

Wythenshawe  
Community Housing Group

The background of the entire page is an aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood, showing rows of houses, trees, and a road. Overlaid on this is a large white rectangular box with rounded corners and a thick blue and green border. Inside this box, the title text is centered.

# STRATEGIC PLAN *Towards* 2020

## WYTHENSHAW COMMUNITY HOUSING GROUP STRATEGIC PLAN

# *“Towards 2020”*

This document sets out in simple terms our direction of travel leading to 2020. No-one can accurately predict the future but our ability to respond flexibly and with clear sense of purpose will help the Group enhance its mission through its organisational values. The delivery of our vision for the business is what underpins all our work.



### Vision

*“Creating communities where people choose to live and work, having pride in their homes and value the services.”*

**The values which our business are built upon**



Since the new Group was established in April 2013, we have sought to build on the strengths of both Parkway Green and Willow Park to forge a new dynamic approach to the delivery of our services. All services within the Group have been reviewed and new united teams created to provide one service. This underpins the ambitions of the Board for efficiencies to be created that help re-invest in our services and enhance delivery for our customers and the wider community.

## Background

If we consider the housing business in which we operate, we can offer some simple reflection on core factors:

## Product

We have just under 14,000 homes in our stock ranging from 1 bedroom to 6 bedrooms. We provide a core of rented properties, both social and affordable rents, with a smaller supply of shared ownership homes. We also provide a number of market rented properties and a number of apartments and houses for outright sale in our forward programme, including our new extra-care development which will be available in 2017.

The active asset management of our aging stock is a crucial factor for future investment decisions. It ensures that we understand our stock and the demands it places on our services.

It is also recognised that as a business we need to be able to respond to the external environment. Changes in the environment including government policy, regulation and the ongoing welfare reforms, requires us to be adaptable to meet future challenges. Equally important will be using our capacity to help meet housing demand locally, and also in a wider sense, which will ensure we are aligned with the housing requirements of Manchester's new Affordable Housing Strategy, the Greater Manchester (GM) Strategy, and government policy in general.





## Supply and Demand

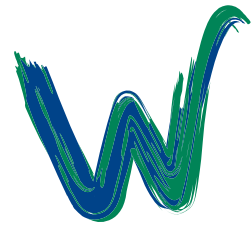
We own the vast majority of socially rented houses within the area of Wythenshawe as the successor body to the City Council Housing Department. Demand remains strong in the majority of areas for our housing stock. Although Welfare Reform has impacted upon rental collection and rent arrears, we have not suffered from any increase in abandonment or hard to let properties.

## Surplus or Profit

The housing sector often refers to its “Surplus” which is the element of income left after costs have been deducted. WCHG needs to be clear that we must generate “surpluses” to enable us to invest in activities deemed important by our Board for the communities we serve. The ability to generate strong surpluses is also important to give confidence to our various stakeholders that we are a sustainable and viable business. We do not distribute our “surplus” as a profit generating private business might. Any surpluses generated are therefore reinvested in assets and services.

## Value for Money (VFM)

An understanding of the costs of delivering our services and the value they provide is important to enable the business to function effectively and efficiently. Good financial control and performance management are also key. The management team has a clear understanding of the need for robust controls, and again in simple terms understand the need to be able to define “what an activity costs”. Procurement is at the core of building a shared understanding across the whole business. Providing our stakeholders with good assurance, developing a framework when decisions on the investment of resources are taken with full understanding of the relative costs / value is critical for both the Board and Management Team.



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## Brand Identity

Our brand is sustained through the delivery of our strategic objectives. We take pride in the services we provide, and we recognise that strong brand identity supports the continued development of improved services, whilst delivering further VFM. The development of brand awareness will focus on the close connection between the organisation and the communities it serves.

## Research and Development

We recognise that anticipating future trends and collaborating with partners to develop accurate projections is extremely beneficial, especially when this relates to future demand and needs in housing provision and complementary services.

A key local example would be the demand for older persons' housing. Our local population is aging but older provision such as sheltered housing is not seen as a service for the future. Demand from prospective customers is changing and so investment decisions need to be sound as they will have an impact on the next 60-100 years.

Our customers sit at the heart of our business and have a key role working alongside colleagues in helping to review services, holding services to account through scrutiny and also crucially helping us assess and evaluate new ideas and ventures. This approach helps ensure we align the needs of the business with those of the communities we serve into the future.





our customers. Robust appraisal and performance frameworks are in place and kept under review to ensure the workforce is given the best opportunity to develop and grow. The Group provides a range of apprenticeship opportunities both craft/trade based and office based. We are also committed to the provision of a range of programmes providing work experience, traineeships and job search support.

## Governance

Strong and resilient governance structures remain crucial as we enter the next period. The Group established a new framework and it is appropriate that we continue to review the effectiveness of this to ensure that the challenges of strong governance are allied to the needs of the business and the demands of the external environment. We will continue to actively plan succession to manage the replacement of established Board members when they reach the end of their terms of office. We will continue to invest in the development of the Board to ensure the Board has the appropriate mix of skills to deliver effective governance in an ever changing environment.

It is also important that a positive relationship is maintained with our regulator at the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to ensure that Board members have a clear grasp of their responsibilities and an understanding of the Regulatory Framework, including Government Policy, VFM and risk management.



## Employer

As the largest Manchester based Registered Provider, we are a significant employer of choice. The pride and ownership felt by colleagues for the communities we serve and the services provided is evident in their work. It comes with some significant responsibilities and we treat these and that of being a quality employer seriously, investing in colleagues to ensure we attract, develop and retain the necessary skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver high performing services for

# Our 2020 Challenge

1. Growth
2. Services
3. Partnerships
4. Viability
5. Community Investment
6. Towards independence, breaking dependency

Each of these key challenges will be the subject of strategic focus throughout the period up to 2020, supported by our Annual Corporate Plan and Service Plans. The aim is to enable colleagues to track their progress and contribution to the delivery of our Strategic Plan. Following the formation of the Group in 2013, we have successfully delivered the **Transformation Plan**, and outperformed all the

targets in the original **Business Case**. We now look forward to 2020 setting ambitious and stretching targets to take our work forward. The success of this plan will be measured by how our **vision** of WCHG becomes a reality for our customers:

## People choose to live and work in our communities because they:

- Offer employment opportunities
- Offer access to outstanding schools
- Have a good supply of high quality housing choices
- Offer a safe environment.

## People take pride in their homes and services because they:

- Report a high level of satisfaction with their home and services
- Feel part of a community
- Have access to a range of appropriate services
- Have control over their lives and can influence their outcomes.

# By 2020, we will be delivering the following...

## 1. Growth

We will initially deliver 500 new homes, and utilise our capacity to establish an ambitious ongoing development programme to help meet the needs of the community and complement the “GM Strategy” in Manchester, providing a range of rented and home ownership opportunities.

The provision of houses for sale, shared ownership and market rent will mean we need to adequately model our business plan to reflect these differing risks; ensuring we have the correct skills set in both governance and the management team to control and manage the operations. As we embed our ongoing development programme,

we recognise we will need to look within and beyond our geographic boundaries to meet housing demand locally, Manchester’s new Affordable Housing Strategy, the GM Strategy and on a wider scale, the government objectives in addition to maximising the return on our assets.

The Board will consider opportunities that fit with our vision and values, and appraise schemes against specific criteria, to be agreed and approved by the Board. Key to this criteria will be viability, affordability, the protection of our existing assets for the sustainability of our communities, and the fit with our current business.

## 2. Services

We will deliver high levels of customer satisfaction as one of the top performing landlords of our size and be clear on how we compare with relevant peers. Our target will be to achieve upper quartile performance where we believe this delivers VFM across our services.

We will use profiling and Customer Relationship Management intelligence to develop our approach to customer service supporting a ‘right first time’ approach, seeking to achieve excellence in this area. The use of technology will be kept under review to ensure the broadest range of choice of access to our services is available to our customers.

Working alongside our customers we will review and refresh all our services to ensure that they are fit for purpose and delivering efficiently.

We understand the costs of all our services and have made active decisions on their growth, sustainability or transformation, ensuring that the most efficient and effective services are available for our customers. The active management of our assets is crucial as this will influence significant investment decisions going forward. We will put in place the most appropriate resources to ensure we can manage this work and be able to effectively benchmark our results with suitable peers.

Core to the delivery of all our services are the colleagues who work across the business. We believe we offer a strong reward package. Investment in training and development is linked to individual targets and also personal development. We have a strong focus on recruiting and retaining the best people for the business. Ensuring a robust succession plan for key roles in the business will be important leading up to 2020.





### 3. Partnerships

Our approach to partnership working will be aligned to the delivery of our strategic objectives. We will develop partnerships which can deliver tangible benefits to our customers maximising VFM, strengthening our alignment to Health, Education and Employment through working with key partners.

### 4. Viability

We will be financially strong while maximising the return on our assets for the benefit of our stakeholders.

Robust budgeting, financial controls and sound investment decisions will underpin our viability. However we will seek to deliver more for less through the delivery of our VFM Strategy, where financial understanding and management of financial decisions is key. We will continue to

demonstrate to our stakeholders the value we deliver and the return on their investment.

A key objective to ensure we are maximising the return on our assets, will be to review our financial borrowing requirements and explore re-financing opportunities that best meet the needs of the business for the future.



## 5. Community Investment

We will build on our strong track record of community investment and regeneration work to create communities where people choose to live and work. This will mean working to help tackle deprivation through a range of activities and partnership working.

Working with customers and residents, we will drive social change through our community investment programme, focusing firmly on those activities that deliver the most towards our vision.

The programme will be underpinned by robust social impact measurement and we will continue to clearly and consistently demonstrate the social return on our investments.

## 6. Towards Independence, breaking dependency

We will work to maximise the number of people and communities who are self-sufficient, whilst continuing to focus resources on the vulnerable and those who need support. We will shape our services to ensure support, advice and guidance is provided to customers impacted by the welfare reforms.

The Group may have to make difficult choices in the future dependent on availability of resources and capacity; it is important we are honest about this while demonstrating our commitment to our values.





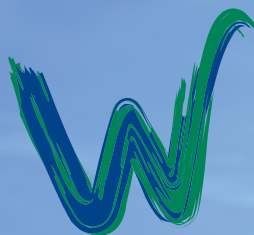
## Summary – by 2020

- We will be delivering a wide range of high quality services engaging and involving our customers
- We will have reviewed our external funding sources to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan
- We will have clear targets for growth, and an ambitious development programme
- Our customers, communities and partners will value the services we provide
- Our workforce will be highly motivated, competent and will deliver our vision through our values
- We will maximise the social, economic and environmental impact we can have in the communities where we live and work
- We will be able to demonstrate the effective use of our resources evidencing excellent governance assurance

The work leading to 2020 is to ensure our vision is delivered.

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## Contact Us

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**w:** [www.wchg.org.uk](http://www.wchg.org.uk)

**t:** 0800 633 5500

FREE FROM A LANDLINE

**t:** 0300 111 0000

LOCAL RATE FROM A MOBILE  
(if not included in free bundle minutes)

### **Parkway Green**

Parkway Green House  
460 Palatine Road, Northenden M22 4DJ

### **Willow Park**

Wythenshawe House,  
8 Poundswick Lane, Wythenshawe, Manchester M22 9TA



@wythenshawe\_chg



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