

**BROADLAND
HOUSING GROUP**



CORPORATE STRATEGY 2016 - 2019

The Background

Broadland Housing Association has been building and managing homes across Norfolk and North Suffolk for over 50 years. We are proud of what we have achieved, particularly the high standard of our properties and the support we offer our tenants.

We recognise that the world is a very different place to how it was when BHA was established and the pace of change has never been greater than in the past few years.

The challenges facing social housing providers and tenants are well publicised – many of our more vulnerable tenants are experiencing increasing financial hardship; our business model has been weakened due to reduced capital grants for new homes and reducing rents on our existing homes. Increasingly the sector is having to diversify into commercial activities, including market sale, in order to still deliver on our ambitions of providing good quality safe properties for people to turn into homes.

Despite the challenges Broadland Housing remains ambitious to make a significant and positive difference in the neighbourhoods we work in. Just because our financial model has become more complicated does not mean that we are willing to tone down our ambition.

We still want to ensure that we provide great services to our tenants; that we maintain our housing portfolio to a good standard; that we invest to reduce the likelihood of our tenants experiencing fuel poverty; and that we continue to build new affordable homes for rent and shared ownership.

In order to realise our development ambitions, we know that we need to be increasingly creative and innovative. We are working closely with North Norfolk District Council and other local authority partners to deliver much-needed affordable homes and through our subsidiary, Broadland St Benedict's, we will be building homes for market sale with profits reinvested in BHA.

Broadland Housing is committed to holding true to our purpose and values over the next decade – it might be more difficult, but we don't see that as a reason to dilute our ambition. This strategy explains what we aim to achieve.

Our Overview

What we were set up to do: -

Our organisational purpose is to help families and individuals in housing need access high quality homes in Norfolk and North Suffolk.

What this means: -

We offer a range of housing options, including low cost rented and low cost home ownership, as we are committed to helping people on low incomes access high quality well managed and well maintained homes.

Our current priorities are: -

- To provide fit for purpose local housing and asset management services
- To help our tenants sustain their tenancies
- To reduce fuel poverty amongst our tenants.
- To involve our residents in shaping the services we provide
- To build at least an additional 175 new homes for rent and low cost home ownership over the next five years
- To ensure that we provide excellent value for money and maintain a focus on minimising increases in our operating costs.
- To develop digital services that benefit our customers and drive efficiencies in the business

Our ground rules are: -

- We listen to our customers and stakeholders and focus on understanding the aspirations of our tenants and people in housing need within our communities
- Fairness is important to us and we will always be intolerant of any form of discrimination against colleagues and customers
- Our staff are the lifeblood of the organisation and we are committed to supporting them to achieve fantastic results
- We work in partnerships with others to help low income families and individuals access high quality homes
- We will use our resources wisely, to maximise the return (social and financial) to our communities and the value for money of our activities
- We will all work in a professional, trustworthy and reliable way
- We will seek to minimise the impact of our activities on the environment

The Board have identified the following strategies that will help Broadland deliver on our priorities over the next three to four years. These are: -

- Development
- Digital
- Environmental
- Finance
- Governance
- People
- Tenancy Support
- Tenant Engagement and Involvement
- Value for Money

Our Value for Money Strategy

What we want to achieve:

- We will seek economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equality in all our activities
- We will be open to sharing services with or providing services to other social landlords, if such an approach delivers sustainable cost savings to us
- We will seek cost sustainability by understanding the cost drivers within the business that have maximum impact on our bottom line and reviewing how we can re-engineer them to reduce cost
- We will optimise the benefits of having an in house procurement team to deliver savings on our purchasing and commissioning of consultancy services, building contracts and the supplies required to run the business.
- We will undertake regular improvement reviews across the business to ensure that our services and processes are fit for purpose
- We will invest in information systems and technology, including RSL Manager, where such investment delivers efficiency and effectiveness gains and greater economy.
- We will maintain our Asset and Liability Register to ensure that we understand our return on assets against our objectives, and can make decisions accordingly.
- We will aim to improve our HouseMark value for money ranking

How we will know if we are achieving our aims:

Our Strategic Performance Measures are: -

- Our HouseMark Value for Money Scorecard demonstrates performance within our VFM tolerances levels
- Our performance against business plan assumptions
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis in our annual Value for Money Self Assessment

Our Tenancy Support Strategy

What we want to achieve:

- We will invest in a strong effective tenancy support team to help tenants sustain their tenancies despite the challenges of welfare reform and other policy changes that affect household income.
- We will work in partnership with other organisations and agencies who can support our tenants and help them sustain their tenancies
- We will ensure that tenants are able to access help in managing any debts they have

How we will know if we are achieving our aims:

Our Strategic Performance Measures are: -

- Comprehensive annual report to the Board on tenancy support covering client profile, volume of need, type of interventions and support outcomes achieved.

Our Tenant Engagement and Involvement Strategy

What we want to achieve:

- We will seek opportunities both digitally and face to face to engage with our tenants and to understand their views on our services
- We will improve the way we undertake surveys of tenants and will particularly maximise our use of digital channels to hear their opinions
- We will always have at least two tenants on our board to ensure that we do not forget who we are in business for and we will use our best endeavours to extend the capacity for tenant engagement at board level
- We will encourage challenge from and scrutiny by tenants, supporting appropriate tenant forums where possible
- During 2016/17 we will learn from other organisations and will extend the range of opportunities for engagement and involvement for our tenants

How we will know if we are achieving our aims:

Our Strategic Performance Measures are: -

- An annual report to the Board on tenant engagement highlighting tenant satisfaction, levels of involvement and how tenants have influenced the shape of our services.

Our Environmental Strategy

What we want to achieve:

- We will maintain our focus on reducing the likelihood of our tenants experiencing fuel poverty by delivering our CROHM reinvestment strategy to ensure that we do not own homes with a lower EPC rating than C by 2019.
- We will provide information and support to our team and tenants to help them be aware of how their behaviours impact on the environment and can be changed.
- We will seek to reduce the negative environmental impacts of our own business activities in particular those relating to:
 - Our construction and maintenance activities
 - Our offices, including energy use, water use and waste;
 - Our communications materials, including our use of resources (mainly paper and inks) and transport for printed materials
 - The goods and services we choose for our offices, including office supplies, ICT and electronic equipment and furniture

How we will know if we are achieving our aims:

Our Strategic Performance Measures are: -

- We will maintain or improve our SHIFT (Sustainable homes index for tomorrow) Assessment
- Our progress in implementing our CROHM (Carbon Reduction Options for Housing Management) recommendations
- We will build new homes that exceed an EPC assessment of C

Our Digital by Default Strategy

What we want to achieve:

- We will ensure that our services to tenants, where appropriate, are available online, mobile-ready, easy to use and accessible
- We will optimise our use of digital technology to enable us to deliver our services in the most cost effective manner achievable
- We will enable mobile and agile working by our teams by investing in appropriate hardware and software
- We will transition existing paper based processes to digital as quickly as financially possible
- We will actively support team members and tenants in acquiring appropriate digital skills
- We will ensure that our digital communications, including our website and our use of social media, is effective and fit for purpose and reaches the audiences we prioritise
- We will also recognise that not all our tenants and prospective tenants can access digital services equally and will give consideration to their particular needs to ensure that they are not discriminated against.

How we will know if we are achieving our aims:

Our Strategic Performance Measures are: -

- Increase the number of stakeholders, policy makers and members of our wider communities engaging with us on social media
- Overall percentage of digital interactions with our tenants increases by at least 10% per annum, with an associated reduction in other channels of contact, with no reduction in tenant satisfaction.

Our Development Strategy

What we want to achieve:

- We will maximise the number of new affordable homes we build, without putting at risk the financial viability of the organisation
- We will optimise our delivery of market sale homes through Broadland St Benedict's in order to maximise the number of homes we build for rent at social and affordable rent levels and shared ownership
- We will build in areas of Norfolk where there is clear housing need and we can manage the properties effectively
- We will build in an environmentally responsible way with a primary focus on reducing the heating bills of those that will live in the homes
- We will aim to replace any homes sold under right to buy within three years

How we will know if we are achieving our aims:

Our Strategic Performance Measures are: -

- We will have a minimum consented development three-year pipeline that will deliver an average of 35 affordable rented and shared ownership homes per annum, additional to any properties sold under right to buy.
- We will have a sufficient land bank and planning consents to allow the Group to replace properties sold under right to buy within three years, based on reasonable projections of demand and government funding of tenant discounts
- Our development delivery will conform with our 2016 Business Plan assumptions.

Our Finance Strategy

What we want to achieve:

- We will minimise our rental arrears and void rent losses, so that we optimise the Group's income
- We will maintain our compliance with the covenants we have agreed with the banks who have lent us money
- We will raise new finance to deliver our development ambitions and to ensure that we have at least 18 months of sufficient funding to support our business plan
- We will negotiate with our funders to facilitate the development ambitions of Broadland St Benedict's and so the delivery of more affordable homes
- We will comply with the Homes and Communities Economic Standards
- We will consider within the next five years gaining a market rating

How we will know if we are achieving our aims:

Our Strategic Performance Measures are: -

- The estimated number of months until we need to refinance remains within our tolerance levels
- We will maintain our loan covenant compliance
- Our Lost income due to rent arrears and voids remains within our tolerance levels
- We will maintain a compliant HCA Viability Judgement whilst maximising our delivery of new homes
- We will ensure that we have an adequate ratio of available security to the next three-year development spend

Our Governance Strategy

What we want to achieve:

- We will simplify our structure to deliver greater value for money
- We will optimise our openness and transparency in decision making
- We will maintain compliance with any regulatory requirements placed upon us
- We will ensure a strong and robust internal audit function which adds value to the business
- We will maintain a strong effective approach to risk management
- We will maintain clarity on the roles and responsibilities of non-executives and executives
- We will comply with the Homes and Communities Agency's Consumer Standards
- We will review our corporate strategy annually to understand the implications of any new or revised government policies or economic circumstances

How we will know if we are achieving our aims:

Our Strategic Performance Measures are: -

- Our progress in implementing our action plan following our 2015/16 Governance Review remains within agreed timescales
- Maintenance of our G1 Homes and Communities Agency Regulatory Judgement
- Percentage of internal audit recommendations that are implemented within agreed timescales
- An annual self-assessment of our compliance with the HCA's Consumer Standards

Our People Strategy

What we want to achieve:

- We are one team, supporting and encouraging each other
- We will review our terms and conditions of employment to ensure that they are appropriate and will allow us to recruit and retain the best people
- We will invest in learning and development to ensure that our people are equipped to do their jobs
- We will ensure that all members of the staff team understand how their individual role enables the Group to deliver our mission and priorities
- We seek high levels of staff engagement and will consider annually the messages from the Best Companies survey
- We will equip and train our people so that they have the digital skills required for their jobs
- We will create and maintain a culture of digital engagement across the Group's staff team

How we will know if we are achieving our aims:

Our Strategic Performance Measures are: -

- Annual improvement in our numerical Best Companies Score
- Annual Staff sickness and staff turnover benchmarked against sector peers
- Maintenance of our RICS Inclusive Employer Quality Mark at "role model" level
- Staff satisfaction with the digital tools we provide