



Abbreviated version

Short-term Corporate Strategy 2020/2021

Introduction

Broadland Housing's Board approved a revised interim corporate strategy in November 2020. This document is an abbreviated version and presents our objectives from November 2020 to November 2021. The full document is available at <https://www.broadlandgroup.org/about-us/governance-documents/corporate-strategy/>.

Context

In June 2019 we agreed a four-year strategy, but the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic put many of our plans on hold. We agreed an interim strategy in April 2020, which has now been superseded by this new 12-month strategy. Restrictions on our activities and ways of working are still in place due to the ongoing pandemic.

We believe too much has changed since March 2020 for us to revert to our 2019 strategy. We will plan to consult tenants, members, staff and stakeholders during 2021, to approve a new four-year strategy in November 2021.

(The full Interim Corporate Strategy outlines how we responded to the Covid-19 pandemic: adapting our services, responding to homelessness, and supporting tenants and staff.)

Organisational structure

Broadland Housing Association (BHA) was established in 1963, initially to provide affordable rented homes in the Norwich area. Today BHA provide homes for people who cannot afford the open market across Norfolk and North Suffolk.

Broadland has three subsidiaries: Broadland St Benedicts (BSB), Broadland Development Services (BDS) and Broadland Meridian (BM). BSB is an open market developer of housing for sale on BHA development schemes, where the profits are gift aided to BHA, to help fund new affordable homes. BDS acts on behalf of BHA and BSB in managing our development contracts. BM is a charitable fund, supporting mental health charities in Norfolk.

What we were set up to do

Our primary purpose is **to help families and individuals in housing need access high quality affordable homes in Norfolk and North Suffolk**. Everything we do within Broadland is connected to delivering our purpose.

Values and behaviours

All members of the Broadland Team - non-executive directors, trustees, staff and volunteers - are expected to behave in line with our values:

Trustworthy

We behave professionally and with integrity in a way that enables our tenants and partners to trust us

Honest

We are open and transparent with our tenants, regulators and partners

Collaborative

We work in equal partnerships with others to deliver our objectives

Innovative

We are creative and imaginative in finding solutions that work for our tenants and partners, learning from successes and setbacks to deliver our objectives

Fair

We treat our tenants and our staff fairly and with impartiality

Reliable

We take ownership of issues and deliver against our commitments

Responsible

We allocate our resources carefully to optimise the community benefits of our activities

Key Performance Indicators

The BHA Board have agreed KPIs for each of the 11 areas (see below) that make up the strategy. The KPIs are available in a separate document – still to be published

Regulatory compliance

In delivering this strategy, we will comply with all the relevant regulatory requirements, including the Regulator of Social Housing's Standards. This compliance is subject to latest Government guidance and updates from public bodies, including the Regulator of Social Housing, during the Coronavirus crisis.

Our customer-facing activities

1. Frontline services

We will provide a high-quality housing management and repair service.

Housing management

Lettings

- We will prioritise households with emergency housing needs, such as homelessness or domestic violence.
- We will use digital tools to make the letting process as easy as possible and reduce health risks for prospective tenants and our staff.
- We will always use Tenants Online as part of sign-up.

Partnerships with local government

- Our allocation and eligibility policies will consider the individual circumstances of each applicant.
- Through the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership, we will take an active role in the county-wide response to homelessness.

Relationships with our tenants

- We will interact with tenants mainly online or on the telephone, but we will undertake face to face meetings if socially distanced.
- We will ensure that tenants know their responsibilities under the terms of their tenancies.
- We will promote the Government's guidance on staying safe during the pandemic.
- We will respond promptly to reports of anti-social behaviour, using dialogue and mediation to resolve issues before any enforcement actions.

Maintenance services

Repairs

- Unless there are local or national restrictions, or we have excessive sickness levels, we will provide a full repair service and aim to deliver 98% of repairs within our target timescales.
- If local or national restrictions are introduced, we may suspend our routine repair service, but will continue to prioritise emergency and urgent repairs so our tenants can live safely in their homes.

Gas safety

- We will prioritise gas servicing and the issuing of new gas certificates.

Health and safety

- We will treat as urgent any repairs that significantly affect health and safety.

Communication

- We will update our website on our services, Government restrictions and how we are complying.
- We will use social media, texts and emails to signpost tenants to the Coronavirus section of our website for up-to-date information on our services.
- We will ensure that all tenants know what repairs the Association is responsible for and what repairs tenants are expected to do themselves

Access to services

Tenants Online

- We will continue to develop Tenants Online so that tenants can access our services online, including scheduling their own repairs.
- We will ensure that Tenants Online works effectively on both desktop computers and mobile devices.
- We will develop our digital services from the perspective of the tenant.

2. Sustaining tenancies

We will support tenants at risk of losing their homes by engaging with them to minimise the number of failed tenancies.

Working with our tenants

- We will give advice, normally by telephone or online, to tenants who are struggling to sustain their tenancy, including budgeting support, access to benefits and signposting to other agencies.
- We will work with any tenant who is actively engaging with us, to prevent their eviction and potential homelessness and we will not commence final eviction proceedings in such cases.
- We will continue to raise awareness of our Tenancy Support services to all tenants.

Partnerships

- We will ensure that homes let to homeless and other vulnerable people are ready to move into.

3. Asset management

We will invest in our homes to improve quality and energy efficiency.

Resuming planned works to homes

- Subject to any lockdowns or excessive staff illness, we will carry out kitchen replacements and installations of new heating systems and energy efficiency works, including solar panels.

Knowing our homes

- We will undertake regular stock condition surveys of our properties to ensure 100% decent homes compliance.
- We will use knowledge of our properties, tenant experience and satisfaction data to inform our investment plans.

Improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty

- We will use surpluses from property disposals, and some profits from sales of open market homes by BSB, to improve the energy efficiency of properties we own.
- We will support people to move from homes (if they wish to) that are not economical to bring up to acceptable energy efficiency standards.
- We will actively support the Home Group's Campaign to get energy providers to help tackle fuel poverty.

Delivering asset management

- We will deliver a quality maintenance service using our in-house teams, where possible.
- We will prioritise works to our tenants' homes and communal areas that affect their wellbeing, particularly their health and safety.
- We will use the 'return on assets' model to identify and plan for investment/redevelopment of homes that do not reach our benchmark, if the tenant agrees.

Building safety

- We will prioritise tenants' safety and will respond to risks as soon as possible.
- We will carry out regular fire risk assessments at schemes with communal areas and complete any actions necessary within the set timescales.
- We will monitor the Building Safety Bill's journey through Parliament, so that we are compliant with any new requirements when the Bill receives Royal Assent.

4. Involving residents

We will involve tenants in shaping our services and in scrutinising our performance.

Face-to-face events on hold

- We will stop face-to-face tenant involvement events during the pandemic.

Online engagement

- We will hold online video conference events with members of the Tenant Action Group and Homes Panel so they can scrutinise our performance and ambitions effectively.
- We will hold online video conference “community conversations” with tenants.
- We will use social media to engage with tenants as widely as possible and provide multiple channels for feedback.

Shareholding membership

- We will encourage tenants to become actively engaged as Members of Broadland Housing Association, alongside other members of our local communities.

Our ambition to address unmet housing needs

5. Homelessness

We will, working with others, seek to reduce homelessness in Norfolk and North Suffolk and will lobby for policy changes nationally that reduce the likelihood of homelessness.

Partnership working

- We will work with our partner local authorities to help find safe homes for people in critical housing need, particularly rough sleepers and people fleeing domestic violence.
- We will play an active role in the Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership and the Norfolk Homelessness Solutions Forum.
- We will work with King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, Norwich City Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council to progress new schemes for individuals and families moving out of homelessness, including Housing First schemes.
- We will work with Norfolk County Council's "People from Abroad" team to help provide housing options for migrants and particularly people with no recourse to public funding.
- We will work with Norwich City Council, the Ministry of Justice, The Police and Crime Commissioner and St Martin's to provide homes for people leaving prison.
- We will help organise Homes for Cathy events to share good practice and develop initiatives that will tackle homelessness in our region.

Sustaining tenancies

- We will work with any tenant who is actively engaging with us, to prevent their eviction and potential homelessness and we will not commence final eviction proceedings in these cases.

Lobbying

- We will continue to promote Homes for Cathy, helping to run the group nationally and to lobby policy makers and influencers for long-term solutions to homelessness.

6. Development

We will build as many new affordable homes as possible each year, while ensuring we maintain our existing homes, the safety of our tenants and our long-term viability.

Developing and marketing safely

- During the pandemic, we will promote safe working on all sites where homes are being built for us, including S.106 sites.
- We will ensure that our development staff can work on actual or potential development sites while complying with social distancing.

Meeting housing needs

- We will aim to build 72 affordable homes (53 for rent and 19 for shared ownership) by March 2021.
- We will continue to develop a pipeline to deliver 599 new affordable homes by the end of the 2024/25 financial year, including 80 affordable homes in 2021/22 and 142 in 2022/23.
- We will aim to build and sell 13 open market homes in 2020/21 to generate funding for our affordable homes programme and the energy efficiency programmes in our existing homes.
- We will deliver 166 new open market homes by the end of the 2024/25 financial year, including 12 homes in 2021/22 and 55 in 2022/23.

Sustainability

- We will build environmentally sustainable homes, normally minimum EPC level B.
- We will accept homes coming through S.106 programmes at a minimum EPC level of C and we will budget to bring these properties up to a minimum EPC level B.

Partnerships

- We will work in partnership with Homes England and local authorities in Norfolk and Waveney to identify and deliver appropriate housing schemes that meet local needs.
- We will work in partnerships with other housing associations and private developers as necessary to meet housing need in our area.

Our infrastructure

7. Value for money

The focus of our financial management is to maximise efficiencies across Broadland, to provide better value for money for our tenants.

Value for money will be integral to our activities, including:

Finance

- We will make digital and process improvements to our finance system.
- We will do regular budgetary reviews during the pandemic, taking into account any new Government restrictions.
- We will monitor our spending/cash flows to allow for significantly increased arrears and excessive voids.
- In our 2021/22 budget we will prioritise spend against our strategic priorities, to maximise the benefit to our tenants and those in local housing need, while retaining financial capacity to cope with an extended pandemic and further national or local lockdowns.

Procurement

- We will monitor the service delivery capability and financial liquidity of our key suppliers and contractors to minimise our exposure to significant financial loss.
- When procuring services and materials we will seek to buy local when possible.
- We will consider quality, environmental sustainability and social value as integral to value for money when awarding contracts.

Digital

- We will engage with tenants and staff when reviewing our Digital First Declaration and will bring to the Board a revised Declaration for adoption.
- We will continue to improve online services for tenants, so they can contact us when it is convenient for them.
- We will continue to improve digital tools for our staff so they can do their jobs more efficiently.

Partnerships

- We will explore the benefits of sharing services with partners, including members of Independent East.

8. Financial resources

We will manage our financial resources sensibly, borrowing funds and maximising grant funding to deliver our strategic objectives and improve Broadland's financial performance.

Business planning

- We will continue our stress testing scenarios so that we can act quickly to review our business plan as circumstances change.

Borrowing money

- Supported by our Funding Advisors, we will seek loans to support our asset management and development ambitions.
- We will comply with the repayment terms of our loan agreements.

Grant funding

- We will use capital grants from Homes England and our local authority partners to help deliver our development plans.

Growing capacity

- We will take advantage of our size and structure to get better value for money in delivering our strategic ambitions.
- We will use surpluses generated by BSB to fund the development of new affordable homes and improve the energy efficiency of homes we already own.

9. Governance

We will ensure that our Boards and Committees are fit for purpose, reflecting good practice and compliant with all regulatory expectations.

We will also ensure that we have effective executive management to lead and manage the staff team and deliver on the Board's ambitions

Capable Boards

- Board and Committee meetings will be held in a safe manner.
- Bimonthly informal recorded video conferences will be held for all non-executives so they are up to date and can engage with and challenge the executive team effectively.
- We will review the NHF's new Governance Code and agree what is appropriate for Broadland going forward.
- We will undertake annual reviews of each Board's effectiveness and compliance, and implement any necessary actions.
- We will regularly review the skills and experience needed for each Board and openly recruit to fill vacancies.
- We will ensure there are tenants on BHA's Board.

Capable executive

- The Leadership Team will meet regularly in a safe manner.
- The Leadership Team will ensure that we deliver against this strategy.
- Operational and strategic performance will be reported regularly to the Board, to allow effective scrutiny and appropriate challenge.

Shareholding membership

- We will hold Membership events using video conferencing to engage our members and benefit from their expertise and experience.

10. Environmental responsibility

We will reduce our carbon footprint and our impact on the environment. We will consider sustainability in all our activities.

Addressing fuel poverty

- Subject to Coronavirus restrictions, we will continue energy efficiency improvements in our tenants' homes to reduce the risk of fuel poverty.

Decarbonisation

- We will continue planning to make our homes net zero carbon by 2050 with a clear strategy and realistic milestones.

Better scheduling

- We will seek to improve productivity and reduce mileage through better scheduling of our repair operatives.

Reducing waste

- We will prioritise sustainability in our development and maintenance programmes.
- We will prioritise digital technology that reduce the need for printing and postage.

Environmental Champions

- We will support and encourage the work of Broadland's Environmental Champions.

Offices

- With more staff working at home as a result of the pandemic, we will review our office accommodation needs and develop a plan to make our offices fit for the new post Covid-19 normal.

11. People

We will ensure that we are a good employer with high levels of staff engagement and staff commitment to our tenants.

Home working

- We will consult with our office-based staff on changes to their terms and conditions of employment to enable long-term home working.
- We will provide our staff with the right digital technology to work effectively.
- We will continue to invest in Broadland Business Systems and other digital tools to provide staff with effective tools to do their jobs.

Covid-secure offices

- We will ensure that our offices are Covid-secure.

Staff remuneration

- We will review our pay and reward systems in 2021 to ensure that they are still fit for purpose and aim to introduce any changes in April 2022.

Staff wellbeing

- We will undertake a regular employee Pulse survey to identify any employees who need additional support.
- We will actively support our Mental Health Champions
- We will ensure that employees who need to self-isolate can do so.
- We will ensure that staff self-isolate if they or a household member is unwell with Coronavirus.
- We will ensure that all staff know how to access our Employee Assistance Programme and other sources of support.

Staff representation

- We will actively support our staff consultative group, CARE, to represent employee views, provide confidential support to colleagues and organise Covid-secure social activities.

Staff training and development

- We will recruit and train apprentices subject to financial resources and business needs.
- We will continue to develop our staff to enable them to do their jobs effectively.

Staff recruitment

- When recruiting, we will consider the applicant's skills, experience, and attitude to our enduring purpose, tenants, digital agenda and teamwork.