



Solihull
Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

Strategic Vision

2020 - 2025



Contents:

1.

Introduction

2.

About Us

3.

Our Strategic Vision

4.

Delivering our SCH Vision

1. Introduction





Introduction

From 2017 to date, SCH has made good progress against our previous strategic vision: to 'Provide Homes'; 'Improve Wellbeing'; and 'Strengthen Communities'.

Now we want to do much more for, and with, our customers.

This refreshed five-year plan sets out our new Vision, the five strategic aims which support it, and the core values and commitments that will shape the way that we achieve it.

Our core purpose remains to provide homes and housing related services but we want to do this in a way that makes our customers lives easier and supports them and our wider communities to thrive.

This commitment is reflected in the way that our vision supports the Solihull Council Plan in addressing fundamental issues such as climate change, health and social care, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable people, and delivering inclusive growth.

We recognise that we cannot progress this vision by ourselves. SCH is embedded within the partnership arrangements in Solihull and the joint development work we do with social care, the police and other agencies is essential to the success of our strategy and associated delivery plans.



Listening to, and involving our customers in policy development and service improvement is a key theme running through our strategic objectives and delivery milestones.

SCH is striving to deliver excellent housing related services and play our part in progressing the wider Solihull Council Plan priorities. We are confident that, working collaboratively with our customers and partners, we can achieve this and make a positive difference to people's lives.

2. About Us



About Us



SCH Board Chair, Richard Hyde and SCH Chief Executive, Fiona Hughes

SCH is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) established in 2004 to manage housing services on behalf of Solihull Council. We are a limited company with one shareholder, which is Solihull Council.

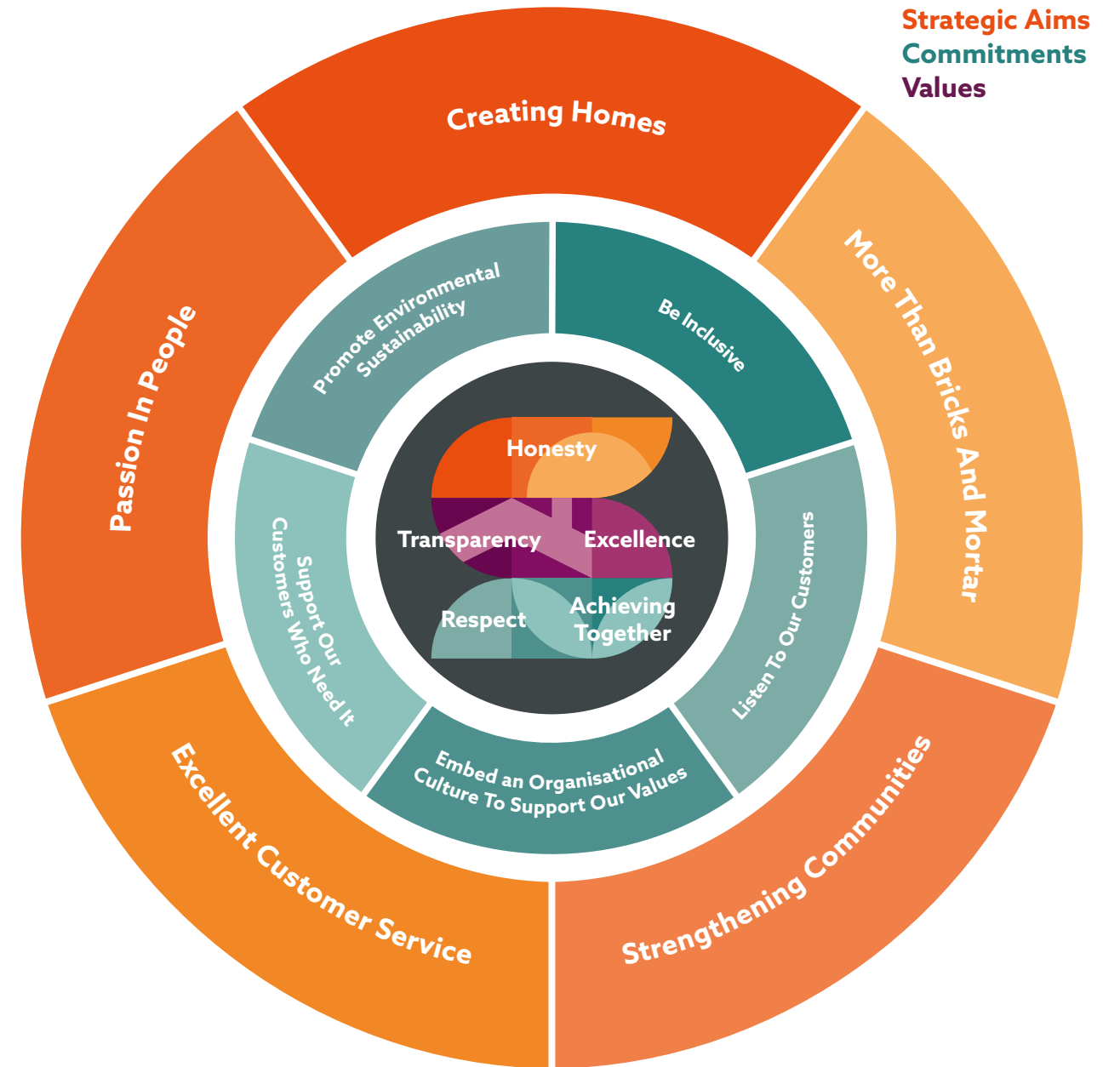
SCH's Board is made up of tenants, councillors and independent people chosen for their specialist skills and experience. The governance arrangements consist of the SCH Board and its committees. Tenants and leaseholders are involved in the scrutiny process.

We strive to be a high performing organisation. A comprehensive performance monitoring framework is in place and progress against key performance indicators and annual Delivery Plan priorities is reported to the SCH Board on a quarterly basis. The Council oversees our performance by means of a Quarterly Monitoring Board, which is chaired by a Cabinet Member with responsibility for housing.

The work to progress SCH's Vision, strategic aims and core objectives is delivered through three service areas: Asset Management and Development, Housing and Communities, and Customer Services and Business Support.



3. Our Strategic Vision



Our Strategic Vision

Creating better homes and thriving communities

Our Values

- **H**onesty
- **E**xcellence
- **A**chieving together
- **R**espect
- **T**ransparency

SCH is not just concerned with what we do but how we do it. Alongside our core values, the following commitments will underpin all that we do:

Promote environmental sustainability

We fully support the Council's climate change goals. Solihull Council has made a declaration of intent recognising the climate change emergency and is taking positive action through its Climate Change Prospectus, setting a target for the Council to become net zero carbon by 2030. Solihull Community Housing (SCH) is totally committed to environmental sustainability and we will develop and implement a complementary SCH strategy to ensure that we work with and support the Council effectively.

Be inclusive

We will always be inclusive in our direct service delivery but also in our wider work to develop Thriving Communities. We will always work in a way that

ensures everyone feels valued, that their contribution matters and they are able to realise their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances. We will meet our moral and legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Listen to our customers

We will always listen to our customers - we recognise that high quality customer care and taking the opportunity to learn from our customers is key to delivering services which are both effective and efficient

Embed an organisational culture to support our values

We will instil an organisational culture which 'lives and breathes' the SCH values and commitments

Support our customers who need it

We know that some of our customers will need support and we will embed a clear approach to supporting vulnerable customers across all SCH services. We understand and will always meet our safeguarding responsibilities.

These values and commitments will influence the way that SCH works with our customers, our partners and with each other, to progress the strategic aims and delivery milestones which will move us towards our vision.

Our Strategic Aims:

To deliver our strategy and our commitment to customers, we need a clear strategic direction. We have developed five strategic aims to take us forward:

- **Creating Homes**
- **More than Bricks and Mortar**
- **Strengthening Communities**
- **Excellent Customer Service**
- **Passion in People**

We have also set our aspirations and success measures for each strategic aim to provide challenge, and against which we can gauge the success of our journey.

Our commitment to delivering environmental sustainability

The government has set a UK target for achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Solihull Council has recognised the gravity of the climate change emergency and made a declaration of intent to take positive action through its Solihull Climate Change Prospectus, which includes setting a more ambitious target for the Council to become net carbon zero by 2030. Solihull Community Housing (SCH) is fully committed to environmental sustainability and we are also ambitious in our plan to become net carbon zero by 2030.

Action has already been taken to make the housing stock more energy efficient through, for example, the installation of biomass heating in over half of the high rise homes we manage. Further improvements to the housing stock, working with the Council, are being progressed by the Asset Management and Development service.

We will also support the Council's climate change goals through a SCH environmental sustainability strategy, encompassing the environmental impact of business activities across the organisation, as well as measures to promote good practice amongst our staff, customers, suppliers and contractors.

SCH Support for the Solihull Council Plan

The work of SCH is aligned with the Solihull Council Plan 2020-2025. The plan emphasises that everything the Council does should contribute to one or more of the five building blocks for sustainable inclusive growth:

1. Building a vibrant economy
2. Promoting and delivering social value
3. Enabling communities to thrive
4. Actioning our climate change declaration
5. Improving skills and access to good work

At the heart of the Plan are nine key things to do by 2025:

1. Revitalising our towns and local centres
2. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2
3. Increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and social housing
4. Enhance Solihull's natural environment
5. Improve Solihull's air quality
6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions
7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities
8. Enable communities to thrive
9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs

SCH will support the delivery of the Council Plan, including specific contributions detailed in our Delivery Plans.

4. Delivering our SCH Vision

Through our five strategic aims





1. Creating Homes

Creating homes for the future to meet the needs of our customers.

Creating homes which meet the needs of our customers means delivering places to live which are safe, secure and affordable. Good quality housing supports health and wellbeing, and can help to promote stronger communities. We strive to deliver quality homes through astute investment in the existing housing stock, as well as working with the Council to develop additional new homes.

Making the best use of the available physical and financial resources requires a comprehensive understanding of how well the existing stock performs in meeting needs, both current and projected. Physical condition, energy efficiency, size, layout and location are all important factors. A wide ranging Asset Management Strategy provides the framework through which SCH and the Council make joint investment decisions. Accurate and robust data is required to determine improvement priorities, the long term viability of different property types or schemes, and undertake options appraisals as necessary.

Alongside investment, an excellent repairs and maintenance service, and an efficient approach to void turnaround to maximise occupancy, are key to delivering homes which meet the needs of our customers.

SCH is eager to make a significant contribution to increasing the number of new homes for social rent in Solihull. Fiscal constraints and the limited availability of land for such development pose challenges. Nevertheless, SCH continues to work in partnership with the Council to review site availability and explore other options to grow the social housing stock, including opportunities for wider regeneration such as the Kinghurst Village Centre.

Building safety and environmental sustainability are central to our approach to delivering quality homes, whether existing stock or new build. Solihull Council has

declared a climate emergency and SCH fully supports the aims set out in the Climate Change Prospectus, including the target to become net-zero carbon by 2030. The environmental sustainability of the Council's housing stock represents one element of this. We will explore the potential benefits of using new building materials or construction techniques. Other possible improvements might include the provision of electrical charging points and SMART diagnostic technology, which indicates when a building component or service installation requires attention before it actually fails.

The Grenfell Tower tragedy still casts a disturbing shadow and we, along with the rest of the social housing and construction sectors, must implement the learning from the Sir Martin Moore-Bick led Inquiry. Again working with the Council, SCH is committed to a strategic overview of all safety considerations, with particular reference to the Bills on building and fire safety included in the government's legislative programme. A key focus will be measures relating to high rise homes, including the installation of sprinkler systems.

An early finding from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry highlighted the importance of engaging with, and involving, customers effectively. Only by doing this will we be sure that we are creating homes which meet the needs of our customers.

By 2025:

- We will ensure that the voice and safety of our residents is central to the decisions we make
- All the homes we build will be of high quality, net-zero carbon and energy efficient
- We will have all the information we need to understand how we should invest intelligently in our properties to improve lives
- We will provide a repairs and maintenance service that meets customer expectations in a timely and flexible way

2. More than Bricks and Mortar

A clear and accessible service offer to improve the lives of our customers.

To enhance the life chances of our customers, we will ensure access to a full range of services focussing on supporting our customers to maintain tenancies, wellbeing and enabling our customers to live independently in their own homes as long as possible, money advice and preventing and tackling homelessness. We recognise that customers will experience challenges in their lives and our aim is to have a responsive service which is tailored around their needs and circumstances. We will work closely with our partner agencies and stakeholders to support our customers and local communities.

Excellent core housing management services will be integrated and highly visible. Effective income collection is vital to sustain our business and will allow us to improve our services and deliver better, so we will always design effective rent collection processes which are customer focussed.

SCH is the main provider of homelessness services on behalf the Council. The challenges presented by the prevention and relief duties introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act will feature throughout the life of this strategy. A comprehensive Housing Options Development Plan to improve our service has been developed and will be implemented in the early years of this five-year strategic vision.

Supporting the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2023 and building closer working relationships with the Council's other service providers: St Basils and SIAS, will also make a significant contribution to this agenda.

By 2025:

- Homelessness services will be fully embedded across the Borough enabling effective prevention of homelessness



- We will achieve 70% prevention / relief rate of homeless approaches to SCH
- We will have integrated core housing management services ensuring minimal hand-offs of customers across teams and service areas
- We will deliver highly accessible housing management services with customers being able to report and access key information with ease
- We will deliver services that maximise the use of digital technology and develop with our changing customer base
- Our services will focus on developing and enhancing life chances particularly around money advice, training and employment
- We will achieve top quartile rent collection



3. Strengthening Communities

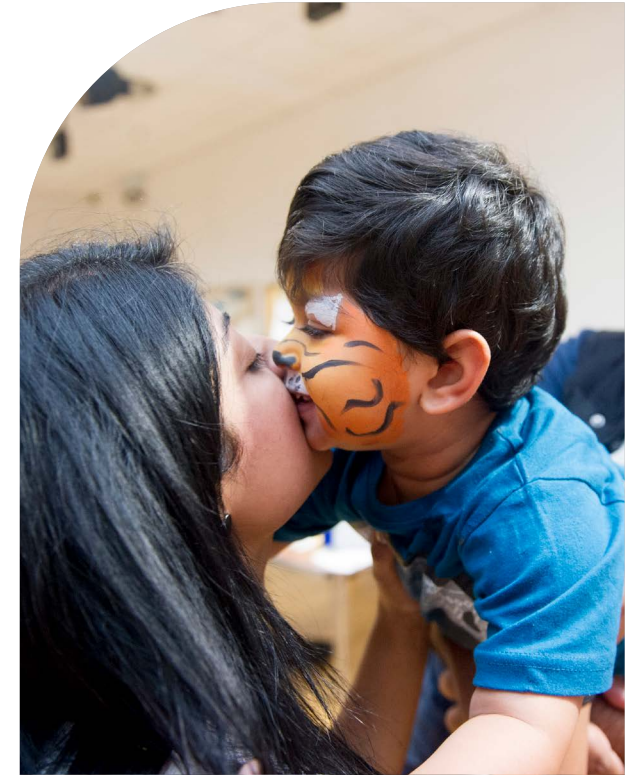
To enable resilient and thriving communities.

The SCH 'footprint' in the communities in which we work extends far wider than the properties we manage. We see our work having greater depth and connectivity with a wide range of partners and stakeholder to create vibrant and sustainable communities. Leading on Locality Working and with a focus on people and place, we are reshaping the way we work and deliver services. Our aim is to deliver on commitments made in the high level strategic Locality Plans and ensure our services continue to evolve and grow not only to meet the needs of our communities, but also build on the aspirations of people in our communities.

Joint working on stakeholder and community engagement events will raise awareness and provide opportunities to obtain valuable input from residents. Co-design of services and working closely with partner agencies to provide seamless delivery will be important elements of our approach. As ever, partnership arrangements to promote community safety, public health and tackle anti-social behaviour will underpin our work to strengthen communities.

By 2025 we will:

- Reach 95% customer satisfaction with anti-social behaviour case handling
- Provide seamless services for customers in close partnership with SMBC
- Have services across stakeholders such as; housing, health, education, social services, emergency services and the voluntary and community sector working in a highly connected way for the benefit of customers
- Create communities and neighbourhoods that people feel proud to live in



4. Excellent Customer Service

Delivering excellent customer service, consistently using community driven insight.

SCH is on a journey to achieve significant transformational change around how we deliver customer service and experience. We want to empower and involve customers in shaping what the future looks like through an engagement framework and fundamentally co-designing key services. Securing Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) accreditation is one step to evidence our journey.

Saying what we will do and doing what we say, at the first time of asking, is fundamental to our approach. At SCH we know that building trust with our customers is imperative. Being flexible and offering choice will be key components along the way, ensuring our more traditional customer channels operate to high standards whilst striving ahead to embrace digital technology. We will be inclusive in all our customer service and wider engagement with communities.

We expect that delivering excellent customer service will reduce the number of complaints we receive, but we will ensure that we learn from any expressions of dissatisfaction to improve even further.

It is likely that the Regulator of Social Housing will strengthen the consumer standards that apply to local authorities and we will be ready to respond to this, and to forthcoming changes in the Housing Ombudsman service.

Continuous improvement is critical for us to achieve high standards. By being data led and capturing the voice of the customer, we will ensure that we focus our improvement in the right areas and work with our customers in a transparent way to co-design service changes.

Embedding a clear approach to supporting vulnerable customers across all SCH services is a key focus for

us, and we will clearly define our service offering in partnership with customers and wider locality organisations. Shaping new processes and governance will be essential elements of this work. At the same time, we will ensure that we continue to meet our safeguarding responsibilities and support our staff by making sure that they can access relevant training. By 2025:

- SCH will be recognised and accredited by our peers as one of the leading providers of housing services in the country
- Our customer satisfaction levels will be above 90%
- Our customer service channels will be digitally enabled and easy to use
- Our customers will be fundamental in co-designing our services
- SCH will have a mature vulnerable customer offer
- SCH will have 70% of customers signed up to self-serve channels across key services



5. Passion in People

Creating a great place to work, where the whole team feels valued, empowered and motivated, with the tools needed to deliver excellent services.

Supporting our staff to further develop the skills required to deliver our ambitions is fundamental to achieving our vision.

Expectations from customers and other stakeholders remain high and managing these expectations will be important, as will creating the different mind-set that we need to embed this within our DNA.

Staff engagement is key and we will nurture this by providing strong and visible leadership to guide the organisation, and by ensuring all employees have the opportunity to be heard and participate in shaping their own future. Our Staff Engagement Group, staff surveys and staff conferences will help to promote this. We will also develop SCH as an employer of choice and inclusivity.

We are aiming high, and will give our people the tools, techniques and support to be successful and to deliver our performance ambitions. We will promote accountability and autonomy by encouraging staff to work flexibly and to try doing things in different ways. Different people have different strengths and we want everyone to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential as individuals and as team members.

By 2025:

- SCH will be a local employer of choice attracting new talent into the sector
- Our staff engagement will be benchmark high with 90% of staff being happy to work at SCH
- SCH will have ensured all staff have the tools and techniques to deliver great performance
- SCH will have a strong talent pool to develop the next generation of leaders in the business
- We will have a strong culture of wellbeing, mental health awareness, equality and diversity



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