



Grove Community

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030

**“To provide quality homes
and services for our tenants
and wider community”**





Grove Community
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



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INTRODUCTION

In presenting our Strategic Plan we aim to achieve sustainability, enhanced quality and increased opportunities for those living in and around North Belfast.

The operating environment within which we work is changing and more demanding. The sector faces third party relationship challenges (maintenance contractors), diminishing grant availability in the midst of a housing crisis (new build development) and a greater focus on tenants rights (quality and safety standards). These are all strategic factors that require underpinning with sustainability alongside an increased need for all housing providers to plan for a future where self-reliance is a key requisite of good governance.

As a community housing provider Grove Community Housing Association (Grove) is well placed to be a beacon for tenants rights and service excellence. Our plan is not only intended to do the best for our tenants, and wider community, but to also act as a shining light to others on how things can be achieved through smarter working and an unrelenting commitment to those we serve. Equally, as a smaller provider developing housing capacity and achieving stronger and more durable partnership is more difficult. This is due to our size and the scarcity of

resources within the wider economy. What worked in the past, won't work in the future.

Against the above backdrop we approach the future with a mindset of openness. Whilst our values and commitment to community are non-negotiable the way in which we deliver better outcomes for our tenants will be heavily dependent upon our openness to do things differently. Part 1 of our strategic plan is aimed at building the foundation, with the full benefits of a different strategic focus realised over a longer time frame i.e. Part 2 - 4 years.

In essence, foundation building means amassing and prioritising resources, developing partnerships and designing out activity that adds little or no value. These factors will occupy our strategic thinking through to 2026. Once complete, the following years of the plan will centre on achieving strategic goals through leveraging the foundation built during 2025/2026 and the early part of 2027.

As a Board, we believe the best way to ensure sustainability, is to radically plan for change whilst remaining true to our values. We are committed to stripping away process, bureaucracy and waste which only eats into resources that would be better invested in

the priorities of our tenants - more housing, right first-time maintenance, support for those who need more than just the safety of a home etc. To get to this point will take time, hence a more strategic focus to our planning which will be in two parts spanning 5 years.

In 2025 and 2026 (Part1) we intend to have in place partnerships and resources that enable us to deliver step change difference based on the 3 strategic goals.

Part 2 2027-2030 will see the realisation of our renaissance, moving from an organisation that manages housing to one that enables community growth. Equally one with the tenacity and ambition to contribute proactively to the critical need for sustainable new homes.

B. Dunn

Mr Brian Dunn
Chairperson
April 2025





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WHO WE ARE

Grove Community Housing Association was established in 1977 when people were leaving this area of North Belfast due to the poor housing and environmental conditions. Since then, the Association has worked successfully to improve the area through renovating old dwellings and building new homes. As a small community-based organisation, we have a stock of 215 social housing units for rent, allocated through the Common Selection Scheme. We are regulated by the DfC and FCA and registered with the Charity Commission of NI.

Grove CHA has demonstrated achievements in the regeneration of the Grove area, and we have plans to further increase the stock portfolio and develop 31 new general needs passive standard social housing units on the site of the former Grove Primary School. We employ a dedicated staff team and contribute to the local construction and service industry through contracts to provide maintenance works and associated services such as IT, accountancy, HR and insurance services. We also give back to the community where it matters. This is through various community support initiatives including, provision of a benefits and welfare advice service, a drop in 'Warm Space', a 'Helping Hand' service and host of community events and financial support to youth groups and others.

The overall control and supervision of the work of the Association is provided by the Board of Management. Members of the Board serve in a voluntary capacity and they bring a range of skills and experience to the Association. Along with the staff at the York Road office, they share a common commitment to improving housing conditions for all Grove residents.

The Association operates in a complex environment where challenges are varied. The issues facing all social housing providers around capacity and demand are increased in areas with sectarian interfaces, deprivation and disadvantage. Regulatory standards must be improved and maintained, and there are ongoing government reviews in relation to structure, sector reclassification, procurement and rent policy. Welfare reform also remains a big issue for the sector and area. As a small community organisation, we can be vulnerable to political change in housing policy, particularly in relation to rationalisation and efficiency.

Against this backdrop this strategic plan has been developed to meet our aspirations to grow, whilst providing great service through a skilled and enthusiastic Board and Staff team.



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WHAT'S IMPORTANT - HOW WE DO THINGS

The way our Board and staff team deliver is defined by our Mission Statement and underpinned by our Values and Behaviours below.

Our Mission & Purpose

Is to provide quality homes and services for our tenants and wider community.

Our Values

Our values are central to all that we do and guide decision making, behaviours and the way in which we act collaborate with partners within the community in which we work:

- **Service Focused** – we strive to continually improve the beneficial impact for those who access our service range.
- **Approachability** – we continually consider the best way to provide access to our organisation in a way that is friendly and centred on the individual needs of everyone.
- **Compassion** – we approach all situations with human kindness and a willingness to help.
- **Honesty & Integrity** we do the right thing, in the right way, irrespective of the potential for adverse consequence.
- **Accountability** – we take ownership for our individual and collective actions with a willingness to change where that is the right thing to do.



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HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

The way in which we collaborate and work as a team is a strength and test of our resolve to commit to a common purpose. We therefore aim to practice in whatever circumstances we find ourselves a way of working together that maximises our collective talents:

- **Listen** – we ‘hear’ what others say and consider views before finalising our own.
- **Treat everyone fairly** – we give everyone equal consideration and ensure everyone feels valued in what they do.
- **Take ownership** – we do what is right and own what we do.
- **Work as a team** – we value difference, promote collaboration and selflessly work towards our common purpose.
- **Develop ourselves and others** – our personal best is always just out of reach, so we aim to improve in all we do and support others in that personal goal too.

- **Agile** – We adapt quickly and flexibly to changing needs, learning as we go and continuously improving how we deliver for our community.





**GRADE 1
ACCREDITATION
RETAINED**

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

Grove Community Housing Association has transformed from a landlord function into a sustainable visible Community Housing Association, recognised for delivering valued additional services to its tenants and the wider community in North Belfast.

Here we illustrate some of our proudest achievements over the past couple of years;

- Significant investment in our homes safety and comfort.
- Readiness for new homes development by investing in local land and achieving planning permission for 31 new homes overcoming many development barriers.
- Robust scrutiny and excellent audit, financial and regulatory performances.
- Giving back through our Community Engagement Fund and Community Events.
- Providing platforms for engagement, capacity building and tenants voices to be heard.
- Achieved excellent key performance indicators across all areas of our work.
- Achieving 'Grade 1' Regulatory Grade Judgement year on year.
- Restructured and expanded the Board with the diverse set of skills and experience required for good governance.
- Restructured and enhanced the staff provision to meet regulatory and operational requirements and deliver on our Strategic Plan, Tenant Engagement and Asset Management Strategies, underpinned by our values.
- Increased the Association's visibility and engagement levels across the wider UK and Ireland's housing, construction and sustainability sectors, sharing good practice.
- Achieved recognition for working innovatively in our service delivery and safe management of our homes and the outstanding individual staff contributions that make a real difference to residents.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS



OUR 3 STRATEGIC GOALS

At the heart of Grove Community Housing Association's strategy are 3 goals that are essential to securing our long-term sustainability and enabling our community to thrive.

We call these our **3 commitments to achieving BETTER:**

- **delivering better value for money,**
- **providing a better quality of service, and**
- **building stronger, better relationships.**

These commitments will guide our decisions, investments, and partnerships over the next 3 years. By **March 2027**, we will have achieved a series of key milestones – our “strategic stepping stones” – that bring us measurably closer to these ambitions.



HELPING HAND



TENANT FOCUS



MAINTENANCE



APPOINTMENTS

OPTIONAL



EXTRA SERVICES



HOME VISITS

TENANT CHARTER



TENANT FOCUS

- Introduce a Tenant Charter to ‘promise’ minimum standards and guide our priority setting.
- Accessible, personalised, maintenance services that provide a choice of appointments, is increasingly delivered through the enhanced ‘Helping Hand’ service – at least two in-house designated colleagues.
- Provides the option to ‘purchase’ added services beyond our core contractual offer.
- A one to one consultation if requested with each household to assess their maintenance needs and plan for their deliver with target dates.







VILLAGE AMBITION

- Establish community connections via four ‘special interest’ groups that work in pursuit of improving the community of Grove e.g. cooking, gardening, art, local history, sport activity etc.
- Develop partnerships in pursuit of establishing at least two social enterprises initiatives – these social enterprises should have the prime objective of creating local employment opportunity and delivery a service of community value e.g. village bakery, small repairs centre, gardening, tourism etc.
- Formalise a calendar of community events for each season Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter - planning and delivery through an established ‘village’ community group and encouragement of local celebrities to participate providing profile & pride.







BETTER HOMES

NEW SOCIAL HOMES



TENANT-LED

MAINTENANCE PLANNING



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT



PASSIVHAUS

STANDARDS



THE GREEN AGENDA



RETROFITTING HOMES

LONG-TERM

DEVELOPMENT PLAN



BETTER HOMES & COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

- Delivery of 31 new build social housing units by **March 2027**.
- Establish a development programme that consistently delivers increased number of homes throughout the period 2027-2031.
- Survey and allocate % of projected surplus each year to retrofitting homes.
- Establish three 'Green' agenda plans for People, Place and Planet.
- A commitment to strive for all new homes to be built to Passivhaus standards.
- Complete planned maintenance and improvements annually not through a desktop exercise but in consultation and partnership with each tenant.











MEASURING SUCCESS

Our success will be measured annually through meaningful analysis and assessment by our tenants, staff, Board and stakeholders. We will be informed not just by operational KPI statistics and accolades but also by the partnerships developed, drawing on constructive conversations and feedback and collaborating with all involved in achieving our strategic ambitions.



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SPECIAL NOTE OF GRATITUDE

We give special thanks and appreciation to the many people who have kindly given their time and energy so readily and inspired and shaped us, both in our daily work, and during the production of our Strategic Plan. We look forward to continuing to collectively play a key role in the successful delivery of our services and homes and in the achievement of our strategic ambitions.



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- Our Tenants
- Our Voluntary Board
- Our Staff Team
- Distinctive People Team, our HR & OD Consultants
- Connon Associates Team, our Accountants
- EOS Systems, our IT providers
- Sumner NI, our external auditors
- TIAA, our internal auditors
- NI Fed. Of Housing Associations Team
- Housing Association & NIHE colleagues – too many to name!
- Mr Erskine Holmes OBE
- Richard Trainor, Photographer
- Avril Thompson, Graphic Designer
- Julia Bakay, Illustrator
- NI Charity Commission, Department for Communities and Financial Conduct Authority (our regulators)

“COMMUNITY IS THE SPIRIT THAT DRAWS PEOPLE TOGETHER”

NOTES - Please use this space to add your notes, thoughts or sketches.



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