



'Business Head/Social Heart'
Value For Money Strategy
2024-2026



Date of Approval	TBC
Responsible Director	Executive Director of Finance
Strategy Monitoring Body	Group Board
Resident Input into Strategy	Tenant Scrutiny Group
Dates for Strategy Review	Formally in 2026 to align with 2026-29 Corporate Plan
Linked strategies	Cross-cutting strategy hence most other Strategies (e.g. Treasury Strategy, Procurement Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, Resident Involvement Strategy, Investment Policy, etc)
Statutory and Legal Framework	RSH VFM Standard
Version	V4

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the refreshed Value for Money (VFM) strategy is to set out the strategic priorities and main objectives to be delivered between November 2024 to March 2026 continuing the work delivered as part of the original Business Head/Social Heart VFM Strategy.

The VFM strategy aligns with the Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) Corporate Plan by ensuring our focus is to support the delivery of services more efficiently, empowering colleagues to take decisions closer to the customer by engaging them in the decision-making process.

The VFM strategy will align and sit alongside the work of the business transformation team and programme board in implementing new systems and ways of working that more efficiently delivers customers the services that matter most to them.

As part of this alignment with the Corporate Plan, we will continue to lay the foundation in best VFM practices by embedding our strategy up to 2026 as the Organisation lays the foundation for the next phase - 'Stretch Shot' (2026-29).

Over the last 3 years, significant time and investment has been made in broadening our approach to achieving Value for Money opportunities and embedding a culture across the organisation that understands the need to maximise the resources at our disposal to ensure high-quality service delivery.

The Sector and its customers has been challenged by inflationary pressures and the cost-of-living crisis which impacts acutely on our customers, notably in energy and food cost inflation.

These economic pressures, are forecast to reduce but economic conditions for our customers are set to be challenging for the foreseeable future, as costs remain high. Therefore, this strategy will reflect the need to further involve our customers on VFM decision making, improve communication on our efforts to demonstrate VFM and added value from the services we deliver and greater transparency in our approach to service charges.

2. Regulation

The VFM strategy complies with the Regulator for Social Housing's VFM Standard and the specific expectations that Registered Providers must demonstrate are as follows:

- A robust approach to achieving value for money. This must include a robust approach to decision making and a rigorous appraisal of potential options for improving performance.
- Regular and appropriate consideration by the board of potential value for money gains. This must include full consideration of costs and benefits of alternative commercial, organisational and delivery structures.
- Consideration of value for money across their whole business including their approach to investment in non-social housing activity. They should include whether this generates returns commensurate to the risk involved and justification where this is not the case.
- That they have appropriate targets in place for measuring performance in achieving value for money in delivering their strategic objectives, and that they regularly monitor and report their performance against these targets.

In April 2024, new Consumer Standards from The Regulator for Social Housing came into effect. Although there are no changes to the Value for Money Standard, some of the changes to the Consumer Standards create additional expectation in relation to value for money and the information WCHG provide to customers to allow them to hold us to account. These changes include:

Safety and Quality Standard

As a registered provider, WCHG must ensure that the delivery of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to homes and communal areas is informed by the needs of customers and provides value for money.

Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

WCHG must ensure that communication with and information for tenants is clear, accessible, timely and appropriate to the diverse needs of tenants, including information regarding value for money of services that are delivered

As part of providing on-going performance information, we are required to also provide tenants with how income is being spent as the Group reviews its approach to service charges.

Working with the Group's communications team, we will review our approach to communication with our customers and create a communications plan to further engage and provide opportunities for customers to influence our approach to VFM.

3. Objectives of the VFM strategy

The Objectives of the VFM strategy are to ensure:

- We run our business efficiently and effectively by aligning best practice procurement and transformation practices to our day-to-day operations.
- we comply with the RSH's Value for Money Standard and support achievement of the future VFM targets, whilst delivering our own VFM performance measures
- we continuously improve customer influence on VFM; embedding them in the heart of VFM decision making and encouraging scrutiny.
- we continuously improve colleague influence on VFM; enabling colleagues to have a VFM voice and ensure our services continue to innovate and provide best value.
- we create social value within our operations and our supply chains that delivers what's important to customers and the community

The Organisation has delivered a significant amount of progress on VFM over the duration of the previous strategy. Achievements of the previous strategy have been recorded separately.

In revising this VFM strategy, the Board, customers and colleagues have been consulted to achieve a collaborative approach in developing an updated approach.

The customer consultation focused on how customer influence, and specifically communication, can be improved using a variety of methods at our disposal to obtain

feedback from Customers but also ensure proactive involvement in decision making in relation to VFM.

WCHG have included an additional Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) in this year's survey regarding if our customers feel the rent they pay is value for money.

The Colleague consultation focused on a reflection on what has and hasn't been successful as part of the previous strategy, ideas to improve VFM, whilst also considering ways to help integrate VFM further embed into organisational culture.

The Tenant Scrutiny Group have been consulted on the main points during the development of the VFM strategy and action plan and have provided feedback on how best to engage with Customers moving forward and what services require improvement.

This VFM Strategy supports the objectives of the VFM theme detailed in the Group's Corporate Plan, which in summary is : "We will build on our resilient financial position, making sure every pound we spend adds social and/or financial value to support the delivery of our purpose. Our VfM strategy is focussed on delivering tangible cash benefits, optimising the impact of our social investment, and investing to deliver future benefits"

Specific strategy contributors are detailed below:

Benchmarking

This strategy will have increased focus on benchmarking our VfM performance against our peer group and sector-wide. We commit to undertake in-depth VFM benchmarking in significantly more detail than in the VFM statement within the annual financial statements. We commit to achieving the medium quartile of VFM performance in comparison with sector peers throughout this strategy

Service charge Project

The ongoing Service Charges project will be a key contributor to VFM within WCHG. Transparency in our communication to Customers regarding the value for money of services that WCHG provides, continues to be a key priority for the Group. This is more important when we are charging customers separately for those services.

The project seeks to ensure that WCHG recover and charge the correct amount for the services we deliver but also how we evidence and communicate the delivery of VFM through our operations, our procurement activity and approach to managing contractors.

Use of the SHAPE model

VFM principles will also support the Group's approach to strategic asset management via the SHAPE model. This analyses the thirty-year net present value of our properties to allow the making of investment or disposal decisions based on whole life cycle costs. It also balances revenue against capital investment and utilises data modelling to identify opportunities for VFM efficiencies. This work will be delivered through the Group's Asset Management Strategy but is a key contributor to VFM.

Transformation

The Transformation programme is a key enabler of VFM over the duration of this strategy. The Transformation team will lead work regarding the benefits realisation model and the VFM Steering Group, the cross departmental group of colleagues tasked with providing

awareness and impact in relation to VFM, will support this work where applicable to ensure that VFM remains an integral part of investment and transformation decision making.

4. Governance and Delivery

4.1 Board

The Board have the responsibility for approving the VFM Strategy and ensuring proper oversight of the value delivered through our services to our Customers and Community.

The Board will give full consideration to the cost and benefit of proposals that are within their remit, providing challenge and scrutiny in order to ensure that VFM is planned and delivered, with a clear audit trail of the decision-making process and outcome.

The Board will have oversight of the RSH's VFM Standard metrics, the strategy action plan and internal performance measures on an bi-annual basis to ensure delivery of VFM objectives in line with this strategy. Throughout the duration of this strategy, we will work to embed these measures within the corporate performance pack.

The Board will review and approve annual budgets and the business plan ensuring delivery of VFM outcomes and will monitor actual results against targets on an annual basis.

4.2 Group Leadership Team/Senior Leadership Team

The Group Leadership Team (GLT) are responsible for delivering the VFM strategy and its objectives.

The Group Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that all strategic decisions made on the use of Group's resources clearly demonstrate VFM and ensure Board reports contain detailed information on the VFM implications of Board decisions;

The Group Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will have oversight of the budgeting and business planning process which will have a clear focus on VFM outcomes by providing robust challenge to submitted budgets.

The GLT and SLT will monitor VFM metrics including RSH's VFM Standards and specific internal VFM measures as part of the Group's Performance Pack.

The Senior Leadership Team will receive and scrutinise and VFM ideas successfully triaged by the VFM Steering Group

4.3 Value for Money Steering Group

Each Colleague at WCHG has the responsibility for demonstrating awareness and impact of VFM. The Value for Money Steering Group will ensure consistency in what VFM means to WCHG and provide support to colleagues to ensure effective delivery.

Projects such as the Groups benefits realisation model and review of service charge processes have been aligned to transformation projects within the transformation team. The VFM steering group will support these projects by adding expertise and effective governance to ensure there is a formal review in relation to VFM as part of approval processes.

As part of its delivery, the VFM Steering Group will support the delivery of the objectives detailed within this strategy. The steering group will also receive and triage ideas from colleagues for VFM improvements across the organisation as part of enhancing colleague influence and will communicate VFM Achievements across both colleagues and customers.

4.4 Customers

The CX Committee and its Tenant Scrutiny Group are vehicles for customers to hold the Group accountable for VFM through sharing of relevant performance information, strategic updates and review of customer related policies.

Throughout this strategy, a variety of feedback methods will be used to seek customer influence in our approach to service delivery.

The volunteer service inspectors group will be further developed to ensure quality of inspection of works delivered on void properties.

The volunteer procurement evaluator and contract manager roles will be assessed to determine the impact on ensuring customer voice is embedded throughout our contract lifecycle. The aim of this review is to expand participation in VFM decisions that impact customers

This strategy also commits to providing bi-annual updates to CX committee regarding VFM performance specific to customer influence identified in this strategy.

4.5 Colleagues

VFM will be part of the WCHG culture and colleagues will understand that VFM is everyone's business. This will be reflected in continuous performance engagement (CPE) discussions with line managers

Managers and budget holders take ownership of effectively managing their budgets in order to deliver VFM;

The VFM Idea box is to be further communicated for colleagues to contribute ideas and VFM improvements in return for incentives for any VFM ideas successfully triaged and implemented by members of the VFM Steering Group;

Frequent VFM engagement and roadshows with colleagues will be undertaken throughout the year to broaden the opportunity for colleagues to influence our approach to VFM and to highlight opportunities to improve and deliver our services more efficiently.

4.6 Regulator

The Regulator is responsible for setting the framework for monitoring the delivery of VFM through the VFM Standard.

The RSH will review WCHG's compliance with the VFM Standard through annual stability checks with VFM continuing to be a key area of focus in the next inspection.

5. Realising and demonstrating VFM

To evaluate the success of the VFM strategy, the following measures are in place to identify, calculate, report and monitor VFM.

5.1 RSH's VFM Standard

We will comply with the RSH's VFM Standard and monitor the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) VFM metrics, and seek to manage these indicators over time as part of the annual business planning process where WCHG can reasonably influence.

We will benchmark against the annual published VFM metrics report and against peers within our region, to understand and improve VFM.

We will publish an annual statement on VFM as part of our annual report and financial statements. This includes the actual VFM metrics outcomes, along with variances to the targeted metrics and supplementary analysis.

The annual VFM statement also includes the forecasted VFM metrics for the next four years. These targets, along with the actuals for the last three years, are shown in **Appendix A**.

5.2 Internal VFM Measures

WCHG report and monitor an extensive suite of measures as part of our wider performance management framework.

As part of this revised strategy, we will include within this framework a number of measures which allow us to assess the performance of VFM (see **Appendix B**).

These indicators are highlighted as being those measures that most strongly demonstrate VFM, allowing the Board to have clear visibility of VFM performance and review delivery of VFM objectives in line with this strategy.

6. VFM Strategy Action plan

As part of reporting a monitoring the internal VFM Measures, **Appendix B** details the strategic action plan that has been prepared to deliver the objectives of this strategy.

7. Review

The next VFM Strategy will align with the Group's next Corporate Plan in March 2026.

An annual update will be provided to Board on the status of the delivery of the VFM Strategy to offer assurance to Board that the strategy remains fit for purpose, and to confirm continued compliance with the Regulator for Social Housing's VFM Standard and all relevant legislation and statutory requirements.

8. Glossary of Terms

Benchmarking	Comparison of performance against other providers of similar services, particularly those recognised as adopting best practice.
Best practice	The most effective and desirable method of carrying out a function or process derived from experience rather than theory.

Greater Manchester Spend	Spend within Greater Manchester borough's
Service Charge	Payments made by leaseholders to WCHG for services that are provided. Leaseholders have to pay a share of the cost of these repairs and services, and these costs are called service charges.
SHAPE	A business intelligence platform that allows WCHG to understand the performance of its properties, measured against WCHG's objectives and using business plan assumption, to inform long term strategic asset management decisions, in particular disposal or continued investment
Social Value	The impact WCHG has on society, the environment, and the economy with each pound we spend.
Value for Money	Maximising the resources we can invest to provide good quality, good value services and deliver social value impact for current and future tenants, leaseholders and their communities