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Orate Plan

027

2024-0



IMPROVING LIVES

OPENNESS SUPPORT CULTURE PROPERTIES COMMUNITIES OUR TOWN HOMES HOUSING HEALTH SPACES WHAT WE DO FUTURES INTEGRITY ASPIRATIONS SERVICES $\mathsf{PF}(\mathsf{)}\mathsf{PI}\mathsf{F}$ VALUES WELL-BEING

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INTRODUCTION

RHA are a registered social landlord, a community benefit society and regulated by the Welsh Government. We own and manage over 2100 homes and provide services across Rhondda Cynon Taf. We are committed to improving and regenerating the areas where our homes are located. We offer a range of high-quality management and support services which ensure that our tenants have the best possible opportunities to enjoy their homes and engage in their communities.

2024-2027

Our last Corporate Plan delivered significant change and progress across a number of key areas and built the foundations from which to progress as an organisation. However, we have also experienced significant external political and economic pressures which have largely been driven by some extraordinary events such as the pandemic, the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East and the ongoing cost of living crisis. Whilst our ambition and desire to improve remains front and centre, we also acknowledge that there is an unstable operating environment with a number of new and challenging policy areas relating to building safety, Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 and homelessness. Therefore, we believe that a shorter 3 year plan will allow us to gain clarity and focus on our key priorities, ensuring we remain focused on our key responsibilities as a social landlord, whilst providing the flexibility to pivot depending on how the operating environment develops over the coming 12 months.

We take responsibility for ensuring that we take a leading role as an anchor organisation in the communities in which we operate, and we understand that capacity and scale are becoming increasingly important in the current operating environment. Whilst we have grown by almost a third in the past 5 years, we acknowledge that we must explore and build strong relationships and partnerships in order to deliver more for our residents and protect the long-term future investment of homes and services for our tenants.

Whilst we continue to have significant ambition, we must be realistic about these immediate challenges, which will inevitably influence and shape the thinking and objectives set in the new plan.

At the time of formulating our new plan our board has approved RHA exploring a merger with Coastal Housing Group to form a new combined organisation. This is an exciting opportunity and one which will be fully explored during 2024. However, it is critical that the focus remains firmly on the priorities of RHA, and this should not detract from the objectives and aspirations we have set to achieve over the coming 12 months and beyond.

OUR VISION

'To create places where people can prosper'

OUR VALUES AND CULTURE

Everyone at RHA recognises the importance of working as one team and we pride ourselves on our culture and togetherness. We appreciate and value that it's our people who will ensure that we achieve our aspirations. The way we approach our work is very important to us and we have an agreed set of Values and Behaviours for our team. These underpin how we deliver our services and are fundamental to our culture and reputation.

VALUES We act with...

RESPECT We demonstrate respect for all, treating people equally and demonstrating an inclusive culture throughout the organisation.	TRANSPARENCY We are open with our customers, our colleagues and our partners. We involve out tenants in key decisions wherever possible and provide up to date accurate information.		
INTEGRITY We aim to deliver to the highest standards possible and do not settle for second best.	OPENNESS We continually challenge ourselves to do things better, looking outside our business and our sector to learn new ways of working.		

BEHAVIOURS We will be...

POSITIVE

We will approach our work with a can-do attitude and try to overcome any barriers or hurdles.

PROFESSIONAL

We demonstrate the highest levels of professionalism in all that we do.

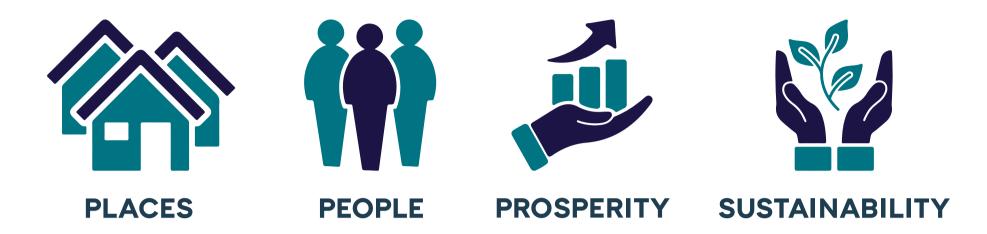
We think creatively and embrace new ideas and ways of working.

AUTHENTIC

We are proud of what we do and we want to do it in a meaningful way. We are committed to providing our tenants with the best possible services and products.

FOCUSING ON STRATEGIC DELIVERY

In order to deliver our vision, we will focus on delivering against four key strategic pillars. These are:



Under each pillar we have outlined our strategic aims for the life of the strategy and these are underpinned by a series of strategic objectives and actions which we will measure our organisational delivery and outcomes against. This will enable our Executive Management Team and operational teams to ensure we are focused on our vision and key areas of commitment over the next three years.



PLACES

The next three years will see us continuing to improve existing homes, build new homes and work with our tenants and community stakeholders to ensure our homes and places are safe, well maintained and healthy environments.



We will continue to play our part to deliver much needed new homes by building a minimum of 50 new homes each year which will be constructed to meet EPC A. We will also assemble a landbank of sites to ensure our programme remains deliverable and consistently achieves handover of new homes for each year of the strategy. The principle of all our new development and regeneration projects will be underpinned by good placemaking and we will continue to be signatories of the Design Commission for Wales Placemaking Charter. Our commitment to regenerating communities will remain a key focus for us over the coming years. Ensuring the works we carry out whether capital or community-based projects provide real opportunities for communities, delivering on solid principles of regeneration and delivering on social, economic, and environmental outcomes creating places where people love to live.

Our commitment to providing safe quality homes that our tenants and staff are proud of continues to be a central priority and we will ensure that we balance our investment across new and existing homes to achieve this. In consultation with our tenants, we will develop and start delivering our new asset management strategy and our plan for meeting WHQS 2023 and the decarbonisation of our homes. We will ensure that by March 2027 we will have completed our whole stock assessment and have a targeted energy pathway in place for each home. As part of this, by March 2030 our aim is for all homes to be above SAP 75 (EPC C). We will continue to ensure that we target our investment towards ensuring our homes are safe and compliant with legislation and we will keep our tenants informed about our plans and how they can help us maintain the health and safety of homes.

A central part of our Asset Management Strategy is to ensure that the use of our assets are optimised. We will strategically review and assess our homes on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are providing value for money and meeting housing need effectively. We will also ensure that the places where our homes are located are well managed, clean, and attractive environments to live in.

PEOPLE

We are committed to listening to our tenants, staff and stakeholders as we know there's more we can do to make our services and workplace better.



We will create and maintain sustainable tenancies through the delivery of tailored housing management services that meets the needs and aspirations of our tenants. We will focus on building relationships and doing the right thing in the right way, providing services that make the most difference to our tenants.

We will gain a greater understanding from our tenants of their experience of our services by using feedback and data to make improvements. This will ensure we focus our resources effectively and in response to the diverse needs of our tenants.

We have a strong track record in being a great place to work, supported by external accreditation from Best Companies and the Quality in Equality and Diversity QED award. We want to maintain this and continue to be recognised as a world class employer, providing opportunities for growth and development, and operating as a values led, high performing organisation, where the working environment maximises the potential of our people and drives engagement, accelerating growth, change, wellbeing and sustainability.

A key outcome of the strategy will be to ensure we build a pathway for our tenants with the aim of bringing them closer to employment. We will develop a volunteering framework whereby our tenants will be able to access placements and gain experience to build confidence and skills to get them work ready. We will develop a framework whereby our partners, local stakeholders and the wider community are working alongside us with this initiative to broaden our reach and maximize opportunities. We will work with training and education providers to identify suitable courses for training and upskilling where appropriate and align with our social value to work to promote opportunities on RHA contracts for targeted recruitment and training and apprentices for our tenants.

We realise that we have a real opportunity to build on our existing and successful Tenant Involvement Framework and during the years ahead will move to elevate that offering to make sure that tenants across all areas of RHA's operation can easily get involved, access support and have a voice in RHA's strategic decision making. We will initially use data from the 2023 STAR survey to shape our approaches to upscaling our Tenant Involvement offering, and from there will look to engage with tenants to understand what involvement would be of interest to them and design a programme around this. We will ensure our programmes are accessible, looking to take activities and involvement opportunities to tenants through 'Little Shed on the Road' being more rooted in their communities. We will also work closely with our tenants to understand if we could be more tech savvy and involve a greater number of tenants using digital platforms, online meetings, and involvement opportunities to create more inclusivity.

PROSPERITY

During the life of the strategy, we will review our overall spend profile and procurement routes to identify areas whereby RHA can further support local business and economy.



We have developed a skills-based board and we will continuously review and reflect on the skills we have to ensure we are constantly challenging ourselves to improve and consider areas of good practice.

Over the coming years we will build on our existing commitment and move towards making Social Value a priority across the business. We will ensure that social value outcomes are embedded in all contracts that RHA lets and that outcomes are measured and reported on regularly. We will have a dedicated member of staff to deliver on this strategic aim to add weight to our commitment and make sure we build on processes and training within the business to make sure a culture of social value and social responsibility is the norm at RHA. We recognise the strength in working with partners and we have a brilliant track record of pooling resources with others to deliver community prosperity. We will continue to do this for the next 5 years, recognising where we can support others to achieve their strategic outcomes and where others can support us, but together we can achieve great things.

We also understand that through our regeneration work we have an opportunity to support local businesses, startups and independents to work together and regenerate our towns and highstreets. Wherever possible we will look to create a balanced approach whereby larger commercial operators work alongside small businesses. Creating an environment where our commercial lets are not competing for business but complementing and supporting one another for the greater good and prosperity of the town as a whole. Where possible we will look to support businesses with more flexible and favorable lease terms to encourage new businesses into the areas we are regenerating.



SUSTAINABILITY

We want RHA to be a strong and sustainable organisation, demonstrating the highest levels of governance and financial strength.



We have developed a skills-based board and we will continuously review and reflect on the skills we have to ensure we are constantly challenging ourselves to improve and consider areas of good practice.

We will maintain our track record of strong financial performance and risk management, ensuring RHA is able to deliver on its objectives and commitments to tenants, and will be fit for purpose as an organisation of the future. We will ensure we have sufficient resources to deliver on our objectives and aim to deliver greater value for money for all of our tenants through careful financial planning.

We want to explore ways we can work in partnership or think more creatively to ensure we have greater depth and resilience in our people resources. We acknowledge that as a smaller business we need to consider succession planning and a broader breadth of skills.

We remain open to exploring partnerships and merger opportunities. As outlined in the introductory section of this strategy, we are currently in the process of considering and exploring this opportunity with Coastal Housing Group and will explore this fully during 2024 to identify whether combining our organisations can deliver greater capacity and resilience.

We will continue to prioritise Strong Risk Management and mitigation. We will regularly consider the operating landscape and ensure we are focused on any current or emerging risks.



OUR ACTION PLAN



Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
Deliver new homes playing our part to meet housing need.	Deliver a minimum of 50 new homes per annum and have a pipeline of sites acquired to deliver year on year. Being a trusted partner for other organisations to collaborate with to deliver more wherever possible.	50 new homes per year.
Regenerating communities creating places where people love to live.	 Ensuring an understanding of placemaking and mixed use developments in our communities and the benefits that brings to everyone. Work with existing businesses, residents and tenants to build on our existing regeneration programme to maximize impact. Ensure our projects both capital and revenue provide opportunities for people with additional needs to live and work in our communities. Partner with others to showcase our natural environment, create opportunities for tenants and communities to access green spaces, maintain and manage areas for community growing and community-based initiatives. Alongside others work towards making Tonypandy a 'Green Town'. 	Improved footfall in the town, less voids, stronger values, new businesses, less ASB, greater demand for commercial and residential. Demonstratable increased interaction between RHA and the business community. Increase number of green spaces and community growing initiatives in RCT.
Provide safe quality homes that our tenants and staff are proud of and ensure that the impact of our assets in optimised.	 Provide homes and external spaces that are of a consistent high standard and are well maintained and meet all legislative requirements. Deliver our commitment to ensuring the health and safety of our homes to the highest standard by continuing to invest in the safety of our homes and improve compliance systems. We will make the best use of our assets and are committed to ensuring a balance of investment in both new and existing homes. In consultation with our tenants, we will improve the energy efficiency of our homes through our RHA Optimise Strategy and our Affordable Warmth Plan. 	 Homes that meet WHQS 2023 by the required deadlines. Reduction in void costs. 100% compliance across all key compliance areas All fire doors that require replacement are replaced and an inspection regime in place. Reduction in the number of long term voids. Reduction in number of components that are over life cycle and in poor condition. Fully costed plan for fencing programme produced with realistic timescales for delivery.



Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
Create and maintain sustainable tenancies through the delivery of tailored housing management services that meets the needs and aspirations of our	Deliver a new housing management service structured around new smaller community focused housing management areas with a focus on proactively building and maintaining relationships, prevention and tailoring our support and action.	Improved tenant satisfaction. Increase in % of tenants who think our rents and service charges are affordable and provide good value for money.
tenants.	Continue to build on our work over the last 2 years to understand more about the demographics of our tenants and their needs and use this data strategically to inform the type of services we provide and how we provide them.	Reduction in void loss and costs association with poor condition voids. Reduction in rent arrears.
	Work closely with our tenants to understand their experience of the services we provide, reviewing services and customer journeys together to make sure we enable people to access services seamlessly in the way that works best for them and at the right time.	Reduced turnover. Reduced legal costs and reactive estate management costs. Improved complaints process.
	We will review our approach to complaints management and adopt the Complaints Standard Authority model complaints handling process and sector benchmarking.	
	Ensure that our rents and service charges are affordable and that we continue to help tenants to manage their rent accounts and reduce arrears.	
Create opportunities to bring our tenants closer to employment.	Develop partnerships that will provide a pathway for work placements, training and volunteering opportunities via our main contracts.	A framework being established and promoted to tenants. Outcomes being reported to Board annually.
Expand our Tenant Involvement Programme to ensure its accessible to all tenants.	Have activities and programmes that run in all areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf - ensuring our current 'Little Shed' offer is available across our full area of operation.	Percentage increase in number of involved tenants across our whole area of operation.
Be recognised as a 'world class employer'.	Move from 2* to 3 * Best Companies Accredited Company.	Ranking with Best Companies.
Provide a values led, high performance environment which maximises the potential of our people and drives engagement to accelerate growth,	Implement Talent acquisition in line with the company org structure to ensure timely and accurate delivery of strategic plans. Develop our reward and recognition offering to ensure that we're fair, consistent and competitive. Develop a well-rounded wellbeing strategy that	A more direct link between culture and performance is understood, documented and communicated to our leaders and Board.
change, wellbeing and sustainability.	supports operational continuity and high performance culture.	



Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
Develop high performance leadership capability so that our leaders can drive accelerated change and transformation.	Provide robust investment, mechanisms, procedures, resource and opportunities to support colleagues personal and professional development	Clear succession plans and development frameworks are in place aligned to the Corporate Plan and Personal growth.
Invest in the development of our people and teams.		
Engage our staff in more creative ways for two way feedback and how to deliver change.		
Create a People Function that provides accurate delivery, meaningful insights and support colleagues through life events.	Build a credible people function that is basing it's plans on insights and research, shifting from a transactional reactive function to one which is leading on workstreams to deliver the corporate plan.	The People Function is commended as having moved from a transactional area of the business to being fully understood as a strategic and critical part of the organisation. This has been recognised through the achievement of a CIPD or other People Related Award.



Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
Support our Local Economy.	Re assess our procurement routes, promote and encourage collaboration with others to better support our local economy.	Increased % of our spend is local.
Support Local Business.	Continue to chair the Chamber of Trade in Tonypandy alongside supporting other towns in Rhondda Cynon Taf providing support and guidance to encourage enterprise and innovation. Ensure our commercial portfolio continues to be balanced, providing opportunities for start ups alongside national occupiers.	Increased involvement in Chamber of Trades across Rhondda Cynon Taf. Profile of RHA's capability and commitment to support and sustain local business is raised.
To make Social Value a priority.	Embed a culture of achieving social value outcomes across the business.	Social Value commitments embedded in all contracts being let by RHA. Social Value reporting to Board on an annual basis.
Build Partnerships to create greater community prosperity.	Demonstrate the strength in partnerships, working with others to projects and programmes that without partnership approach wouldn't be delivered. Focus areas for us will be around Heritage and Culture, Wellbeing and Personal and Financial Health and Green Skills.	Project delivery.



Strategic Aim	Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
To demonstrate the highest level of governance.	Implementation of the External Governance Review Recommendations.	Completion of implementation of recommendations.
	To continue strengthen equality and diversity at a senior level and ensure RHA is a fully inclusive organisation.	Greater diversity across the organisation.
	To continue to improve the tenant voice at the Board Level and to ensure tenants are central to key decision making.	Increased level of evidence of tenant influencing and participation in key decision making processes.
Maintain RHA's liquidity	Secure additional finance to support the ongoing development programme and ensure RHA has sufficient liquidity in place.	Sufficient liquidity in place to meet Treasury policy requirements.
Ensure we embrace digital transformation to improve our working environments and services to tenants.	Re design and embed how we collect and use data to provide better services to our tenants. Strategic use of data across the business.	Management information dashboards. Integrated systems.

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