



# **Women's Pioneer Housing Asset Management Strategy 2018 - 2022**

## **Why do we need an Asset Management Strategy?**

How we repair, improve and maintain our existing homes and develop our new homes will play a key role in whether we achieve our vision of making a positive difference to women's lives.

The strategy is essential to the delivery of our five strategic objectives:

1. Providing high quality homes and services for existing and future residents
2. Supporting our residents' independence and well-being
3. Growing homes locally
4. Being a leading voice for women's housing
5. Strengthening our organisation

This strategy sets out how the way in which we develop, maintain and improve our homes helps us to achieve each of these objectives. It reflects the nature of our existing stock and seeks to meet the anticipated needs of our existing and future residents. It also reflects the financial constraints we work within and our need to ensure value for money and to maintain or improve the value of our assets.

In all our property related work, our intention is to maintain and where possible exceed our statutory duties and regulatory requirements. Post Grenfell, we like many others have increased our focus on works to keep our buildings and residents safe. This work will continue to be our top priority.

The Strategy aims to continue to invest in our homes whilst they are empty but also to address the differential in the standard between those homes which have been improved as part of works carried out whilst they were empty and homes which have remained tenanted over a long period.

In accordance with our Resident Engagement Strategy, this strategy seeks to increase opportunities for resident involvement in planning and improving our property related services

## **Background**

### **Our existing homes**

We have been acquiring land and properties and turning them into homes largely for single women since the organisations inception in 1920. The legacy of that activity is that 78% of our homes are located within Victorian five and six storey, terraced properties, which have many distinctive architectural features. Most are listed or in conservation areas within eight west London boroughs. 95% of our homes are studio or one bedroom flats. 82% of our homes are flats and were by and large converted in the 1970's and 80's

The characteristics of the buildings in which the majority of our homes are situated makes the stock expensive to maintain and improve. Simple repairs to the roof costing less than £100 to carry out, may require the erection of scaffolding costing £1500 or more to enable access to be gained to carry out the work.

We have carried out the needed investment to the structure and fabric of our buildings through a programme of cyclical maintenance and major repair which it is considered necessary to continue. The focus on carrying out significant repairs and improvements to the flats themselves however has, in the past, been to carry such works wherever possible, when flats are empty. This has resulted in a marked differential between the standard of those flats which have been improved, as they have become vacant and those which have been and remain resident's homes for a considerable number of years.

The characteristics of the stock impose limits on the improvements we can carry out. Certain improvements for example those to create level access from the street or to improve circulation spaces for wheelchair users are simply not possible to achieve within the constraints of the buildings making up our stock

In addition, 98% of our homes are flats situated in buildings with communal areas. Less than 5% of our homes have private gardens but 43% of residents have access to a communal gardens which we maintain whilst a further 20% have access to gardens owned and managed by locally constituted Garden Square Committees. Consequently we provide a wide range of estate services, for example cleaning and lighting of common parts, grounds maintenance, passenger lifts and wheelchair hoists, provision and maintenance of communal fire safety equipment and door entry systems.

### **Plans for new homes**

We have ambitious plans, which will see the number of homes we provide grow by 12-15% over the next few years

In accordance with our Development Strategy, these homes are likely to:

- Be predominantly one bedroom flats
- Be situated in or close to areas where we have existing stock
- Be newly built as opposed to converted homes
- Be built to lifetime homes standard
- Have a mix of tenures and rent levels

## Our existing tenants

Our current resident population is older and ageing. The table below shows the age groups our current residents fall into across general needs and sheltered accommodation. The largest group across both tenures is 50-59 at 21%. However, in five years' time (not accounting for new lets and end of tenancies) the largest group becomes 60-69.

Age of WPH residents						
Age range	No. of residents in sheltered	No. of residents in general needs	Total (No.)	Total (%)	5 year projection (total)	5 year projection (total %)
Under 25	0	9	9	1.0%	0	0%
25-35	0	89	89	9.5%	56	6.0%
35-39	0	55	55	5.9%	42	4.5%
40-49	1	152	153	16.3%	129	13.8%
50-59	2	197	199	21.3%	173	18.5%
60-69	43	132	175	18.7%	199	21.3%
70-79	71	80	151	16.1%	176	18.8%
80-89	52	38	90	9.6%	109	11.6%
90-99	11	3	14	1.5%	46	4.9%
100+	1	0	1	0.1%	6	0.6%
Total	181	755	936	100%	936	100%

The Asset Management Strategy takes account of this in the way we maintain and improve our stock and in the new homes we develop.

This Strategy will enable us to use our residents' insight into the things that matter most to them to inform our plans. It will be a two way process which means we share information and ideas and in turn we listen & act on suggestions and comments.

## Regulatory requirements

The key statutory requirement here is the Department for Local Government 'A Decent Home – Definition and guidance for implementation' 2006 update

Our homes must meet the current Decent Homes Standard namely that they must:

- Meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing i.e. be free from Category 1 hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Be in a reasonable state of repair
- Have reasonably modern facilities
- Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

## OUR STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

### Objective 1 – Providing high quality homes and services for existing and future residents

#### Overview

- We will meet and where possible exceed our legal and regulatory responsibilities
- We will ensure that our homes are safe and secure
- We will set a Homes Standard: a core quality standard which all our homes must meet
- We will set a customer service standard which all our staff and contractors must meet
- We will set quality service standards for all services related to asset management
- We will manage our staff and contractors to ensure they meet these standards, providing guidance where required.
- We will monitor performance using KPIs, including customer satisfaction and seek to continuously improve
- We will seek to maximise opportunities for residents to be at the heart of developing the responsive repairs service
- We will measure customer satisfaction and to learn from customer feedback
- We will involve our residents, in line with our Resident Engagement strategy
- We will ensure that the principles of health and safety ,diversity and equality are central to working procedures and practices

#### Examples of how we achieve this?

##### Safety

We will:

- Implement clear policies and procedures to meet all our Health and Safety compliance responsibilities including Fire safety, Electrical safety, Water safety, Asbestos management and Gas Safety
- Carry out periodic risk assessments and ensure that all work arising from these is completed within timescales
- Train staff to carry out H&S inspections that will act as an early warning of potential hazards in all compliance areas.
- Prioritise repairs that affect the safety of residents
- Introduce processes to improve arrangements for access

##### Home Standard

We will:

- Have a common Home Standard and will aim over the next 5 years to bring all our homes up to this standard. The Home standard will meet or exceed the Decent Homes Standard.

##### Voids

We will:

- Rebalance our voids work to ensure that all voids are completed to the Homes Standard.
- Continue to improve the layout of our older flats where this will offer greater flexibility of use
- Ensure that works are completed such that they are free of defects at the point the resident moves in

## **Improvements to tenanted homes**

We will:

- Expand our programme of improvements which can be carried out whilst residents remain in their homes to ensure over time all flats have modern facilities .The principal areas for expansion will be the upgrades of kitchens and bathrooms
- Use our stock condition data to identify where the older kitchens and bathrooms are and arrange these programmes around this
- Aim to complete this work within 5 years
- Offer residents choices of finish
- Continue with other resident in place programmes such as heating upgrades when ongoing repairs would be uneconomic

## **Planned works (including cyclical maintenance and major repairs)**

We will:

- Continue to update and consolidate our stock condition data and use this to inform the process of compiling our cyclical maintenance programme
- Carry out cyclical maintenance programme on an 8 year cycle
- Use repairs histories and our stock condition survey to inform our major repair programme
- Where possible carry out planned maintenance alongside cyclical maintenance

## **Responsive Maintenance**

We will:

- Provide an effective responsive repairs service to residents, aiming to complete repairs first time
- Develop more robust Key Performance Indicators to include right first time KPI
- Ensure that access to the responsive service is available to and understood by all residents
- Consider the impact of our practices on the environment, the community, the workforce and the market place
- Equip our front line staff to deal effectively with resident queries and to keep them informed as works progress
- Review the way we procure works by amalgamating contracts, re-tendering and investigating the use of other local Direct labour Organisations or through the use of specifications which include quality and customer service standards

## **Estate Services**

We will:

- Re-procure these services annually using specifications which set quality standards which reflect tenant preferences and can be easily monitored by site based staff and through the use of standard contracts
- Subject to consultation and our legal and regulatory responsibilities, aim to enable residents to carry out some of the services themselves, so long as they meet the same quality standards as set for external contractors. This is most likely to refer to cleaning of common parts and gardening of communal gardens

## **Resident Engagement**

We will:

- Obtain feedback from residents and use this information to inform future programmes
- Seek to ensure that there is meaningful consultation with residents before planned improvements or cyclical maintenance is carried out
- Equip front line staff to inform residents about progress on any works
- For planned cyclical or major repairs works, ensure that all contractors carrying out programmes of work appoint a Resident Liaison Officer who is on site for the duration of the works and is a single point of contact for the making of appointments with residents and dealing with resident queries
- Continue to offer residents whose homes are in houses where we are decorating the common parts a choice of finishes
- Involve residents in the shaping of the services we provide through for example inclusion on tender panels and in task and finish groups to review certain areas of service provision

## Objective 2 – Supporting our residents independence and well being

### Overview

- We will aim to provide homes that meet the needs of existing and future tenants, recognising that these needs may change over time
- All new homes will be built to lifetime homes standards
- We will seek to adapt and improve our existing homes to meet residents needs
- We will incorporate sensitive design to meet the specific issues women tell us are important to them into all our new developments
- We will work with residents to improve the ways in which we develop, maintain and improve our homes to enhance residents' independence and well-being

### Examples of how we achieve this?

#### New homes

We will:

- Ensure that all new homes are built to the Lifetime Homes Standard
- Incorporate design features are particularly important to women

#### Existing tenants

We will:

- Carry out minor adaptations to homes in line with our adaptations policy
- Support residents to access Disabled Facilities Grant for major adaptations such as installations of level access showers. Work with local authorities to identify and implement the requirements
- Work with residents to identify those improvements which make the biggest difference to their independence and well-being
- Reflect these in our Homes standard e.g. incorporating enhanced safety and security features including providing security measures to both the common areas and to flats, and installing showers rather than baths where possible
- Assist vulnerable tenants in carrying out their repairing obligations
- Continue to offer a security grant to those tenants who wish to do more to improve the security of their homes

## Objective 3 – Growing locally to provide more homes

### Overview

- We will grow the business by 12-15% through the development of our existing land and properties and through the acquisition of new properties
- In line with the Development Strategy we will seek to develop
  - Predominantly one bedroom accommodation
  - Homes that are lifetime homes, meeting the needs of residents both now and as they age.
  - Homes that are affordable to a wide range of women
  - Homes that are safe and secure

### Examples of How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Progress our work in accordance with the Resident Engagement Strategy.
- This will include consulting all residents about future housing needs and more detailed consultation at an early stage with those residents affected by our developments potentially using specialists such as Source , to act as independent resident advisor
- Work with residents and contractors to minimise the disruption to those living close to our developments
- Work with groups of residents to inform the design process in areas where there are elements of choice and incorporate this into a design brief to inform the design of future developments.
- Obtain feedback about the experience of those who have lived in or close to properties undergoing development and use this to inform future developments.
- Obtain feedback from those moving into newly developed or acquired homes and use this to inform future development

## Objective 4 – Being a leading voice for women’s housing

### Overview

- We will use the research being conducted and our residents’ feedback to understand women’s housing needs to inform our development strategy
- We will use this research and feedback to influence key stakeholders
- We will showcase the new homes we are developing , seeking to influence others to do more to meet women’s housing needs
- We will aim to achieve high levels of resident satisfaction and work with our residents to promote our homes and services and make the case for more women-led housing

### Examples of How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Use research, and our residents’ feedback re the need for homes for single women on low and median incomes, to support negotiations with LAs re planning criteria and nomination agreements
- When developing Wood Lane, seek to use the developers greater resources to enhance our work to publicise the project widely
- Aim to use this project as a centrepiece for our centenary activities.
- Involve our residents in communications activity and discussions across the sector and with LAs e.g. by encouraging engaged residents to attend the Women Housing Forum or TPAS conferences

## Objective 5 – Strengthening our organisation

### Overview

We will seek to:

- Enhance the value of our stock through
  - Targeted investment
  - Selective disposal
  - Diversity of tenure
- Maximise value for money through our procurement arrangements
- Increase efficiency through improved streamlined property related processes, using and extending our use of IT systems where possible
- Train and support our staff, recognising that they are also an asset to the organisation and a key resource in meeting our objectives

### Examples of How will we achieve this?

We will:

#### **Enhance the value of our stock**

- Ensure that the information we hold about our properties is up to date
- Through a programme of stock condition surveys carried out on a five year cycle
- Updating asset date as components are replaced through planned and responsive maintenance
- Using information gained from regular inspections of properties by in house surveyors or site based staff to identify defects and repair requirements
- Use stock condition data together with responsive repair costs management costs and rental income, to calculate the viability of each building through a discounted cash flow to provide a net present value (NPV) of each building and of the portfolio as a whole.
- Carry out option appraisals for underperforming properties
- Through a robust financial appraisal and hurdles set by the Board, ensure that properties we acquire or develop make a positive financial contribution over the long term

#### **Maximise value for money through our procurement**

- Undertaking a comprehensive review of procurement arrangements across our property related activities to include the following areas
  - Responsive maintenance
  - Estate services
  - Void works
  - Resident in place improvements
  - Health and Safety Works

It is anticipated that this will result in our re-procuring much of this work

- Complete the work to retender certain of our preventative maintenance contracts
- continue to competitively tender our cyclical maintenance contracts
- Evaluate our performance by benchmarking against others

## **Improved systems and use of IT**

- Develop clear and transparent policies and procedures
- Use process mapping to support effective working within and across teams
- Continue to invest in IT to support these systems e.g. using Photobook and QL version 4 to ensure efficient working. The purchase and implementation of the QL Asset Management module is key to our ability to collect store analyse and model stock condition data enabling us to target investment ,identifying properties which are in need of investment or underperforming

## **Supporting and training for staff**

- Train and support our ESO team to manage estate services contracts
- Continue to reduce our dependence on external consultants through the use of directly employed technical staff for improved control of the content of specifications and of the quality of the work on site.
- Equip front line staff to deal with a wide range of property related queries

## **How will we get there and how will we know we have got there?**

We will develop an action plan based on SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) principles which will enable us to achieve the above objectives.

This action plan will be monitored by residents and a progress report produced every year which will be made available for all of our residents.

## **How do we know these are the right things to focus on?**

When deciding on our strategy, we have taken into consideration a number of different factors including:

- How the elements of the strategy fit with our overall strategic aims and objectives
- What our residents have told us, including which issues are important to them
- Our own information, including housing data and resident & staff views
- What's happening nationally
- What our regulator, the Social Housing Regulator tells us we should be doing

## **How will we measure & monitor success?**

We will work alongside residents to monitor the successful delivery of this strategy.

In particular, we will:

- Monitor performance against KPIs including those for resident satisfaction
- Review key programmes of work under this strategy with the Resident Scrutiny and Engagement panel using task and finish groups.

We will publish information and outcomes in a variety of ways including the Women's Pioneer Housing Annual Report and our website.