



Business Plan
2024-2025

Wolverhampton Homes



A message from the Chief Executive

Welcome to our business plan that will underpin our work through to 2025. This is our strategic roadmap that outlines our commitment to providing high quality services that meet the needs of our diverse customer population in accordance with the priorities of the city council.



The landscape of social housing is changing rapidly, with increased regulation that will help us to drive ever-higher standards for customers. By embracing the regulatory changes and listening and acting on customer feedback, we aim to deliver great services to our customers, while delivering against regulatory requirements.

Our business plan details our commitment to our customers, to compliance and to our aim of enhancing services to ensure we continue to work towards our vision of unlocking people's potential through housing, skills and technology.

Customers have told us they want us to be there when they need us, with access to high-quality digital services and the ability to speak to our teams if they need to. We have developed a new My Account app and enhanced our website to ensure easy online access to our services.

**We have a clear mission:
To help people get
on in life.**

In pursuit of this mission we will continue to focus our efforts around three key pillars, to support the City of Wolverhampton Council's strategy:

Enhance our community and customer focus – by working in communities to deliver high quality services which keep customers at the heart and meet their changing needs and preferences.

Provide safe and secure homes – by managing and maintaining homes and neighbourhoods to a high standard, adapting and improving the existing housing stock and actively contributing to the improved supply of sustainable accommodation options across the city.

Support people to sustain their tenancies and homes – through effective advice and support services that help residents to live independent, prosperous and fulfilling lives. We will continue to work collaboratively with stakeholders to promote independence and individual and community resilience while continuing to provide excellent housing services.

Through robust community engagement initiatives, transparent communication channels and a range of options for customers to provide feedback and be involved, we will continue to strive for high standards, with strong governance and support from Wolverhampton Homes' Board.

Shaun Aldis
Chief Executive of Wolverhampton Homes

Executive Summary

Wolverhampton Homes manages properties across the city on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council. We also provide a wide range of support services for customers and city-wide, tenure-neutral services including the Anti Social Behaviour team and the Wolverhampton Homes Improvement Agency.

We are governed by a Board of non-executive directors and led by a Senior Management team, with customer voice and influence on decision making embedded in our governance structures through the Board, our Committees and our Customer Involvement Panel.

We have a clear vision and plan, which has been developed through customer feedback, robust data and insights, and driven by the Charter for Social Housing Residents. We believe we're in a strong position to meet the demands ahead, with a sound track record of delivering services that meet customers' needs.

It's a challenging time for social housing, and this business plan outlines how we will continue to respond to the new legislation and regulation to improve standards for customers.

The plan will take us through a period of unparalleled change, and we anticipate that our role will develop and grow throughout this time, supporting the council to deliver on their priorities and creating positive change with longer, healthier lives for the residents of Wolverhampton.

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Our City, Our Plan

Wulfrunians will live longer, healthier lives.

Wolverhampton Homes Business Plan 2024/25

- Enhance our community and customer focus
- Provide safe and secure homes
- Support people to sustain their tenancies and homes

Our supporting strategies



Corporate Social Responsibility and Community Investment



People and Organisational Development



Customer Contact



Communication



Asset Management



Carbon Reduction

About Wolverhampton Homes

Wolverhampton Homes is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) that manages around 21,000 properties on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council.

Wolverhampton is unique in its position of having an ALMO operating alongside three smaller tenant management organisations – Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board, Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation and New Park Village Tenant Management Co-operative.

Wolverhampton Homes manages 19,548 tenanted properties, 2,274 leaseholds, 14 shared ownership homes, 200 shops and more than 3,500 garages. We deliver a wide range of services on behalf of the city council including retained responsibilities, regulatory and compliance activities for each of the tenant management organisations, ensuring all council-owned properties across the city are compliant with the highest safety standards.

We manage the city's capital programme for maintenance and regeneration and we are responsible for the delivery of the award-winning Heath Town regeneration programme – a £multi-million scheme to upgrade and enhance Health Town estate with a range of safety, security and environmental improvements.

There are more than 6,000 people currently on the council's housing register, with new applicants joining all the time, and around 800 properties a year coming available for letting. We are committed to supporting the council's Better Homes for All strategy to support those in need of a home to explore other housing options, which could see them move to a safe and secure home more quickly.

With circa 700 employees, we are one of Wolverhampton's biggest employers and we take our responsibility to the city seriously. We support the council in delivering a number of city-wide objectives such as our recently relaunched Early Careers programmes which provide young people with the opportunity to gain valuable skills and experience in the social housing sector combined with formal learning and qualifications that will help them to develop a long and rewarding career.

It is important that colleagues have access to a range of learning opportunities to help them to continually develop and grow – while being able to deliver professional services to our customers. This is done through in-person and online training, accredited courses and self-managed learning available 24/7 through our My Learning Hub virtual platform. We actively encourage managers in the business to achieve Member or Fellow qualifications from the Institute of Leadership and Management.



How we work:

Our ways of working are driven by our values, creating an enabling and engaging culture, inspiring innovation and excellence, and collaborating to deliver.



Working together

We work collaboratively with our customers and colleagues. We value each other's ideas and different skill-sets, and many hands make light work so we're more efficient when we work together.



Open to new ideas

We embrace change, look in different places, ask questions and try new things. We're curious and we look for a better way. We won't always find one but that's OK because we know that 'good enough' isn't the best we can be.



Respecting differences

We treat others as we would like to be treated and we value open and honest conversations. We are encouraging of other views and we know that our greatest strength comes from our differences, so we have created a supportive environment where we can all be ourselves.



Delivering our promises

We take personal responsibility for getting things done and we do what we say we will. We are committed to providing a great service to our customers and always act with integrity.



For the 2022/23 financial year, Wolverhampton Homes:

- Collected 97.32% of rent
- Handled 178,018 calls to our customer contact centre
- Responded to 46,594 Telecare calls, supporting some of the most vulnerable residents in Wolverhampton
- Made 3,744 befriending calls through our volunteers
- Supported 20 people in the city into work, work experience, training and volunteering
- Delivered savings of £118,000 for the local NHS Trust through quicker safe hospital discharge with home adaptations completed by our Home Improvement Agency
- Completed 320 home adaptations to support people to remain living independently in their homes for longer
- Helped 4,840 customers with financial support through our Money Smart team
- Accessed £440,000 of additional funding to support those customers in the greatest need
- Completed 17,634 gas safety checks
- Allocated 801 properties and 142 home exchanges
- Let empty properties, after repairs are completed, in an average of 26 days
- Spent almost £13 million on 64,980 repairs

Property Services

- Asset compliance management and assurance
- Capital programme management and delivery
- Stock condition, design, and investment planning
- Commercial services
- 24/7 response repair service
- Void property management
- Environmental management
- Retained responsibilities and support to TMOs and the EMB

Homes & Communities

- Tenancy and estate management
- Income and sundry debt management
- Money Smart
- Tenure neutral anti-social behaviour services
- Neighbourhood Services
- Home sales, shops, and leasehold management
- Lettings, allocations, and mutual exchanges
- Homeless services
- Safeguarding
- Domestic abuse
- Young persons service
- Housing Support and temporary accommodation management
- Home Improvement Agency

Corporate Services

- Customer contact centre
- Customer involvement and engagement
- Complaints and compliments
- CMC and Out of Hours service
- Governance, business assurance and business support
- Health and safety
- Human resources
- Learning and organisational development
- Communications
- Business improvement – system development and transformation

Governance

Over the last 18 years, Wolverhampton Homes has supported its shareholder the City of Wolverhampton Council to deliver housing management services as part of the Management Agreement.

Wolverhampton Homes Board

We are governed by a Board of 12 non-executive directors who work closely with our Senior Management team to support the strategic decision making process. Our Board is made up of four tenant Board members, four independent and four Wolverhampton councillors, who oversee the effective operation of the organisation and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Board and Committee meetings provide strategic direction, help to share business planning and objective setting, monitor performance, and ensure we work effectively with our customers, shareholder and other stakeholders.

Board members undertake an annual development plan, and receive bespoke training and development to ensure they are able to undertake their roles to a high standard. This includes external training to support their roles as company directors, and covers a number of key areas such as Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Finance and Audit.

Senior Management Team

Our Senior Management team is made up of the Chief Executive – Shaun Aldis and three directorate leads:



Shaun Aldis
Chief Executive



Julie Haydon
Director of Corporate Services



Angela Barnes
Director of Homes and Communities



Ian Gardner
Director of Property Services

Governance arrangements

To prepare for the housing sector's increase in regulation, a strategic housing review was completed. The review resulted in several recommendations that were supported by the Cabinet, and will see the following proposals implemented:

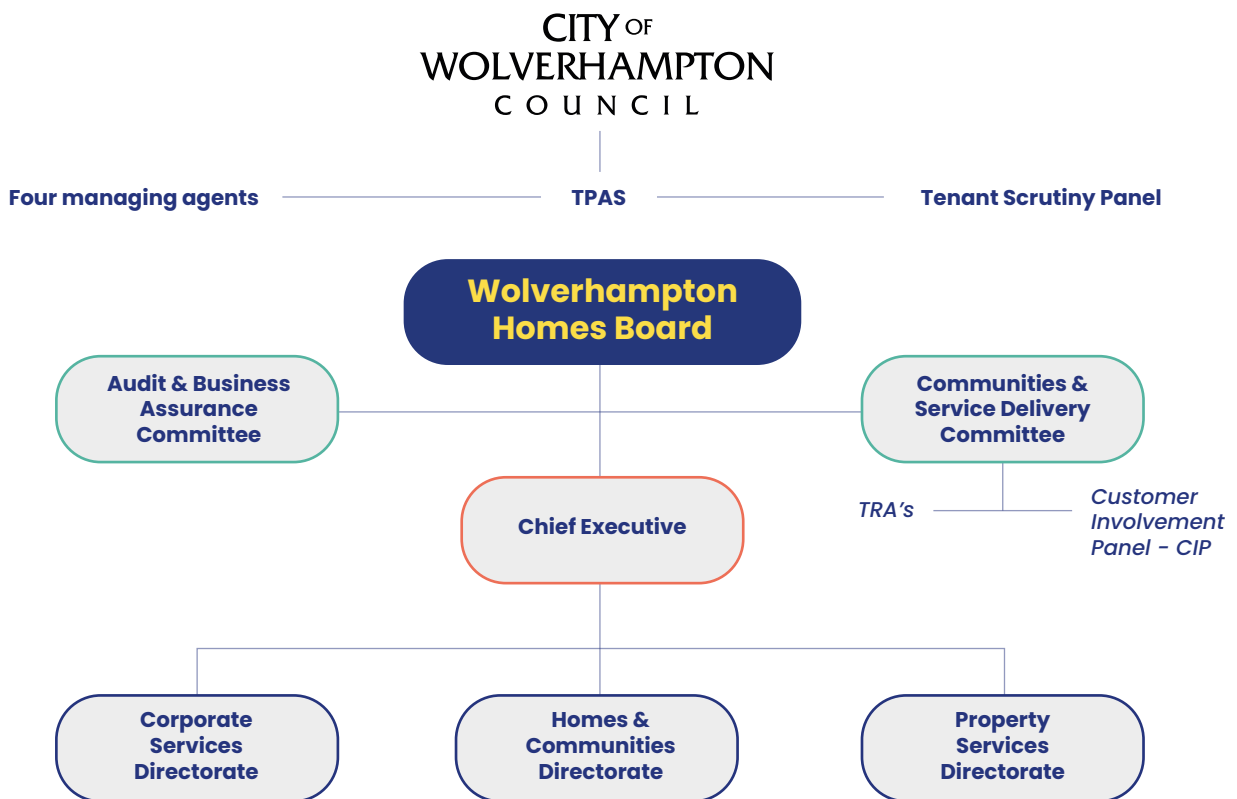
- Development of an overarching Shareholder Board as a focus for housing governance
- A review of the Management Agreement
- Creation of a shared evidence-base to ensure clarity of city-wide data
- A review of the Service Level Agreements in place between the city council and Wolverhampton Homes

Assurance is provided to the city council through robust governance structures that are continually reviewed. These governance arrangements ensure that we remain fit for purpose, continue to offer value for money to our customers, and that we meet and support the council's priorities.

Customer Involvement Panel

We have a newly established Customer Involvement Panel supported by tenants and leaseholders from across the city. The group meets quarterly and has responsibility for reviewing strategies and major service changes that could impact on customers, ensuring they are supporting us to listen and act on the customer voice. The panel also oversees the programme and delivery of our scrutiny activities and report on findings and outcomes to our Communities and Service Delivery committee.

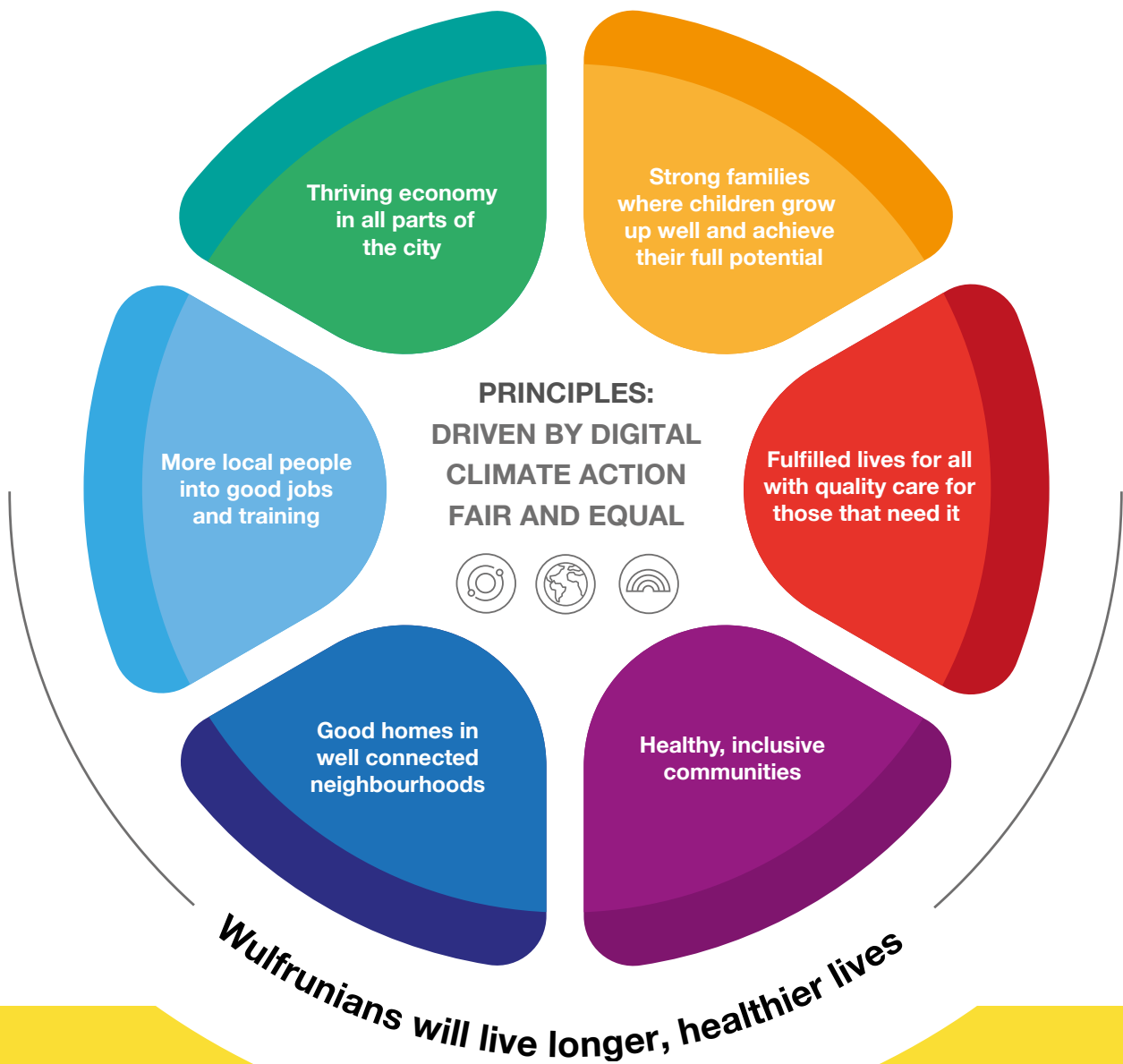
Our Customer Involvement Panel support us to listen and act on the customer voice



Supporting the city's priorities

As the largest housing management partner of the City of Wolverhampton Council we recognise the significant role and opportunity we have in supporting the council to achieve its goals.

Our business plan and key priorities are informed by Our City, Our Plan, as we deliver critical housing services in Wolverhampton.



Supporting the city's priorities *Continued*

A settled and secure home is the foundation for people and families to thrive. So alongside the standard housing management services, we provide a wide range of services to build healthy, safe and thriving neighbourhoods and communities.

We aim to tackle ASB through our dedicated, city-wide, tenure-neutral service and we strive to forge positive connections and to keep residents safe in their homes; our Money Smart team supports thousands of customers every year with the cost of living. We aim to help families with children who are attending school to ensure those children are ready to achieve their potential; and our Early Careers initiatives have supported unemployed 18-24s in the city into secure jobs with opportunities to learn and grow.

A committed supporter of the Wolverhampton Pound by way of joint procurement initiatives, and supporting the aims to help reduce youth unemployment by pledging our support to the city's Wolves At Work programme. We also deliver an apprenticeship scheme to help young people into work.



Supporting Principles



Climate Conscious

We have committed to the 'Net Zero' carbon target for 2028 to continually improve the properties we manage on behalf of the city council, with a focus on energy efficiency.



Driven By Digital

We are aligned with the council's aim to maximise how we use digital technologies to deliver better services and outcomes, encouraging customers to move to digital by choice.



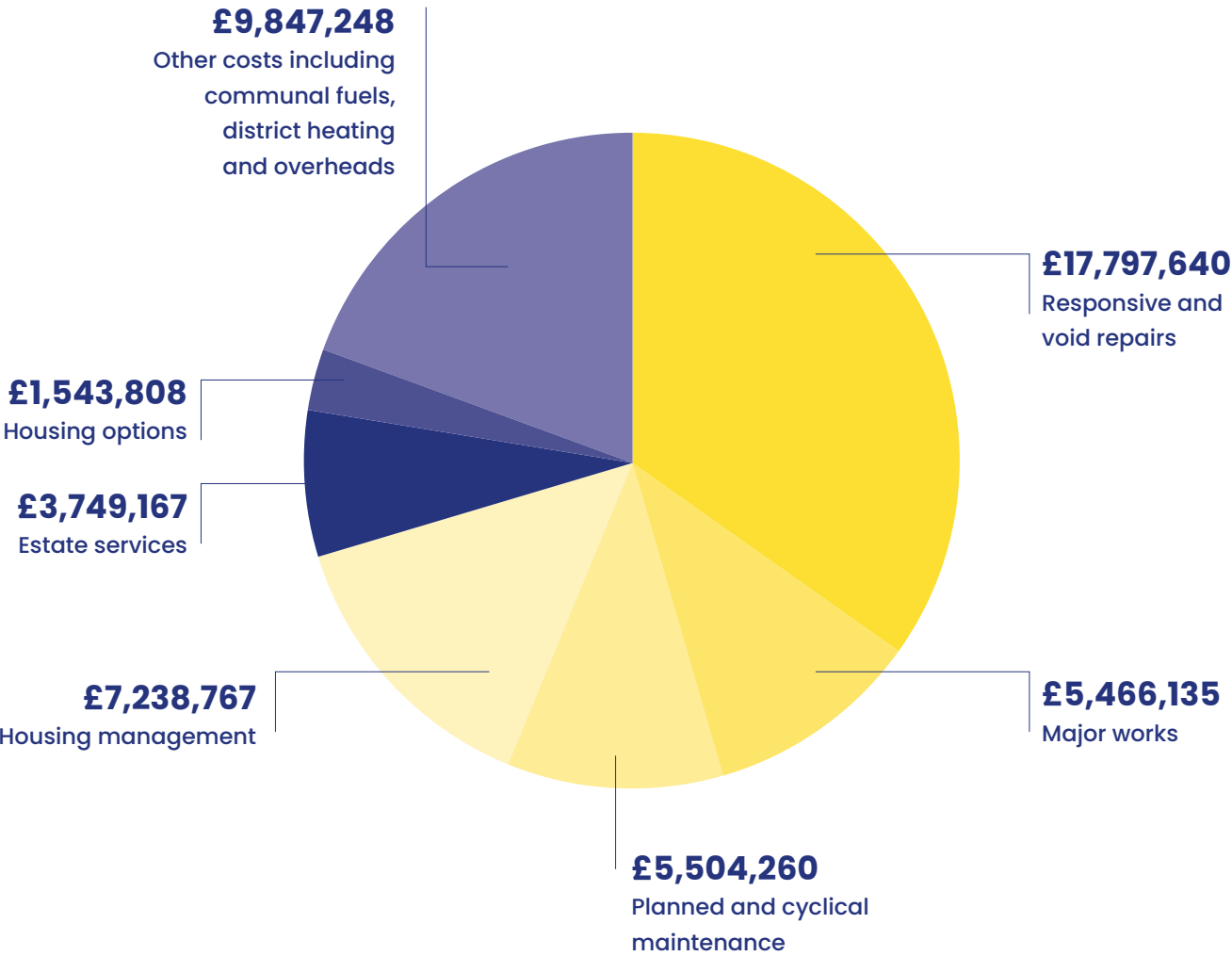
Fair And Equal

We are passionate that everyone should have fair and equal access to services and opportunities so that they can play a positive role in their community.

Our Finances

Wolverhampton Homes works effectively to deliver value for money services against the backdrop of the current economic pressures which are being experienced nationally.

Rent helps to pay for the delivery of our services and to support the maintenance of homes. For the 2022 - 2023 financial year, we collected **£90,385,209** in rent on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council, with 97.32% of rent collected.



Priorities for the year

As the largest housing management partner of the City of Wolverhampton Council we recognise the significant role and opportunity we have in supporting the council to achieve its goals.

The seven pillars of the Charter for Social Housing Residents sets out what our customers can expect from Wolverhampton Homes:

To be safe in your home.

The government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.



To have your **complaints dealt with promptly and fairly**, with access to a strong Ombudsman.



To know how your **landlord is performing** including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.



To be treated with **respect**, backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards.

To have a good **quality home and neighbourhood** to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.



To have your **voice heard** by your landlord, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board.



To be supported to **take your first step to ownership**, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.



Priorities for the year *Continued*

Close performance monitoring ensures we are meeting consumer regulation through good quality, safe and secure accommodation and neighbourhoods. Our new Customer Involvement Panel and scrutiny groups will support regular, transparent performance reporting with the customer voice flowing through all our services, procedures and policies. We have redesigned our complaints process and increased resource to ensure we're responding and resolving complaints to customers' satisfaction, and that the learnings are captured and used to inform continual service improvements. Our annual 'Here when you need us' progress report will let you know how we're performing against these objectives.

Keeping customers safe, in a good quality home and neighbourhood

To ensure that estates are safe and clean, where people feel they belong and where anti-social behaviour is not tolerated

Access to suitable temporary accommodation, with B&B and hotel rooms used for short-term emergencies only

Homes and communal areas are compliant with all relevant Health & Safety requirements

Develop long term investment strategies to maintain decent homes and reduce carbon emissions



Providing robust and person centred domestic abuse support

Provide an efficient and customer focussed repairs service to keep customers safe

Delivering regeneration, refurbishment and building safety projects to enhance homes and neighbourhoods across the city

Priorities for the year *Continued*

Treating customers with respect and acting on their feedback

Delivering the Our Future transformation programme to ensure that everyone at Wolverhampton Homes is skilled, engaged and able to do a great job in an inclusive and open environment

Supporting customers to choose digital channels through providing high quality online services



Keeping customers at the heart of all decision-making, with a menu of involvement for customers to share their views in a way that suits them



Supporting customers to maintain their tenancies through providing relevant help, advice and information



Providing a people-focused adaptations service to enable elderly, vulnerable and disabled people to lead rich and fulfilling lives through living independently at home

Enablers

We are committed to developing our people, our systems and our processes to allow us to effectively deliver against these priorities in full support of the City of Wolverhampton Council and our customers.

We will attract and retain the best people through an inclusive and diverse company culture, excellent training and development opportunities and a first-class employee experience. High-quality digital solutions will ensure customers benefit from fast and efficient online services, freeing up resource for our teams to provide more dedicated support to those who need it most. And the customer voice will be heard, with our customer panel embedded in our governance process and enhanced understanding of customer needs and preferences driving our decisions.



Conclusion



This Business Plan will guide Wolverhampton Homes and underpin its work over the coming year. This comprehensive roadmap reflects the company's commitment to providing exceptional services aligned with the priorities of the City of Wolverhampton Council.

The social housing landscape is evolving, and Wolverhampton Homes, as an ALMO, is well-positioned to navigate these changes. By embracing regulatory reforms, fostering customer-centric practices and promoting innovation, we are confident in the company's ability to not only meet but exceed the expectations of their diverse customer base.

The priorities outlined in this plan, from enhancing community focus to delivering safe and secure homes, resonate with the council's broader objectives and corporate aim, for Wulfrunians to live longer, healthier lives. We are confident that Wolverhampton Homes' leadership, colleagues and governance structures have been designed and developed to deliver this business plan effectively. Through transparent communication, community engagement, and a commitment to high standards, we believe Wolverhampton Homes will continue to be a cornerstone in providing quality housing services and positively impacting the lives of Wolverhampton's residents.



"As the Chair of the Wolverhampton Homes Board, it has been welcoming to see the company's response to customer feedback, which is reflected in the Business Plan priorities, along with the joint aspirations of the City of Wolverhampton Council."

"With an ever-changing landscape in social housing, including increased regulation and legislation and the upcoming launch of the refreshed approach to Consumer Standards, this will help ensure that Wolverhampton Homes working together with the council, is able to deliver even greater services to our customers, with the aim of enhancing customer satisfaction."

"Wolverhampton Homes has created a Customer Involvement Panel providing opportunity for customers to be heard and are committed to working with partners to enhance community engagement across their estates."

Councillor Sue Roberts

Chair of the Wolverhampton Homes Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'S. M. Roberts'.



"One of our key priorities is for the city's social housing providers to provide good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods across the city."

"Part of that is about providing access to a safe and secure home for residents and changing the lives of families for the better. Wolverhampton Homes' Business Plan has been developed in collaboration with the City of Wolverhampton Council to ensure improvements are delivered that meet not only regulation and legislation, but the needs of our customers."

"The City of Wolverhampton Council are proud to be working with Wolverhampton Homes."

Councillor Steve Evans

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for City Housing

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'S. Evans'.