



Strategic Plan

2023



Together we make a difference

- ▲ We are an organisation that is committed to making a difference in the communities in which we work, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and North Essex. Caring for and supporting people, as well as providing them with a safe home, is central to what we do. This is a key differentiator and has made us one of the biggest providers of housing, support and care in the region.
- ▲ 60 years on from our foundation we still value the ethos of why we were created but we also aspire to do more. We want to be known as an organisation that provides the quality and type of housing which meets peoples needs at all stages in their life and where necessary be able to provide them with the care and support they need to have control over their future.
- ▲ This plan will support us to deliver our vision “That everyone has a safe place to call home with the care and support they need to live their best life” and puts the ethos of “together we make a difference” at the centre of what we do.
- ▲ We are a key local employer, with over 700 people and are committed to being a great place to work. We have around 4,500 homes in management and provide care and support to 1,500 people across Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and North Essex. This means that more than 8,000 people have a safe, affordable home giving them the opportunity to improve their life chances from a secure base.
- ▲ Our development company Orwell Homes Ltd supports the work of the Association by building homes for the private market to generate profit. This is then used by the Association to help us provide more affordable homes and services to our customers. Orwell Homes also supports the Association by developing our affordable homes programme and increasing our access to building land by developing mixed tenure sites that have both private and affordable homes.
- ▲ We enjoy a G1 (Governance) and a V2 (Viability) rating from the Regulator for Social Housing. We have a strong and well-established governance structure that includes Board members with a wide range of skills from the public, private and voluntary sector, along with Board members who are also customers. The Board devolves some its work to its committees which cover Audit, Customer Insight and Remuneration and Nomination. Our Orwell Residents Group (ORG) and resident task and finish groups provide a level of scrutiny of our services and we are working to expand our customer insight and increase the voice of the customer in all we do.



Our Operating Environment

We are continuing to operate in an environment which is incredibly challenging. The sector has been impacted by a number of macroeconomic shocks from Brexit, the covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine; all leading to the current economic impact of high inflation and a difficult labour market. The impact of all of these factors on areas of the business has meant that the sectors ability to recover and get back to pre-pandemic levels of customer service, especially around repairs delivery, has been increasingly challenging.

Recent interest rate rises by the Bank of England have further increased costs and although we are relatively protected from this impact, with only 7% of our borrowing on variable rates; this has still increased interest costs by over £250,000 pa. At the same time, we are aware that the cost-of-living crisis is having a detrimental impact on our customers and potentially their ability to pay their housing, care and support costs so incomes could be under further pressure over the next couple of years.

There is pressure on our supply chain, both in terms of sourcing goods and materials as well as the associated costs. Our financial plans incorporate the latest forecast estimates of cost increases that will affect our business to ensure we understand the impact of these challenges, but we recognise that there may be further unforeseen factors which we may have to address and therefore flexibility will be key.

Our aim to achieve an EPC C for all our homes by 2030 and to decarbonise our homes by 2050 has been built into our long-term business plan. We are hopeful that attracting Government funding to help with this investment will enable us to continue to invest in new homes as the need for affordable homes in our operational area remains high. Street homelessness, people experiencing mental ill health and the impact of chaotic lifestyles on health and housing has increased during the pandemic, whilst the challenge of adequate funding to support and care for people has not kept pace with demand. We are committed to doing what we can to secure funding streams to provide our customers with the care and support they need, but understand that the impact of the shortage of staff in the care and support sector is a key area of risk for us and one that we are working hard to mitigate.

We have closely followed the progress of the areas within the White Paper and tried to build these into our plans. We are working towards our objectives, while meeting or exceeding our regulatory requirements at the same time. We will continue to adapt our plans wherever necessary throughout the life of this strategy and will be guided by the increased insight that the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) and our Customer Insight team bring to the needs and wants of our customers.

Our Vision

That everyone has a safe place to call home with the care and support they need to live their best life.

Our Mission

That together we make a difference by providing housing, care and support services with the customers at our heart.



Our Values

Everything we do is linked back directly to our vision and values. To do this, we have set out four strategic objectives and targets to help us track whether we are making a difference.

People-focused

People are at the heart of our organisation. By recognising people's diverse needs and strengths and treating everyone fairly, we can both serve our customers better and support our teams to run a brilliant organisation and improve services.

Ambitious

We are ambitious to grow the organisation so that it can do more and realise the full potential of Orwell, our employees, and those we support and house.

Collaborative

We will work in partnership and search out best practice. We will collaborate with tenants, customers, colleagues and like-minded organisations to develop solutions together.

Effective

We will be economic and embed efficiency across our services, ensuring we lead the way with our knowledge and expertise. We will ensure that our teams are committed and competent to be the best at what they do, in order that they can provide the highest possible standards of service.



P **A** **C** **E**

Our Objectives

1 **People-focused** - Put our customers, our communities and our people at the heart of our organisation.

What we want to achieve:

- ▲ High levels of customer satisfaction.
- ▲ All care services to achieve and retain a GOOD CQC rating.
- ▲ Sustained tenancies, preventing homelessness with zero evictions.
- ▲ A growth in the development and career opportunities for our people.

To achieve this over the next 5 years we will:

- ▲ Provide a high quality, responsive day to day repairs service that meets customers needs.
- ▲ Get repairs right first time.
- ▲ Provide support to help customers sustain their tenancies.
- ▲ Provide customers with a choice in the way they communicate with us both digitally and in person.

Our Objectives

2 Ambitious - Be ambitious and invest in our communities and our people. Be a great organisation and employer and somewhere people are proud to live and work.

What we want to achieve:

- ▲ The prevention and relief of homelessness and to help meet housing need in our communities.
- ▲ An increase in the availability of care and support for people to enable them to be independent and live their best life.
- ▲ The attraction, recruitment and retention of people who accord with our values.
- ▲ A happy, healthy workplace where people are comfortable being their authentic self and feel supported and empowered.
- ▲ To be an employer of choice.
- ▲ A highly skilled professional workforce.

To achieve this over the next 5 years we will:

- ▲ Continue to look for innovative ways to build, buy and lease new social, affordable and shared ownership homes.
- ▲ Work with partners in health and social care to identify areas of need and design suitable, sustainable services to help meet that need.
- ▲ Invest in the Orwell Academy to support innovative, ambitious and values-led individuals to achieve their goals.
- ▲ Ensure we have a physical and virtual work environment which is inclusive and flexible, focusing on wellbeing.
- ▲ Increase employee engagement.
- ▲ Have a clear, transparent and attractive employment offer.
- ▲ Maximise ways of working to drive engagement, collaboration, and efficient working practices.
- ▲ Tell the story of what we do and the social impact that we make.

Our Objectives

3 Collaborative - Know our customers and provide a service driven by their voice.

What we want to achieve:

- ▲ Increased level of customer engagement through a range of channels.
- ▲ Improvements to services delivery through co-creation with customers.
- ▲ Choice for our customers whenever possible.

To achieve this over the next 5 years we will:

- ▲ Use customer data and insight including compliments and complaints to understand what is important to our customers and use this insight to improve services and increase efficiency.
- ▲ Increase the opportunity and ease for customers to engage with us and co-create service improvements.
- ▲ Ensure the customer voice is heard at the strategic level and informs wider business decisions.
- ▲ Increase the number of areas where we can offer choice to our customers, recognising the needs and diversity of the individual.

Our Objectives

4 Effective - Improve our efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

What we want to achieve:

- ▲ Homes that are safe, energy efficient and well-maintained.
- ▲ A scalable and affordable solution to achieving net zero carbon for our homes by 2050.
- ▲ Reduction in our environmental impact.
- ▲ Efficient and effective services that meet the needs of our customers.
- ▲ An improvement in efficiency and/or quality by working collaboratively with others.

To achieve this over the next 5 years we will:

- ▲ Improve the energy efficiency of our homes and business to meet the Governments Future Homes Standard for retrofit.
- ▲ Build new homes to high environmental standards.
- ▲ Engage with customers to understand their environmental priorities and concerns.
- ▲ Be a partner of choice.
- ▲ Work with our partners including, Independent East, to identify areas where shared services or joint procurement could improve efficiency.
- ▲ Sell our expertise or services to other providers to generate income or reduce costs.

Our Measures and Metrics

By 2027 we will:



Achieve 92% customer satisfaction with our services



Achieve 90% employee satisfaction
Own and manage 4,900 homes



Increase the number of members of Orwell Residents Group
and Orwell's Think Tank by 50%



Reduce the carbon baseline of our homes and organisation by 10%
Run an efficient and effective business achieving an
operating margin of 15.8%





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