

Grove Community Housing Association



GROVE COMMUNITY
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Value for Money Statement 2019/2020

Value for Money

Value for Money (VfM)

The Association is committed to delivering Value for Money (VfM) by continuous performance improvement.

This is a key principle of the Association's business plan which aims to deliver VfM under its business objectives and DfC standards of Finance, Governance and Consumer.

Achieving a balance of progress against the specific targets within our Strategic Plan and Business plan will ensure we remain true to our core mission and values and we believe, ensure success.

We continue to benchmark our services against our peers and met our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). We always aim to meet targets and standards set by our regulator and prioritise performance in these areas. We will continue to focus on investing sufficient resources to enable us to meet the highest levels of performance possible.



<https://nifha.org/>



<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/>

The Association considers VfM in terms of the maximum outcomes for the minimum cost of service provision.

The Association therefore strives to provide quality homes at reasonable cost. The service charges were also reviewed to ensure all eligible costs were included and we strived to ensure the servicing contracts provide good value for money, for example we have used a very affordable social enterprise for grounds maintenance.

Affordable Rent

As a small, community-based Housing Association with tenants at its heart, we have always strived to provide affordable rents. We compare our rents to the sector and they demonstrate value for money and the majority of our rents remain the lowest in the Housing Association sector and in Belfast City. To enable us to continue to invest in our properties and the services we offer we ensure any rental increase still enables our rents to stay low. We examined all Housing Association weekly rents (including any service charges) and our 1 Bed average at £54.80, to our 4 bed average at £77.74 – these remain approximately 30% lower than other Housing Association landlord rents.

Value for Money

We reserve the use of consultants for critical work and ensure competitive costs are secured that have provided us with significant savings that can be used in other areas of our work.

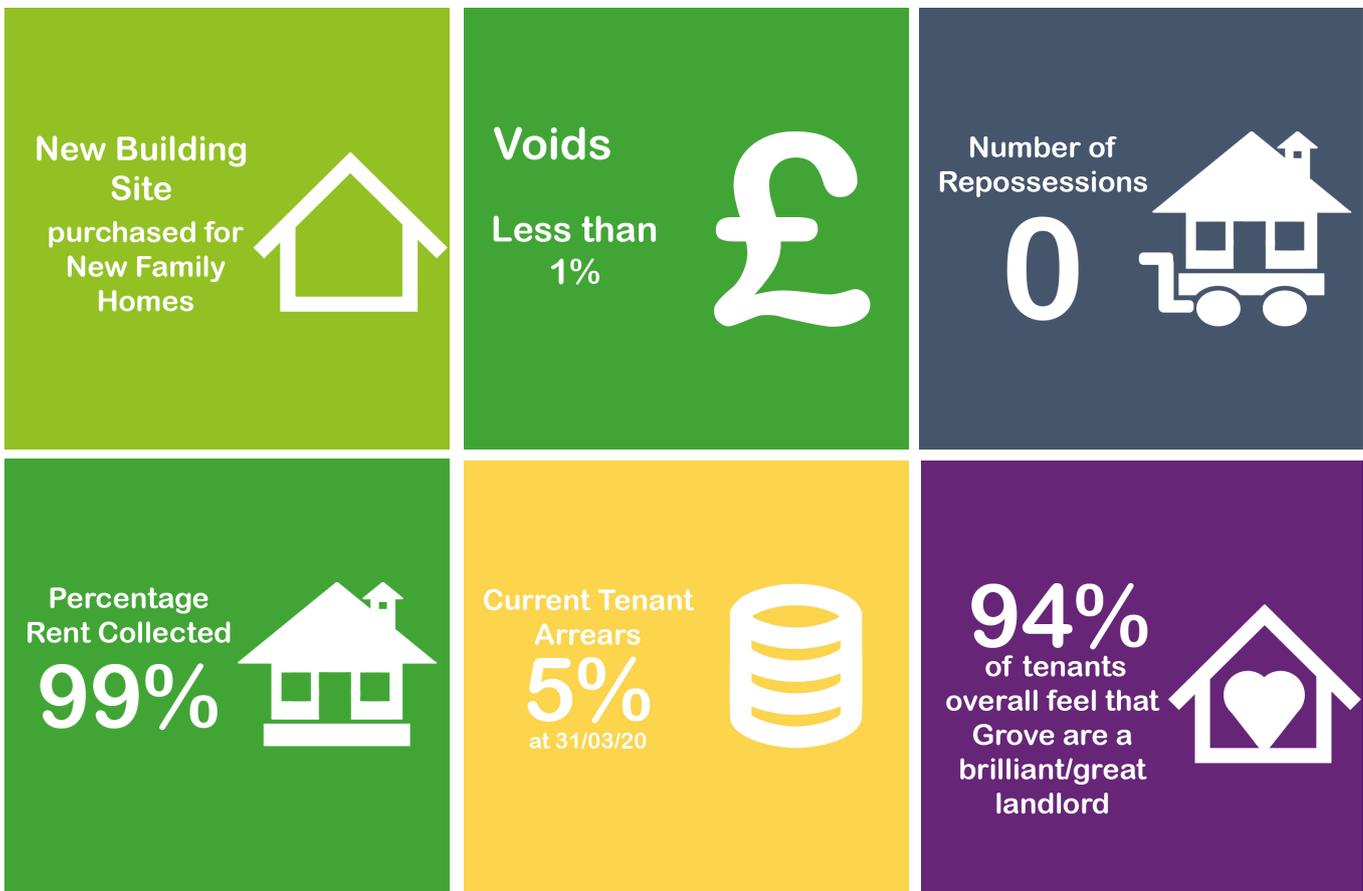
Responsible management of our rental income enables Grove to achieve the strategic goals set out for it's customers, plan ahead, invest in its homes, consider new ways of interacting with the 'Tenant Voice' Group, improve services and meet aims and objectives.

The Association has always benefited from volunteerism, with many of our Committee members and shareholders undertaking tasks on behalf of the Association such as actively participating in the provision of tenant participation activities such as social events, community garden activities, joint initiatives with others for those in food poverty.

We attend 'Supporting Community' events for good practice examples in the sector and have brought these to our tenants along with considering a Tenant Participation (TP) accreditation scheme.

To ensure we met our objectives an annual business plan and budget is produced to enable us to set measurable KPIs for the organisation. Each quarter we report on our performance to both our Board and our Regulator and have been able to demonstrate excellent performance in each quarter along with significant savings against the budget.

This performance demonstrates we are able to deliver high value, meaningful services while enabling the Association to keep costs to a minimum.



Value for Money



The Association activities that contribute to **VfM** include:

- **Key performance indicators** which encourage efficient and effective services and behaviours
- **Continual review of services and suppliers and investment in technology** to enable procedures to be streamlined and improve compliance
- **Delivering maximum value** to the customer **while minimising costs**
- **Working effectively and efficiently** while maintaining and improving the service to our customers **by making the best use of resources**
- **Effective procurement of services** including use of joint procurement with other Housing Associations **to provide very competitive maintenance costs** e.g. HA5 Group maintenance contract
- For the past two years we have been able to **make significant savings on our annual insurances all while having added cover** leading to potential further savings and efficiencies
- **Tenant satisfaction surveys and engagement** to assess quality of services provided from an end user perspective, thereby understanding their definition of value, and focusing on the right things and doing the right things
- **Ongoing investment in our properties, ensuring high standard accommodation and efficient, comfortable homes.**

Value for Money

We understand that value for money can be best achieved by striking good balances between:

- **Economy – Spending less.** The price paid for what goes into providing a service. It's about delivering services at optimum cost, through minimising the cost of resources.
- **Efficiency – Spending well.** A measure of productivity and performance and the process and delivery of procurement.
- **Effectiveness – Spending wisely.** A measure of the impact that has been achieved, which can either be quantitative or qualitative.

The Association's Board leads the approach to value for money by setting the strategic vision and mission. The Association is also focused and determined to secure VfM into the future.

Value For Our Tenants

Value can also come in the form of advice and assistance. Grove Community Housing Association works closely with **North Belfast Advice Partnership**. We provide free office space and facilities three days per week. This enables our tenants and other people from the community to avail of confidential, free, money and benefits advice.

This has enabled our staff to signpost any tenants struggling with debt or a change in their circumstances. This is vital to ensure people are able to sustain their tenancies and maximise their income. It also supports them with any queries following welfare reform changes and technology is also provided to assist tenants with their online Universal Credit claims.

We have also invested heavily in **Tenant Participation** opportunities. It is important for us as a community-based Housing Association where tenants are at the heart of all that we do, that mechanisms are in place to give opportunities for their voices to be heard and actions taken to involve them in the work that we do. We rolled out the actions set in our new **Tenant Participation Vision Strategy**.

We held many events, involved tenants in redesign of our association logo and **Tenant Satisfaction Surveys (TSS)**. From our TSS and other events we held, we now have a **Tenant Voice Group (TVG)** identified to take forward further tenant participation work. This is in line with the **Department for Communities' (DfC)** regulatory consumer standard. We believe that our tenants' involvement can only help improve our services and help us obtain further value.

Value for Money



We will continue to review opportunities for Vm in 2021 and beyond, with the assistance of Connon Associates Limited, Chartered Accountants, coupled with ongoing benchmarking within the sector.

Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic

The Association has assessed its Forecasts under various scenarios including the potential and likely impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on its operating results and financial position and have a reasonable expectation that the Association has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

We continue to maximise the use of technology to deliver our business objectives and stay engaged and involved with each other and our stakeholders and tenants.