring we have the right blend of **skills** within our teams.

To help our teams develop further and achieve more, we will embrace opportunities for **partnership working** and co-creation with our delivery and supply chain partners.

In line with our Digital Strategy, we will also explore the potential offered by **AI** to undertake and automate repetitive tasks, and make best use of the information we hold to ensure that our work is increasingly informed by data.

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