



Strategic Plan

2025 -2030



Who are we?

We are an organisation dedicated to making a difference in the communities in which we work: Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and North Essex by providing safe, comfortable homes with the care and support that our customers may need to be able to live the lives they choose. This commitment sets us apart and has helped establish us as one of the largest providers of housing, care and support in the region.

Over 60 years on from our foundation, we continue to uphold the ethos that drove our creation, while striving to do more. Our goal is to be recognised as a leader in providing housing, care and support that meets the diverse needs of individuals at every stage of their life. This Strategic Plan will guide us in achieving our vision “That everyone has a safe place to call home with the care and support they need to live their best life” Central to this is our mission of “Together we make a difference by providing housing, support and care services with customers at our heart”.

With a dedicated team of over 800 colleagues, we are a major local employer and a recognised great place to work. We currently own and manage 4,213 homes and provide housing management and care services for an additional 160 homes owned by other landlords. We support over 1,500 individuals across Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and North Essex, ensuring that more than 8,000 people have access to safe, affordable homes and the opportunity to improve their life prospects from a secure foundation.

Our development company Orwell Homes Ltd plays a critical role in supporting the organisation by building open market homes that generate profit. These funds are reinvested into providing more affordable housing and services to our customers. Orwell Homes also contributes to our affordable homes programme and expands our land acquisition capabilities by developing mixed tenure sites that have both private and affordable homes.

We are a part of Independent East, a network of five locally based, community focused landlords committed to

collaboration, best practices and shared services. Through our development consortium e², we help East Suffolk District Council and Ipswich Borough Council achieve their housing development goals. We are also active members of the National Housing Federation, BuildEast and Placeshapers.

We are proud to hold a G1 (Governance) and a V2 (Viability) rating and have not yet been assessed under the new C (Consumer) rating by the Regulator for Social Housing. We have a robust governance structure with a diverse Board that included members from the public, private and voluntary sectors as well as customers. The Board delegates some of its work to its committees covering Audit & Risk, Customer Insight and Remuneration and Nomination. Additionally, our Orwell Residents Group (ORG) and Resident Task and Finish groups provide valuable scrutiny of our services. We are committed to continually enhancing our customer insight and engagement to ensure our actions are always informed by the voice of our customers.

Independent **East** Board and Tenant Conference



James Francis, Saffron Housing Trust; **Wendy Evans-Hendrick**, Orwell Housing Association Ltd;
Andrew Smith, Havebury Housing Partnership; **Kate Henderson**, National Housing Federation;
Michael Newey, Broadland Housing; **Anita Jones**, Freebridge Community Housing.

Our Values



People Focused

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



Ambitious

We are ambitious to grow and improve, so that we can do more and realise the full potential of Orwell, our teams and our customers.



Collaborative

We will work with others to seek out best practice. We will collaborate with customers, colleagues and values-driven organisations to co-develop solutions.



Effective

We will embed efficiency and effectiveness across Orwell, ensuring we have the resources to support our teams to be fully committed, professional and knowledgeable and provide the highest possible service to our customers.



Our Operating Environment

As highlighted by the Regulator for Social Housing's Global Accounts, Housing Associations are facing significant financial pressure. Expenditure on property improvements and repairs has increased by 55% compared to pre-2020 levels, while rental income over the same period has risen by only 23%. This includes the 2023 rent cap, which was below the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Consequently, income has not kept pace with rising costs. The challenge of balancing competing priorities – such as continuing to build much-needed new homes, maintaining, improving and decarbonizing existing properties, and complying with the new Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 – requires difficult decisions about where to prioritise investment. As a result, Orwell, along with other social housing providers, has at times been unable to deliver the level of service we aspire to. This plan outlines clear objectives aimed at improving both service delivery and financial resilience, which enables us to continue developing new homes to meet the growing housing needs in our area.

Our goal is to achieve an Energy performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C for all our homes by 2030 and be carbon neutral by 2050. These targets are integral to our long-term business plan. We are committed to securing Government funding to help with this investment, and grant funding from

Homes England to allow us to continue to invest in new homes at a time when demand for affordable housing remains high.

As one of the largest care and support providers in our region, we have observed a steady increase in demand for our services. However, public funding has not kept pace with the rising costs of service provision. The recent increases in the National Living Wage and the Employer National Insurance contributions – particularly during a time when social care is already financially strained – place considerable pressure on our ability to maintain sustainable services. We are committed to ensuring that our care and support services remain financially viable and believe the true cost of care should be adequately funded by those commissioning the services.

Given the ongoing demand for both our housing and care services, it is essential that any growth in these areas remains sustainable. The need for robust governance, effective financial controls and comprehensive risk management has never been greater. We are well-positioned to navigate both current and future challenges, ensuring continued success and sustainability.



Prince of Wales Drive Ipswich, Suffolk.

Introducing our Plan

While our core vision, mission and values remain unchanged, this plan introduces a renewed focus on placing our customers at the heart of everything we do. Our goal is to enhance the quality of our offerings and deliver sustainable growth. We have always been passionate about supporting the communities in which we operate, providing safe, warm, high-quality homes and offering the care and support people need to live their best lives. Although these objectives have become increasingly challenging in recent years, we are more committed than ever to delivering services that are essential to our customers.

At Orwell, we take pride in offering exceptional homes and aspire to remain a key developer in our region, as well as the partner of choice for developers, local authorities and other stakeholders. Our properties are more than just buildings; they are homes where individuals should feel safe. Safety and quality are our top priorities, with a focus on meticulous attention to

detail. Whether creating new homes or improving existing ones, we are committed to working sustainably, using energy efficiently, and reducing our carbon footprint. We will actively listen to our customers, continuously improving our repair and maintain services to ensure our homes remain safe, high-quality and cost-efficient to operate.

We have closely monitored the development of the new Consumer Standards and are confident that we are well-positioned to achieve full compliance with these standards. We will continue to adapt our strategy as needed, informed by the insights provided by the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) and our Customer Insight team, which help us better understand the needs and preferences of our customers. Our ongoing investment in technology aims to enhance the efficiency, data-driven nature and accessibility of all our services, ensuring that we can meet the diverse needs of our customers.

As a major local employer, we are committed to the professionalisation of housing and care services and promoting these roles as rewarding careers. We will continue advocating for care work to receive the recognition it deserves as a skilled profession and will campaign for increased social care funding from commissioners and the government. We are dedicated to supporting our colleagues in building meaningful careers. We value diversity, responsibility, and flexibility in our teams, and encourage our colleagues to bring their best selves to work, sharing creative and innovative ideas to best serve our customers.

This plan has been developed using insight and involvement from our customers and outlines our key commitments for the next five years. Our ambition is for Orwell to become one of the leading community focused housing associations in the sector continuously innovating and refining our systems to bring this vision to life.



Image taken from our Mental Health in Construction event at Ipswich Town Football Club. **Ian Semel**, Integrative Counsellor at National Gambling Support Network
Greg Dodds, Assistant Director of Development and Growth at Orwell.

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

Our Mission is that together we make a difference by providing housing, support and care services with customers at our heart.

Our key objectives for this plan are:

Putting
People
at the
heart of what
we do.

Being
Ambitious
for our homes
and our
customers.

To
Collaborate
with others
to achieve
more.

Being an
Effective
team
and
organisation.



Katherine Warburton, Service Manager at Hinde House.



Our 2025 - 30 Objectives

1. Putting people at the heart of what we do

We will...

- ▲ Provide great services to our customers and co-create services and systems with them.
- ▲ Ensure customers feel listened to and colleagues are empowered to act to resolve customer concerns.
- ▲ Support our most vulnerable customers to maintain their independence and tenancy.
- ▲ Involve our customers in order that they influence our services.
- ▲ Have a strong Board that includes Customer Board members ensuring it hears the voice of the customer in its decision making.

We will achieve this by...

- ▲ Being driven and guided by customer insight and engagement and adapting and reviewing our offer to better align with customers' needs.
- ▲ Putting in place a Customer Insight and Resolutions Team who focus on ensuring that any customer concerns are listened to and resolved effectively.
- ▲ Having dedicated Tenancy Sustainment Officers who can provide advice and support to general needs customers and specialist care and support colleagues to enable people to live their best life whilst remaining in their home.
- ▲ Developing fully inclusive ways people can engage with us either digitally, over social media platforms, or in person led by a Customer Insight and Resolutions Team.
- ▲ Having at least 2 customer Board Members, providing engaged customers with access to the Board along with appropriate training and support.

2. Being ambitious for our homes and our communities

We will...

- ▲ Increase the number of homes we own or manage to help meet the housing need in our communities.
- ▲ Invest in our homes to ensure that our housing stock meets the target of net zero carbon by 2050.
- ▲ Ensure that all our homes achieve EPC C as a minimum by 2030.
- ▲ Invest in the quality of our homes to ensure that they provide safe, warm and efficient homes for our customers.
- ▲ Dispose of homes that do not meet our quality standards or net zero ambitions and reinvest the proceeds in either new homes or accelerate the improvement of existing homes.

We will achieve this by...

- ▲ Building or acquiring 500 homes for rent and shared ownership by 2030 which address current and future housing needs.
- ▲ Utilising available grant funding and external expertise to inform our road to net zero and incorporating appropriate energy improvements in our annual property improvement budget.
- ▲ Prioritising those properties that have been identified as being below EPC C for property improvements over the 5 years of this plan.
- ▲ Invest £55m over the next 5 years to improving the quality of our homes.
- ▲ Using our Stock Condition Surveys to identify appropriate properties for disposal and then working with customers to develop move on plans into better quality housing.



3. Collaborating with others to achieve more

We will...

- ▲ Continue to seek out areas of joint working and shared services that improve quality and produce efficiencies.
- ▲ Co-create care and support services that are sustainable and of good quality.
- ▲ Ensure that we help meet housing, care and support needs in our communities.
- ▲ Work as one team – TeamOrwell.
- ▲ Maximise our social value.

We will achieve this by...

- ▲ Taking an active role in Independent East, using benchmarking to share best practice to support value for money.
- ▲ Working in partnership with Commissioners in health and social care.
- ▲ Working with our local authority partners.
- ▲ Developing and creating a high performing, inspirational team across Orwell and improving effective and engaged communication links throughout the organisation.
- ▲ Working with our contractors, consultants, suppliers and colleagues to ensure that social value is embedded in everything we do.



4. Being an effective team and organisation

We will...

- ▲ Be a healthy, happy place to work.
- ▲ Harness a culture committed to our values and that supports and encourages innovation.
- ▲ Build a diverse TeamOrwell that is committed to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- ▲ Build our financial strength to enable us to invest in new and existing homes.
- ▲ Better know our customers to inform delivery and improve performance.

We will achieve this by...

- ▲ Assessing wellbeing and supporting wellness at work. Maintaining gold accreditation as a 'Good Health at Work' workplace and becoming a Mentor.
- ▲ Identify and invest in innovative, ambitious, values led people and continue to promote our 'Innovate' reward.
- ▲ Achieve Housing Diversity Network DNA accreditation and alongside the NHF, review our EDI profile and ensure diversity of thought.
- ▲ Maintaining our focus on improving our operating model to provide efficiencies.
- ▲ Triangulate data driven insights to design and improve services.



Metrics of success by 2030



90% of Colleagues are proud to work for Orwell.



Customer Satisfaction with our services improves every year of the plan as measured by our TSMs.



The Association has grown to own and or manage 5200 homes.



The surplus level delivered by Care consistently achieves 7% each year.



Operating Margin achieves 17.5% or greater



100% of Homes achieving EPC C or above



Image taken from one of our new developments in Ipswich. **Liveta Bileisyte**, Graduate Development Project Officer; and **Charlotte Dautzenberg**, Repairs Co-ordinator.

Our 2025 Objectives

Our 2025 Objectives

1. Putting Customers at the Heart of what we do

We will...

Metric of Success...

Reduce the time taken for routine repairs by our in-house repairs service.



Reduce the average time taken for routine repairs from 41 days to 28 days by December 2025.

Improve customers satisfaction following a complaint and seek to resolve more concerns at first point of contact.



85% of all complaints resolved at stage 1.

Sustain vulnerable tenancies and minimise evictions by providing first time tenancy support and specialist tenancy sustainment officer.



80% of tenancies sustained and zero evictions where customers engage.

Create further links between the Board, colleagues and Customers, ensuring our customers voice is involved in our decision making and governance.



A joint Orwell Residents Group and Customer Insight Committee meeting resulting in an annual report showing what has changed or evolved as a result of the customer voice.

Conduct four roadshows within our communities to improve our understanding of customer concerns and needs.



Engage with 10% of Orwell customers in their own homes and/or communities with evidence that the feedback has changed/improved our services.

2. Being Ambitious for Homes and our Communities

We will...

Metric of Success...

Build 100 new homes for rent and shared ownership.



100 homes handed over by December 2025.

Reduce void times to ensure homes are available for letting to meet housing need.



Void rent loss of 3% (as budgeted) or lower.

Focus Wave 2 and Warm Homes Funding towards ensuring that our homes achieve EPC C as a minimum.



73% of homes achieving EPC C and above.

Invest £11m in 2025 to improving the quality of our homes.



80% of customers are satisfied their home is well maintained as measured by our TSMs.

Identify those homes that will not meet our quality standards and net zero goals in the future.



Revised Disposals Strategy in place.

3. Collaborating with others to achieve more

We will...

Metric of Success...

Use Independent East Benchmarking to identify areas of good practice and use this to improve our own services.



Improved Customer Satisfaction with their landlord achieves 75% as measured by the TSM's.

Work with Commissioners to either restructure services to ensure they are sustainable or develop improved funding models.



Care achieves it's budgeted surplus of 5.8% or higher.

Work with colleagues and customers to develop a Social Value Strategy.



Social Value Strategy in place.

Be a learning organisation and seek out best practice from across and outside of the housing sector.



Coaching and Mentoring programme fully in place with 2 trained coaches and mentors.

4. Being an Effective Team and Organisation

We will...

Metric of Success...

Identify Value for money efficiencies through the year with the aim of improving the operating margin above budget.



Achieved operating margin 1% ahead of budget.

Reduce short term sickness in care and support schemes.



Reduction in short term sickness levels in care and support to an average of 6.6 days pp pa.

Restructure Customer Services and Repairs to improve customer experience.



A 10% reduction in the total number of repairs complaints in Q3 and Q4 when compared to the Q1 and Q2 of 2025.

Restructure care and support to improve the housing management service to the schemes bringing down rent arrears and void times.



Rent arrears in extra care to meet or beat budget.
Void times in care services to meet or beat budget.

Introduce a digital system which enables integration between care delivery with the finance system improving speed and accuracy of care invoicing and reducing non-productive time.



Reduction in non-chargeable hours.



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or call 0345 60 100 30

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