



**DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**April 2020 – March 2025**

**The Wrekin**  
Housing Group



## Executive Summary

**The Wrekin Housing Group is a socially minded organisation that prides itself on making a difference to people's lives.**

In November 2019 the Group completed a re-financing exercise which provides the springboard to once again accelerate the development programme. The £600m re-financing will enable the Group to deliver 2,391 new homes for social and affordable rent, rent to buy and shared ownership between April 2020 and March 2025 across Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire and Staffordshire.

These homes will provide accommodation for families, couples and single people, along with supporting those who require more specialist housing such as older people, adults with learning difficulties, and those suffering with dementia.

This ambitious development programme will see the group moving our growth agenda forward, and result in a housing provision of around 16,000 homes.

The Development Strategy is one of a suite of underpinning strategies that have also been refreshed to ensure they remain relevant and aligned with the plan and its objectives and targets.

The refreshed Development Strategy builds on five aims which will provide the strategic roadmap that ensures the Group operates a joined-up and focused development programme.



## Five targets:



Deliver 2,391 new homes for social and affordable rent, rent to buy and shared ownership between April 2020 and March 2025 – Link to Group Strategy – Customers & Asset Management



Deliver a range of new homes aimed at meeting the needs of our older customers – Link to Group Strategy – Care and Support



All new developments deliver value for money and create social value – Link to Group Strategy – VFM & Social Value



Develop and deliver a pilot project with new homes that achieve a SAP rating of A – Link to Group Strategy – Asset Management



Ensure The Wrekin Housing Group is seen as the preferred development partner of choice – Link to Group Strategy – Partners and Stakeholders

The above targets include facets from six of the seven “pillars” which underpin the wider “The Wrekin Housing Group Strategy 2020 – 2025”. This demonstrates that the Development Strategy is aligned with the priorities of the Group, emphasises the Group’s commitment to providing homes for some of the most vulnerable people in our society, and it contributes to fulfilling the Group’s stated purpose of “Making a difference to people’s lives”.



## Strategic Context

**The Wrekin Housing Group have been developing new homes for more than a decade, and during that time we have delivered nearly 4,000 new homes for our customers.**

These new homes include exemplar rural developments, innovative modern methods of construction, high quality care villages and homes provided to meet the needs of the people in our communities.

The Group has, and continues to, successfully deliver new homes across Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire and Staffordshire that meet local need. The location, tenure and house type are driven by a robust framework of data and knowledge including:

- Area Teams with ward estate level knowledge and understanding of need and demand
- Sustainment data tracking turnover of properties in localities
- Waiting Pool data which monitors level of demand
- Local Authority housing waiting list, needs and strategy data

All new developments are assessed against this rich pool of information and knowledge to determine the right developments to pursue, with the right mix of property in terms of tenure and house type.



LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	IDENTIFIED AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED 2020-25
Telford and Wrekin	3,325
Shropshire	5,184
Staffordshire (Stafford Borough/Newcastle-under-Lyme/South Staffs /Cannock Chase)	4,260

The foundation these new homes have been built on is successful partnership arrangements. Great efforts have been made in forging strong links with our Local Authority partners, key local and national developers, and strategically placed consultants and agents. These partners have supported The Wrekin Housing Group in establishing a growing reputation as a reliable development partner and investor in the communities in which the Group operates.

The current national landscape is presenting new challenges to delivering our growth strategy. Global pandemics, structural changes to the political and legislative framework following BREXIT, fluctuations in the financial system, Government prioritisation of home ownership products and a clear need to move towards a “Carbon Zero” world, highlight the need for innovation and adaptability.

This strategy sets the Group’s ambition to continue to “make a difference to people’s lives”, and we believe that the new homes we build bring long term benefit to multiple sections of society. Homes for the old and the young. For person’s with a disability or care needs. For those with a growing family and those looking to downsize. Whatever the need we are seeking to deliver housing solutions that help.





## AIM 1 – Deliver more affordable homes

### Strategy Objective - Customers & Asset Management

Target – Deliver 2,391 new homes for social and affordable rent, rent to buy and shared ownership between April 2020 and March 2025

Actions needed to reach this target:

- Continually review and assess housing need based on Area Team and Local Authority data
- Build or acquire new homes in The Wrekin Housing Group Operational areas
- Pursue the highest standard of new home possible in terms of quality, space, design and sustainability within the financial appraisal limits available, whilst fulfilling the Group's overall objective to "make a difference to people's lives" by providing new affordable homes to as many people as possible
- Ensure all affordable home ownership properties are sold within a 6 month period with a focus on prioritising Rent to Buy as the affordable home ownership product of choice
- Continue to explore opportunities to re-develop the Group's existing assets to build new homes





## AIM 2 – Provide high quality older person's accommodation designed to meet the changing needs of the individual

### Strategy Objective - Care and Support

Target – Deliver a range of new homes aimed at meeting the needs of our older customers

Actions needed to reach this target:

- Work closely with Local Authority partners and undertake market research to ensure development and product meets identified demand and need
- Continue to deliver new older person's accommodation in our existing operational areas in line with the approved direction of the Group Care Strategy
- Work closely with Retirement Living and Choices colleagues to continue to adapt the accommodation and services offer to ensure we deliver homes where people can live for longer independently





## AIM 3 – Ensuring value for money for our customers and the communities we serve

### Strategy Objective - VFM & Social Value

Target – All new developments deliver value for money and create social value

Actions needed to reach this target:

- A minimum of 30% of all project spend on sub-contractors and suppliers are from the Local Authority area postcode where the development is based for all Group led developments
- Contractor and developer partners will support one apprentice for every £1m spent on each Group led development
- Contractor and developer partners will support 13 weeks of work placements / training weeks for every £1m spent on each Group led development
- Customer satisfaction with new builds is monitored along with all new lets and any score below 85% investigated to understand dissatisfaction. A minimum sample of 30% of new build completions will be targeted







## AIM 4 – Deliver long life and low energy new homes

### Strategy Objective - Asset Management

Target – Develop and deliver a pilot project with new homes that achieve a SAP rating of A

Actions needed to reach this target:

- Develop and deliver a bespoke and viable “Wrekin Simply Sustainable” Specification that achieves an A rated SAP score at a viable build cost
- Deliver a pilot project using the “Wrekin Simply Sustainable” specification, monitor outcomes and customer experience, and update the specification accordingly in order to be ready for a wider use of the specification post 2025
- Work with Homes England to understand the impacts of sustainable development on build costs, and explore enhanced grant rates
- Actively pursue the use of modern methods of construction (MMC) and smart eco technologies
- Identify direct and indirect funding opportunities for housing innovation pilots





## AIM 5 – Support and build on successful partnerships

### Strategy Objective - Partners and Stakeholders

Target – Ensure The Wrekin Housing Group is seen as the preferred development partner of choice

Actions needed to reach this target:

- Further develop The Wrekin Housing Group's relationship with Homes England (HE) and explore new partnership arrangements
- Understand and secure all grant funding opportunities available, and maximise grant levels attained
- Continue to build on a strong working relationship with Local Authority Partners pursuing partnership projects to solidify bonds
- Work with sector peers to share best practise and promote the housing sector
- Work in partnership with developers and consultants to deliver affordable and high quality homes



