



# Corporate Strategy **2020-2023**

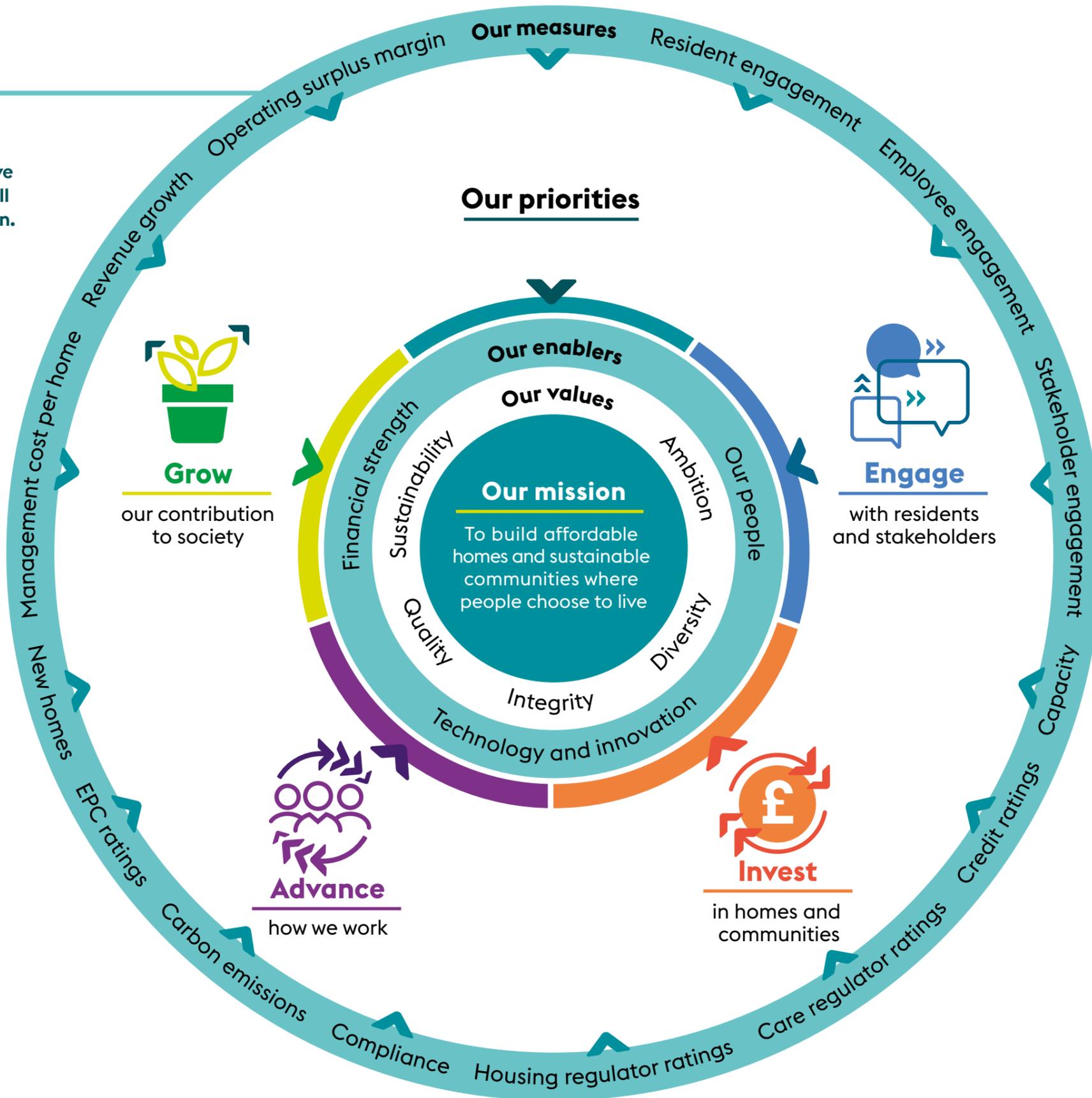
Revised November 2021

Sanctuary

# Our strategy

Sanctuary's corporate strategy begins with our mission. It sets out what we are trying to achieve and our values define how we will behave in delivering that mission.

We will use enablers of **people, technology and innovation** and **financial strength** to achieve significant progress in our four strategic priorities of **engage, invest, advance** and **grow**. We measure all our work through a balanced suite of key performance indicators, which we report to our Group Board, Executive Committee, our people and on our website.



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## Foreword

We launched our corporate strategy in March 2020, not long before the full scale of the pandemic became apparent. In light of that, we have since reviewed and updated our plans to ensure we are attuned to the external context. It has been an extraordinary couple of years but I remain inspired by our teams, who are focused on getting things done for our residents and customers.

As we return to a degree of normality and move to the recovery stage of the pandemic, this presents obvious challenges for our teams on the front line but we continue to focus on our residents and customers. Whether social housing residents, older people living in care homes, students, homebuyers or people living in supported accommodation, they come first and we are on their side trying to deliver the best quality service.

What we want to achieve hasn't changed over the pandemic - if anything it has given us greater motivation to accelerate many of our initiatives, but in some cases how we are doing that has changed to reflect new ways of working. Sanctuary is a strong organisation, with a long and proud history of delivering our charitable social purpose of providing homes and care. But in common with our fellow housing associations, and indeed the UK as a whole, we face a combination of challenges: a multi-faceted housing crisis, an ageing population and the demands on social care, and a climate emergency. We believe that no one should be excluded or left behind. We believe that everyone should have a home to live in and community they can belong to. We want to help build a society with opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background or circumstance.

Now more than ever, people need a sense of ownership of their community and to feel – and genuinely be – empowered and listened to so that we remain accountable to our communities. A sense of belonging and of living in a place that people are proud of needs to be revived and reengaged; as a housing association, we are well placed to deliver that. I remain hugely optimistic that staying true to our mission, our sense of purpose and our values will enable us to face these challenges and the wider pandemic head on. This strategy is Sanctuary's commitment. We will work with Government, the private and public sectors, using all of our energy, creativity and vision to deliver our priorities and play our part in meeting these challenges.



**Craig Moule**  
Group Chief Executive

Sanctuary Housing tenant and Chair of the Rochford Committee, Trish O'Shea, meets Sanctuary Group Chief Executive Craig Moule



**“People need a sense of ownership of their community and to feel – and genuinely be – empowered and listened to”**

## Our strategic context

### Who we are and what we do

**Sanctuary's mission is to build affordable homes and sustainable communities where people choose to live.**

We are a not-for-profit housing association, providing homes and care for more than 250,000 people in England and Scotland. Every penny we make is reinvested in improving homes, building new affordable homes and investing in communities. We are driven by our charitable and social purpose and our values.

We manage:

- more than 100,000 homes nationally
- more than 100 residential care homes
- more than 500 supported housing schemes
- more than 10,000 student rooms.

We work as one team, made up of over 13,000 people.

### Why we do it

We believe that no one should be excluded or left behind. We believe that everyone should have a home to live in and community they can belong to. We want to help build a society with opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background or circumstance.

As one of the largest housing and care providers in the UK, with a history going back over 50 years, we have a duty to do everything we can to alleviate the housing crisis.

The housing crisis is multi-faceted and complex, and there are no easy solutions. The issue of expensive and insecure private tenancies in large cities contrasts with empty, hard-to-let homes in some places. The number of homeless people – both on the streets suffering the indignity of sleeping in doorways and those 'hidden' in unsuitable conditions – is rising.

In parallel, there are many trapped renting in the private sector with no realistic hope of saving for a deposit to achieve their ambitions of owning their own home.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, with people spending more time than ever before in their homes, having a home that is safe, comfortable and a place of sanctuary has never been more important. We recognise that investing in social housing will help to provide this security for many people, as well as boosting the economy, creating jobs and improving people's lives when our nation needs it most.

By building more social housing, improving homes and communities and investing in supported housing we know Sanctuary can transform lives and provide people with a place to live that they can be proud of.

Today we live an average of ten years longer than we did when Sanctuary was first established in 1969. By 2050, it is projected that one in four people in the UK will be aged 65 years and over – an increase from approximately one in five in 2018.

Too many people experience poverty, isolation and poor health in older age. We believe older people should have choice about where they live, whether that be through assistance to stay in their own home or moving to a retirement complex or a care home.

We want to see a social care system where everyone, regardless of where they live in the country, can access the care they need and can have confidence that it will be of a good quality.

### How we will do it

Our strategy spans April 2020 to March 2023 and sets out four key priorities to deliver our mission.

Residents Catherine Donnelly and Vicky Campbell with Director – Sanctuary Scotland Pat Cahill (left)

## Our priorities Engage



### Engage residents

Sanctuary is setting the bar high for resident engagement. Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will ensure residents experience a significant shift in how actively they are heard and that their views drive improvements to homes and services through our most ambitious listening exercise **A Conversation with Sanctuary**.

We have never been interested in ticking a box or paying lip service to resident involvement; we believe residents can and should drive up standards through their views. We will engage with residents over every area of service that they experience from us – from safety to the quality of their home, from the way we communicate to acting on complaints. We recognise that we will not always get things right, but we are committed to learning from our mistakes when things go wrong.

To ensure residents' voices are heard in everything we do, we are reviewing our governance arrangements. We will strengthen our Group Housing Committee, the committee of our Group Board where our residents scrutinise our services and help to drive our future strategic direction. Working alongside our **National Resident Scrutiny Panel**, this will ensure greater accountability about the way we provide services.

### Engage stakeholders

As one of the largest housing associations and care providers in the UK, and a key player in local communities and on the national stage, we recognise that – rightly – we operate under significant scrutiny from our stakeholders. It is a privilege to operate with charitable status, and we honour that with a deep sense of responsibility.

**Sanctuary will actively engage our stakeholders, including MPs, local authorities, central government, investors and the media, in open, honest and ongoing relationships.**

We will proactively communicate our priorities and demonstrate that we consider issues from multiple perspectives. We will ensure we deliver the right outcomes as an integral part of managing effective relationships with stakeholders. **We will work closely with our stakeholders as a trusted partner to achieve shared goals.**

Local Service Manager Alison Notman and resident Kenneth Trim, Old Milton Road, New Milton

“We will ensure residents experience a **significant shift** in how **actively they are heard** and that **their views drive improvements to homes and services**”



## Our priorities

# Invest



### Invest in our homes

Sanctuary will always prioritise investing in existing homes before building new homes. We recognise that ageing homes require increased investment. We also invest in the quality of our care homes and buildings to ensure they meet a standard we are proud of. **Sanctuary will increase investment by £100 million to a total investment of £370 million in our homes over the lifetime of this strategy.**

As a not-for-profit organisation focused on long-term sustainability and value for money, we prioritise our resources carefully. We will use the data we hold on our properties along with insight from our residents, people and stakeholders to precisely target our investment plans where there is the greatest need. We will ensure a golden thread of intelligence for every building we own by the end of this strategic cycle.

### Invest in our safety

Residents of all tenures should feel and be safe in their home. **We have established a Building Safety programme, working with residents, to oversee our response to evolving best practice around fire safety.**

Despite being a large landlord, we have very few high rise residential buildings, but we are still committed to understanding all of our properties and taking action wherever needed. We will continue to review the safety of all elements of our buildings as further information emerges. **Because the safety of residents is critical, we are installing sprinklers in a number of our properties where they will deliver the most benefit, and we will continue to install additional fire safety measures as best practice develops.**

### Invest in frontline employees

We operate in more than 250 local authorities nationwide and we aim to deliver a genuinely local service. **To achieve this, we will invest in our frontline housing teams which will include better mobile technology to support improved operating models, enhanced digital customer interaction and increasing housing officer numbers over the life of this strategy, because we believe the role of a housing officer is key to ensuring a high quality service. We have put in place our dedicated Housing 360 team, who work proactively with our residents to identify and resolve concerns in their homes.** This investment will enable our teams to focus on doing what they do best, providing support to our residents to sustain their tenancies.

### Invest in efficiencies

We recognise that we have limited resources. We want to continually invest. As with all social landlords, we have a growing cost base owing to increased asset management costs. We will identify and deliver efficiencies which do not compromise our frontline services.

### Invest in regeneration

We are proud of our track record of regeneration projects, such as our award-winning redevelopment of Anderston in Glasgow. **We will use our skills and experience to focus on regenerating neighbourhoods such as Barne Barton, in Plymouth, to improve lives for residents and create sustainable communities.**

### Invest in our communities

Through our community investment we will tackle the challenges of worklessness, poverty, in particular fuel poverty, and exclusion. We recognise the strengths and assets that already exist within our communities and will build on this to provide our residents with tools that enable them to drive real change. To enable and bring forward community investment opportunities designed by residents, we will work closely with our supply chain partners to bring in additional social value.

Resident John McQuaide from  
Baskeyfield House, Stoke-on-Trent

“Sanctuary will increase investment by £100 million to a total investment of £370 million in our homes”



## Our priorities Advance

### Advance decarbonisation

Sanctuary recognises the climate emergency and fully supports the drive towards a low carbon economy. To meet the Government's commitment to end the UK's contribution to global warming by 2050, all social landlords will need to step up and proactively decarbonise their housing stock, fleets and working practices.

No one will be able to achieve this alone. Fundamental changes on this scale will require partnerships and collaboration with Government, private sector, local authorities and other landlords. We have a responsibility to show our serious intent and, more than that, our action to address this existential crisis.

Our Environment Strategy, which we launched in 2021, sets out for the first time our approach to limiting our environmental impact. Our plans to do this include making our homes more comfortable places to live, adapting the way we work and working with our people and customers to lead change.

With more than 100,000 homes in the UK, the biggest impact Sanctuary has on the environment is through the energy efficiency of our buildings. **We will reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions through a significant investment programme in our homes including upgrading heating systems, increasing insulation and replacing windows and doors.** We will accelerate our plans and work with residents to ensure homes are more sustainable. Delivering this element of our strategy will continue into future years, but we will make serious headway and will lend our voice to campaigns that inspire and motivate change.

### When we build new homes, we will use smart technology to minimise energy costs for our customers and reduce or minimise overall carbon emissions.

We will also seek ways to lower emissions of our fleet, which includes around 1,000 vans across our maintenance service, and encourage walking, cycling, mobile-working and home-working to reduce emissions from commuting where possible. We are committed to measuring our carbon footprint and will implement measures to reduce our impact on the environment.

### Advance accessibility

As one of the UK's largest housing and care providers, Sanctuary achieves value for money and economies of scale from investment in technology. We were the first social landlord to implement an enterprise platform using SAP, known internally as OneSanctuary, which enabled us to bring together disparate systems and processes.

One of the benefits of Sanctuary's size is the ability to offer 24/7 customer service through our contact centre based in Hull. Through the contact centre, we manage enquiries through phone, email, social media and live chat, giving our residents a range of options about how they interact with us. But we aspire to go further and Covid-19 has accelerated that aspiration.

**Over the period of the strategy, we will take our services to our customers and develop further tools to make it easier for customers to access our services online, including a customer portal.** A portal will enable faster resolution of simple queries, offer further choice for residents about how they interact with us and will allow us to serve all of our customers more effectively and efficiently. Our customers and their feedback will be at the heart of this work to ensure the outcome is genuinely focused on an improved user experience.

Team Leader Ryan Khan and resident Wesley Thompson from Lime Tree Court Residential Care Home, Wolverhampton



### Advance care technology

Over the past two years we have transformed our care operation, which now has a portfolio of more than 100 homes, and we have focused on enriching the lives of our residents.

Digital innovation has enabled us to develop our own mobile care planning application, **Kradle**, so care employees manage and plan care through iPhones at the point of delivery. The reduction in bureaucracy, while continuing to maintain rigorous record keeping, allows employees to spend more time with residents.

**Building on this success, we will roll out an electronic medication management system, which will enhance the way employees deliver medication to our residents.** This will reduce time spent on paperwork and allow employees to interact with complex data quickly and easily, and instead focus on caring for residents. We will continue to explore technology which enhances the quality of care, such as acoustic monitoring tools, which reduce the need to disturb someone's sleep to check on them.

**“Our customers and their feedback will be at the heart of this work to ensure the outcome is genuinely focused on an improved user experience”**



## Our priorities

# Grow



While we are ambitious to expand our services and geographies, we will not grow at any cost. The best way to deliver our mission is to ensure our sustainability as an organisation and we will continue to be selective about any growth opportunities to make sure they deliver benefits to Sanctuary and to our residents.

### Growing our homes

Sanctuary will continue its proud history as a developer of social housing. **During the lifetime of this strategy, we will build 6,000 homes across a range of tenures.** To do this, we will build homes for sale to generate funding for new homes for shared ownership, affordable rent and social rent.

We want to build more homes for social and affordable rent and believe social housing – the right homes, in the right places – could play a bigger role in reducing the impact of the housing crisis. Alongside many in our sector, we will continue to make the case for increasing grant funding for social housing to enable the Government to meet its new homes targets.

While we did not rush to build homes for sale, we recognise in the current policy environment that doing so is a necessary component of our business model. We are cautious about our exposure to the home buying market and typically build out small sites, spread over a wide geographic area to minimise risk. We are mindful of political and economic changes; we have stress-tested our business model against a range of scenarios and are confident we have the measures in place to withstand future risks.

We will build high quality homes where they are needed the most. We are committed to the principle of Inclusion by Design and developing a range of property types based on what customers tell us they need and want. In addition to building our own homes, we recognise we can grow our contribution to society by working with others.

We are delivering more than 1,000 homes through a series of joint ventures and will continue to build more homes with other organisations as well as strengthening our relationship with Homes England through our new Strategic Partnership which will deliver 2,000 grant-funded new homes..

### Growing our supported housing

We believe supported housing is critical in a fair society to ensure everyone has the opportunity to live independently and fulfil their potential. Our 500-plus services currently serve more than 6,000 residents. In the vast majority of those, Sanctuary owns the building as well as delivering the support, which gives us a greater ability to deliver positive outcomes for residents and clients. **We will expand our supported housing provision through acquisitions, development and new contracts.**

We have focused our provision of support on people facing homelessness, mental health issues, living with disabilities, young people and people who have experienced domestic abuse, which has enabled us to develop specialisms in these areas. We will build on this expertise to expand our provision of supported housing for these groups into new geographic areas.

### Growing our care

We believe the Sanctuary model for providing residential care, through our 100-plus care homes, works. As a not-for-profit provider of care, we are driven by our values. We invest in our people and aim to recruit for the long-term, only using temporary employees when absolutely needed. We will continue to grow our portfolio of care homes by both acquiring and building care homes, to help meet the needs of the UK's ageing population. We remain committed to ensuring high quality ratings from the Care Quality Commission and Scottish Care Inspectorate services.

**“We believe supported housing is critical in a fair society to ensure everyone has the opportunity to live independently and fulfil their potential”**

## Our enablers

The successful delivery of Sanctuary's corporate strategy is predicated on three enablers: our people, technology and innovation, and financial strength.

### Our people

We work as one team made up of over 13,000 people; the calibre of our people and the culture we create is the single biggest influence on Sanctuary's success. **We will be an employer of choice to enable us to recruit the brightest and best by offering great working environments, competitive terms and conditions and nurturing potential through the Sanctuary Learning Academy.**

We will continue to champion the work of our frontline heroes, especially those in social care, who have delivered an invaluable service throughout the pandemic.

We will continue our journey to being an even more inclusive workplace. Our Inclusion for All strategy sets out the steps we are taking to embed a working environment where people can thrive and everyone can be themselves. We have established Staff Networks that provide us with the opportunities to listen and learn from diverse lived experiences.

We want all our people to have a stake in our organisation, whether that's having a say over how we are run through Staff Council, encouraging employee feedback and honest conversations, or promoting an inclusive culture that values diversity. We will continue to host internal and external events designed to grow our culture of inclusion. **By enabling flexible working practices, we will develop a more accessible service for our customers.**

We will continue to support and champion the physical and mental wellbeing of our people and, to that end, we will continue our commitment as a **Time to Change** employer, particularly focusing on mental health. With hundreds of **Mental Health First Aiders** throughout the organisation, including all of our Group Directors, we have sought to break the stigma of mental health conditions and we are well-placed to further this agenda.

### Technology and innovation

We are proud of our commitment to investing in technology and innovation. **We will enable our strategic priorities to be delivered by ensuring our people have the tools and technology they need. We will invest in our systems to drive efficiencies in our back office and streamline transactional processes.**

We will continue to explore the benefits of greater flexibility and remote working that were accelerated by the pandemic and will work with our people to create ways of working that enable good health and well-being. This will include reviewing our office infrastructure to ensure it is fit for purpose.

We also have a strong track-record of developing our own apps, including the **kradle** care management app. We will continue this path by investing in a technology platform that enables greater automation and the creation of mobility tools in-house.

Good organisations need good management information to make intelligent decisions about service improvement. We will continue to develop insightful and timely business and financial information to inform decision-making.

**We will enable our strategy to be delivered by standardising and streamlining ways of working to deliver efficiencies, value for money and better working practices.**

### Financial strength

Our financial strength is part of our DNA and has underpinned our exponential growth over the past 50 years since we were established. **We will continue to prioritise financial strength and focus on value for money because it enables us to deliver a service we are proud of to residents and customers.** We will continue to build financial resilience through an optimised funding structure and manage risk through continuous stress testing of our business plans against potential adverse events.

We will continue to focus on efficiencies to deliver long-term sustainability.

We will continue to build and sell homes on the open market but we will be cautious not to over-expose ourselves to one particular region or type of property.

We will drive value for money through rationalisation of our structure wherever possible and will uphold the highest standards of corporate governance.

**“Our financial strength is part of our DNA and has underpinned our exponential growth over the past 50 years”**



Project Manager Megan Laurie

## Our measures



### Resident engagement

We will measure overall satisfaction with our services as a landlord, as well as participation in resident engagement activities, feedback from residents and improvements made as a result of feedback.

### Employee engagement

We will measure employee engagement through our annual people survey and intermittent surveys in between, as well as feedback from employees through Staff Council and informal mechanisms.

### Stakeholder engagement

We will measure stakeholder engagement through an annual stakeholder perceptions audit, direct feedback and contact from stakeholders.

### New homes

We measure success in terms of the overall number of homes we build and how many new affordable homes (that is homes for shared ownership, social rent and affordable rent) we build.

### EPC ratings

We will measure the Energy Performance Certificate ratings for our homes to help us understand how energy efficient they are and where we can make improvements.

### Carbon emissions

We will measure and evaluate our carbon emissions to enable us to make changes to our business model which reduce our impact on the environment.

### Compliance

We will measure our compliance with a range of statutory and regulatory metrics relating to our buildings in accordance with the legal timescales.

### Housing regulator ratings

We are regulated by the **Regulator of Social Housing** in England and the **Scottish Housing Regulator** in Scotland. In England, we hold a G1 V2 for Governance and Viability. In Scotland, where the system of regulation focuses on engagement plans, we are considered to be 'systemically important', which means we regularly engage with the Regulator about a wide range of issues.

### Care regulator ratings

We are regulated by the **Care Quality Commission** for our care homes and many of our supported living schemes in England. We measure our success by which of those care settings achieve good or outstanding ratings. In Scotland, our care and some of our supported living schemes are regulated by the **Care Inspectorate**. We measure our success by those which are inspected and found to be good, very good or excellent.

### Credit ratings

We recognise maintaining investment-grade credit ratings, as assessed by independent credit rating agencies Moody's and Standard & Poor's, as an important metric to measure success.

### Capacity

Our capacity – our ability to borrow against our assets and use that money to deliver our charitable and social purpose – is a key measure which determines our investment priorities.

### Management cost per home

We consider our operating and management costs per home we own, so we are able to make a judgement about efficiency and value for money. This metric, in combination with other measures such as overall satisfaction with our services as a landlord, informs our priorities.

### Revenue growth

We measure success by how our revenue is growing.

### Operating surplus margin

Our operating surplus margin measures how effective we are at improving the operational and financial effectiveness of our business streams.



**“We measure our work with a view to driving the behaviours and outcomes which residents, stakeholders and employees most value and help us achieve our mission”**

Newly wed residents Linda and Darrell Alexander from Epsworth House, Burton

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## Accessibility

We want this strategy to be accessible to all. If you would like it in a different format, call **01905 334000** or email **[externalaffairs@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:externalaffairs@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)**.

## Feedback

We would love to hear what you think of our strategy. To let us know what you think, email **[externalaffairs@sanctuary-housing.co.uk](mailto:externalaffairs@sanctuary-housing.co.uk)**.

# Sanctuary

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