



Corporate Plan

2019 - 2024

Corporate Plan

Foreword	Page 3
Objectives	Pages 4-10
Our Vision, Purpose & Strategic Ambitions	Page 11
Achievements So Far	Page 13
Challenges	Page 16
Strategic Objectives	Page 18
Strategic Targets	Page 19

Foreword

Who are we?

As a locally based housing association, set up to support people in housing need, it is our responsibility to do everything we can to address housing need in the areas where we operate.

This plan reflects the shared purpose of the Board members and the Executive Team. It has been co-created through a strategy session and thorough debate at board meetings. The plan has been adopted by everyone at Housing Solutions and will be reviewed and updated as part of our annual corporate planning cycle.

The Corporate Plan fulfils a dual purpose: first and foremost, as a working document for the Board members, its management, and staff to understand, monitor and control the business; and second to summarise where Housing Solutions is heading for our staff stakeholders and partners.

The improvements that we have made under the previous plan, our recent G1 V1 rating; Standard & Poors A+ rating and new funding agreed, all mean that we are well placed to take on future challenges. We're already the envy of the sector when it comes to digital services and our in-house maintenance team continues to provide excellent value for money services, consistently achieving very high levels of customer satisfaction.

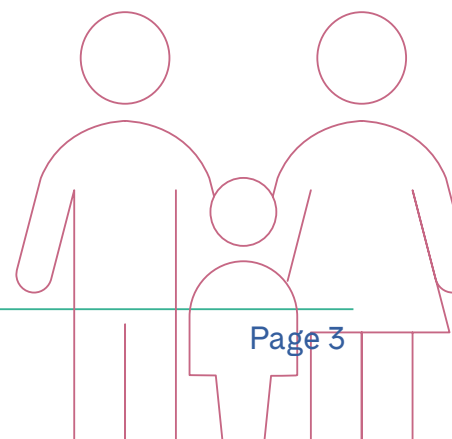
In the following pages, we highlight the key internal and external issues affecting Housing Solutions and we explain how we are adapting to a changing and challenging operating environment to fulfill our Mission of: **Happy Customers. More Homes.**

About Housing Solutions

Housing Solutions is a registered housing provider with charitable status dedicated to providing affordable and supported homes.

We were established in 1995 and we now own, manage and maintain over 7,500 properties across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hampshire. We pride ourselves on staying close to local communities, knowing and understanding our customers and working with local people to deliver the best services and more homes. We provide homes for rent, shared ownership, key worker housing and specialist homes for older people and people who need support and care to live within the community.

Everything we do is guided by our **Vision, Purpose and Strategic Ambitions.**



Objective 1

A housing organisation that exceeds the expectations of both the community and industry.

Priority 1	Goal	Goal Target	2019 Projects
Happy Customers - Residents proud of where they live.	90% of residents and 75% of homeowners satisfied with Housing Solutions as a landlord.	2020/21	Have Your Say & Getting to Know You, Residents surveys - greater customer insight.
			Contra Management Agent costs & Services
	New Homes Standard exceeds expectations.	2019/20	Create our own standards (voids, decent homes, and new homes) with the aim to reduce volume of repairs and improve customer satisfaction.
	Placemaking to be the heart of effective estate management.	2020/21	Develop customer charters.
	Support our customers on the impact of Welfare Reform.	2019/20	Welfare & Support Team events and drop in sessions.
	Improve our digital offering to customers.	2020/21	Alexa trial and online portal enhancements - providing 24/7 accessible services.
		2020/21	50% of customers signed up to the portal.
		2019/20	Increase customer connectivity by 100%.
		2020/21	Accurate Data project.

Priority 1	Goal	Goal Target	2019 Projects
Happy Customers - Residents proud of where they live.	Improve customer satisfaction and communications on repairs.	2020/21	Tracking app - to provide customers with up to date information on repairs visit.
		2019/20	Reduce the use of sub-contractors.
		2020/21	Introduce tenant incentives to reduce repair costs.
	99% of emergency repairs completed on target.	2019/20	Review of emergency (E4) standard.
	Saturday repair appointments.	2019/20	Trial offering of Saturday repair appointments
	More calls answered first time - 78% of calls resolved at first point of contact.	2019/20	System adaptations and bespoke training for all call centre staff.

Objective 2

Financially strong - delivering value for money services and more homes, without needing to build for sale.

Priority 2	Goal	Goal Target	2019 Projects
Remain Financially Strong Delivering value for money services and more homes without needing to build for sale.	Effective business planning.	2019/20	Develop organisational expertise in multivariant stress testing.
		2019/20	Develop a programme of early warning signs / triggers which are linked to the business plan.
	Effective Asset Management.	2019/20	Review the quality of the data on the asset register and stock condition.
	Reduce general needs re-let time to an average of 23 days. Rent loss due to voids kept below 0.58%.	2019/20	Voids improvement project.
			Review of void standard to achieve higher standard and less responsive repairs.
	Reduce current general needs arrears to 2.66%.	2019/20	Reduce former tenant arrears by 30% - either through cash collection or write off.
			Improve customer communication/ information regarding service charge billing.

Priority 2	Goal	Goal Target	2019 Projects
Remain Financially Strong Delivering value for money services and more homes without needing to build for sale.	Achieve £500,000 in procurement savings.	2019/20	Key programme of high value asset management contracts identified and actioned.
		2021/22	New procurement strategy and supporting policy and procedures.
	Right first time.	2019/20	Improve repair diagnostic IT tool and scripting.
		2019/20	Implement effective van stocking.
		2019/20	Variation control project.
	Digital projects.	2020/21	Combined housing management system.
	50% of customers report repairs online £850k of rent paid online.	2019/20	Digital hub space.
	Cost per unit to be maintained at between £2,106 and £2,116 .	2019/20	Effective budget control throughout the year.
	Achieve maximum securitisation from property assets.	2020/21	Review valuation mechanism for existing use social housing units.

Objective 3

A beacon for the sector in how we do things and as an aspirational place to live and work. We will develop a strong corporate foundation, where customer and staff shape and transform our services.

Priority 3	Goal	Goal Target	2019 Projects
Building a strong corporate foundation	Maintain G1 V1 and Standard & Poor's A+ Rating.	2019/20	Review Board and Executive Team composition, competencies and skills.
		2019/20	Enhance the voice of staff groups and forums and ensure Board understand the challenges and performance of the business.
		2019/20	Develop organisational expertise in multivariant stress testing.
		2020/21	Develop a balanced scorecard reflecting metrics which can significantly impact our business.
	A governance structure that is clear and accessible and understands the experience of our customers.	2019/20	Establish Stakeholder Scrutiny Committee with links to the Board.
		2021/22	Deliver a range of customer involvement / engagement opportunities for Board members to get involved.
		2019/20	Enhance the transparency of our operations.

Objective 4

Passionate, caring workforce nurtured and developed in-house. We will attract, retain and reward best staff and leaders

Priority 4	Goal	Goal Target	2019 Projects
Attract, retain and reward best staff and leaders	Digitalise recruitment process.	2020	New HR system to provide greater functionality.
	Create an employer brand to promote Housing Solutions.	2020	Work with PR on marketing and branding of recruitment materials.
	Structured and comprehensive induction and training plans.	2020	Improved induction process and materials.
	Fully utilise Apprenticeship levy.	2021	Creation of at least two apprentices for 2019/20.
	Reduce employee turnover to below 22.5%.	2021	Exit interviews for all leavers and analysis.
	Increase employee satisfaction to at least 89% proud to work for Housing Solutions.	2020	Employee benefits review.
	Improve internal communications and understanding - at least 64% believe departments work well together.	2020	Develop new service shaper programme and staff briefings.

Objective 5

An organisation that is quietly and capably delivering for the local community. We will produce more housing for local people.

Priority 5	Goal	Goal Target	2019 Projects
Grow the size of the business	Increase our units in ownership by at least 15% (5,608 units to 6,450).	2019/24	New developments, with priority to key strategic sites in Maidenhead in partnership with RBWM.
	Complete at least 143 new units and 69 shared ownership scales. Secure between 120-130 units of new business.	2019/20	Develop options to reduce the risk of s106 developments.
	Mitigate the risks of reduced s106.	2019/21	Enhance the capacity and expertise of the development function.
	Sell the Buckinghamshire care homes.	2019/20	Use the capital receipt from the sale of the care homes to increase our capacity to accelerate the development of new affordable homes in Maidenhead.
	Options appraisal of mobile home sites.	2020/21	Explore the development potential of the two mobile home sites and consider the use of joint ventures where necessary or advantageous working with the Asset Management Team to optimise our assets.
	Leverage external funding to deliver services to vulnerable groups.	2021/22	To obtain grant funding to work with partner authorities to provide new housing opportunities for vulnerable people locally.



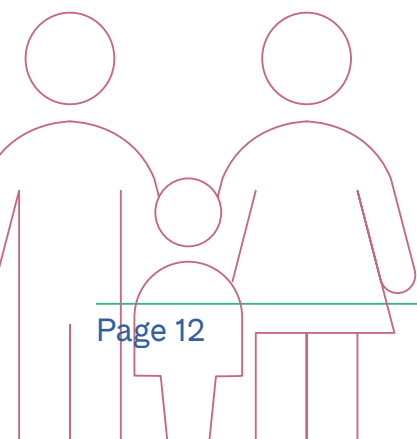


1. Our Vision, Purpose and Strategic Ambitions

At Housing Solutions, we want to be an outstanding local housing association.

Our purpose today remains true to our original core purpose when we transferred from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in 1995, of providing good quality homes and services for local people, who cannot afford the market.

Housing Solutions is a strong housing association. We have grown over our first 25 years to become one of the leading social housing providers in our area of operation. We own, manage and maintain 7,500 homes locally and have an annual turnover of over £40m.



2. Our Strategic Ambitions

Housing Solutions is committed to improving people's lives and our Corporate Plan sets out our approach to continued enhancements to our services in order to meet this commitment. Our corporate aim is to be successful, by creating a responsive, locally based housing association that works for local people and still delivers more homes.

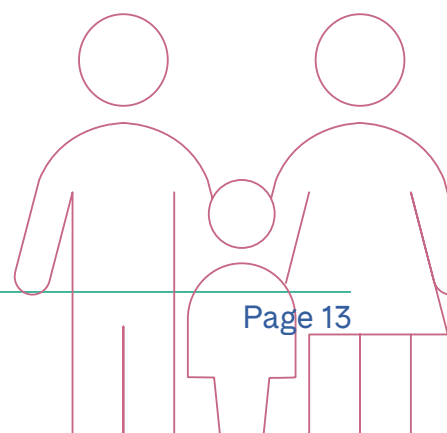
We want to be at the forefront of how housing is delivered, ensuring our customer services offering is sector leading, providing a customer experience that embraces technology together with the experience, skills and empathy of our people.

We will continue to maximise our financial strength to deliver new homes for local people, playing our part in addressing the national and local shortage of affordable housing.

Our Corporate Plan is designed to guide all aspects of Housing Solutions, to enable us to deliver on our core purpose, driving constant improvements across the business.

3. In the next five year we will be :-

1. A housing organisation that exceeds the expectations of both the community and industry.
2. Financially strong - delivering value for money services and more homes, without needing to build for sale.
3. A beacon for the sector in how we do things and an aspirational place to live and work. We will develop a strong corporate foundation, where customer and staff shape and transform our services.
4. Passionate, caring workforce nurtured and developed in-house. We will attract, retain and reward best staff and leaders.
5. An organisation that is quietly and capably delivering for the local community. We will produce more housing for local people.

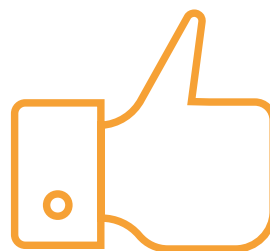


4. Achievements So Far

We do many things well, including providing a tailored service to local people, supporting our partners, local agencies and charities.

At Housing Solutions it's all about our current and future customers. We benefit from very experienced and responsive staff. We are dedicated to supporting local people and providing homes and services that are valued by all our stakeholders. Since 2014 we have invested over £98 million and delivered over 1,200 new homes and we currently have a further 500 homes in our development pipeline. But we're much more than just a Landlord.

We work hard to support individuals to pursue their aspirations. We value our local, regional and national partnerships which support our strong financial position and the delivery of housing services.



1. Exceeding local expectations

Our corporate strategy is to stay local, so that we remain rooted in the community and we can provide the services and homes needed.

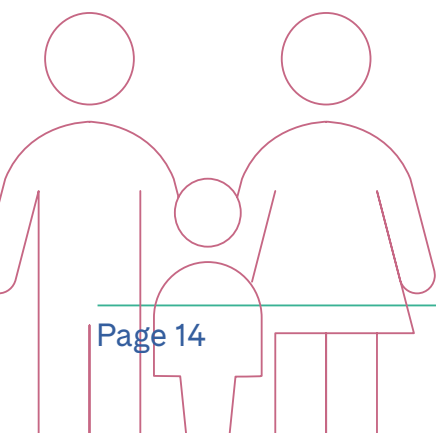
Our key partnerships are with local authorities and we're constantly working on joint initiatives to achieve our aims and reduce the pressure on local waiting lists. We're good at offering solutions - often working on schemes and initiatives that require more thorough and innovative thinking.

We love working with Enterprise Cube and we have jointly supported 100s of talented and ambitious residents to start their own business. We run local job clubs, helping residents to write their CV and we support people through the interview process. We work closely with Three Discovery Centre, Maidenhead; our customers have access to free IT and Social Media training. This service allows customers to develop and learn more about this fast-growing industry and develop their skills and confidence.

Working jointly with RBWM, we offer residents' opportunities to buy through the popular DIYSO shared ownership scheme. Many of our customers in rented housing are buying our shared ownership homes.

We have great relationships with the Police and together with other statutory agencies - keeping customer service high with low levels of ASB. We also work proactively with the Fire Service, offering tailored advice to our vulnerable customers.

In 2018, 87% of customers said they were happy with our services.





G1/V1

IDA rating



2. Financially Strong

We remain a financially strong housing association, delivering more homes without the need to build for outright sale.

Our corporate strategy, business plan, risk appetite and funding strategy are all aligned. We continue to develop more homes, achieving a strong EBITDA margin which does not fall to below 55% in the longer term. At the same time, we are protecting our social purpose and continue to fund more homes without the need for open market sales.

Our investment strategy is underpinned by a healthy cash flow; managing costs; and taking a commercial approach to our activity.

We are also a valued and successful partner. We have partnered with Berkshire Pension Fund to build and manage valuable private rented homes in Maidenhead - investment level £3m. We have a fantastic in-house maintenance team which provides maintenance services for other housing providers in Berkshire. We have an excellent partnership arrangement with care providers to provide tailored care home services. We provide a management & maintenance service to other housing providers and property companies. We've shown how by working with other agencies including local authorities we can incentivise people to start their own business, promote their work, and help them to buy a home. Equally we help people who are struggling. Our Welfare & Support Team helped 869 people in the local community last year which is a 34% increase in the last 4 years.

In April 2019, Standard & Poor's Global Ratings, reconfirmed our existing ratings as A+, Outlook Stable. The Standard & Poor's overview commented that Housing Solutions has persistently high levels of EBITDA margins, a strong liquidity position, and exceptional asset quality.

3. Strong Corporate Foundation

In 2018 we recruited our new Chairman, Liz Padmore and later in 2019 we carried out a comprehensive review of our governance framework. Our work has set the foundation for a clear and accessible governance structure.

We have over 100 involved customers that work with us to review and scrutinise our services. In 2018 and 2019 our involved customers helped us to change our arrears collection process and let properties more effectively.

At Housing Solutions, we are also focused on Corporate Giving. Our Support and Sustainment fund aims to support customers facing financial difficulty to improve their life chances and help them to sustain their tenancy. We support the local foodbank by offering premises free of charge and we have an ongoing means of support for the foodbank. We raised over £10k for Thames Hospice as our nominated charity in 2018.

We are also flexible to the aspirations of our residents. We allow tenants the opportunity to make adaptations to their home and maintain their own communal grounds, this enables them to take ownership of their own homes and outdoor space.

In 2018, the Regulator for Social Housing confirmed Housing Solutions as a G1 V1 Housing Provider, from an in-depth Assessment (IDA) process.



4. Great People

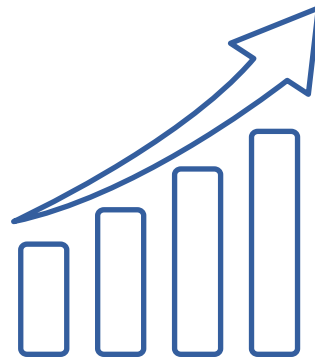
We have 160 staff, including our in-house trades team. Our staff are our most critical resource and play an essential part in the delivery of our corporate plan. We are committed to continuously improving our staff engagement and consider our people in everything we do.

We have achieved a lot in getting the basics right; we reviewed our structures in 2018 to ensure we have the right level of resources, together with modernising our recruitment materials, reviewed market conditions to ensure our salaries and pensions are competitive and we have continued our commitment to employee health, safety and wellbeing.

We have put in place formal learning and development plans and staff have attended over 90 training events in 2018. In 2019 we are investing in our managers through a Management Leadership Programme involving 19 managers from across the organisation.

We have introduced a formal corporate induction programme, ensuring our new members of staff are fully integrated into Housing Solutions, welcoming 52 new members of staff in 2018/19.

Our most recent staff survey in February 2019 shows that 87% of our staff are happy and proud to work at Housing Solutions.



5. Business Growth

In the last 5 years we've invested £133million providing 923 new affordable homes.

In 2018/19 we were selected as the affordable housing partner for the first of four regeneration schemes in Maidenhead town centre. We sold our first Extra Care shared ownership homes to older people in Wokingham and we were finalists in the Sunday Times Best Community Housing Project for The Birches, Wokingham. In 2018/19 we have undertaken our largest ever investment in long term improvements in our homes in one year - circa £7m.

In 2019, we regained the repairs and maintenance contract to maintain over 12,000 homes for a partner housing association.



5. Challenges

To achieve our ambitions, we face several challenges, particularly when trying to provide more new homes, with increased development costs and less grant; increased borrowing requirements and planned investment requirements; reduce income; more competition from other housing associations and significant affordability issues for local people.

1. Increase costs of development with less grant

In the last ten years, the input costs of new housing have increased - the price of land, the cost of construction labour, materials and consultants' fees have all increased. The result is that the average cost of building each home has increased significantly, while in the same period the level of grant has reduced. This means housing providers are now contributing approximately 70% of the cost of a new home compared to 50% ten years ago. The options available to all developing housing providers is to either cross subsidise with sales receipts; increase the level of borrowing, and / or use surpluses.

2. Increased borrowing

So far, Housing Solutions has created more homes by keeping costs low, using surplus and primarily focusing on s106 opportunities combined with borrowing.

Over the past ten years our private borrowing from the capital markets and the banks has increased from £150m in 2009 to £300m in 2019 - a 100% increase in just 10 years. Whilst within our banking covenants is high for a housing organisation of our size due to our strong development appetite and opportunities in our area.

Our 2019 business plan indicates that we will need additional financial resource to fund our new developments in mid-2020 of £50m - this will also refinance the £20m RCF drawn later in 2019.

3. Planned investment requirements

Our costs are also increasing, we are facing more regulatory pressure, particularly consumer regulation and investment in health and safety. Our stock is also getting older and we forecast our operating margins will reduce significantly by 2025 due to additional planned works as per our stock condition survey.

4. Competition from other housing associations and the market slow down

We face other challenges in relation to competition from other housing associations driving the costs (and rents) of s106 opportunities upwards, this combined with local affordability issues (average house price is c£400k - 12x the average salary) creates a very difficult local operating environment.

The property market slow down, particularly in London has reduced the cross subsidy model and put the large London associations under pressure. These associations, along with the for-profit providers are actively targeting Maidenhead and the surrounding area for s106 opportunities.

S106 is a very important source of new affordable housing for Housing Solutions, as we have limited development and construction capacity. It is also vulnerable to the market cycles, between 2006 - 2009 annual s106 completions fell by 50%. However, in the current slow down, we're still forecasting significant s106 opportunities in Maidenhead, fuelling competition from outside organisations.

5. Reduced Income

Against this backdrop, we have also experienced the five-year annual 1% reduction in rents. Between 2015 - 2017 we took the decision to keep developing and reduce costs elsewhere - through reduction in planned maintenance and staff resources.

In 2018 and 2019 we have recovered both the lack of investment in staffing and the maintenance programme, whilst still experiencing rent reductions.



2019 - 2024 Strategic Objectives

Our targets and how we will achieve our goals.

The combination of increased costs, reduced income, and more competition has brought about a very challenging operating environment. Despite these challenges, the Housing Solutions Board and Executive are confident that we are best placed to achieve our Corporate Plan as a standalone housing association.

Objective 1: A housing organisation that exceeds the expectations of both the community and industry.

Our aim: Over 90% of our general needs customers and 70% of shared owners and leaseholders will have trust and confidence in our services and be proud of where they live.

We achieve our objective by:

1. Understanding our customer's, their communities, needs and aspirations, with the aim of working in partnership with other organisations to make a significant difference locally.
2. Develop locally based social contracts and customer charters as part of our Placemaking Strategy.
3. Raise the voids and decent homes standards to exceed expectations and let properties quickly.
4. Empower residents to make choices for their own community spaces.
5. Develop an incentive / reward scheme for tenants who maintain their tenancy well and who 'add' to the community.
6. Deliver our new Digital IT Strategy - enhancing self-service online services to our customers, enabling access to our services and making digital first choice.
7. Ensure that our data is correct and current, allowing our customers to have full visibility of their information.
8. Reward tenants with new homes and give future tenants choices in their new homes.

Objective 2: Financially strong and stable

Our aim: Delivering value for money services and more homes, without needing to build for sale.

We achieve our objective by:

1. Develop organisational expertise in multivariant stress testing.
2. Develop a programme of early warning signs / triggers which are linked to the business plan.
3. Review the quality of the data on the asset register and stock condition.
4. Reduce general re-let times and rent arrears.
5. Ensure operational efficiency to grow our cash surplus.
6. Keep a tight control over our receivables to reduce levels of cash outflow into working capital.

Objective 3: A beacon for the sector in how we do things and as an aspirational place to live and work

Our aim: To have a strong corporate governance structure that is clear and accessible and understands the experience of our customers and staff.

We achieve our objective by:

1. Review the composition, competencies and skills of the Board and Executive Team.
2. Establish a Stakeholder Scrutiny Committee with links to the Board.
3. Enhance the voice of staff groups and forums.
4. Deliver a range of customer and staff involvement/ engagement opportunities for Board Members to get involved.
5. Deliver a range of involvement and engagement opportunities for residents.
6. Develop a balanced scorecard reflecting metrics (internal and external) which can significantly impact our business.

Objective 4: Passionate, caring workforce nurtured and developed in-house

Our aim: We will attract, retain and reward best staff and leaders.

We achieve our objective by:

1. Maximise the opportunities and projects identified in our People Strategy 2019 - 2022. We will focus on unlocking internal potential, empowering our staff, keeping and attracting motivated and ambitious people who are energised by the positive impact they have on people's lives.
2. Deliver the internal employee projects within our new Digital IT Strategy 2019 - 2022 - we will embrace technology, enabling a self-service digital service for staff to work flexibly and on the move.
3. We will have the right people in place at the right time to align with and meet our growth ambitions.

Objective 5: An organisation that is quietly and capably delivering for the local community.

Our aim: We will produce more housing for local people

We achieve our objective by:

1. Be partner of choice to the Local Authorities in those areas we work.
2. Be the number 1 affordable housing developer in Maidenhead.
3. Enhance the capacity of the development function.
4. Increase our units in ownership by at least 15% (5,608 units to 6,450).
5. Sell the Buckinghamshire care homes.
6. Carry out options appraisals on our own priority sites including the two mobile home sites and consider the use of joint ventures where necessary or advantageous, working with the Asset Management team to optimise our assets.
7. Obtain grant funding to work with partner authorities to provide new housing opportunities for vulnerable people locally.
8. Create innovative design and construction methods on our own sites.

2019 - 2024 Strategic Targets

Area	5 Year Targets
Happy Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 90% of our general needs' customers and 70% of shared owners and leaseholders will have trust and confidence in our services and proud of where they live.
More Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 750 new homes locally without the need for open market sales
Happy Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 92% of staff proud to work at Housing Solutions. 85% satisfied with Housing Solutions as an employer. More than 85% staff feel departments work well together.
Operational Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrears below - 2.25%. General needs voids below average of 18 days. Sheltered voids below an average of 25 days. Sickness better than upper quartile. Staff turnover at or better than median quartile performance of 17.9%.
Financial Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of approved budget operating costs measured against actual outturn. £1.5 million of procurement savings.
Digital Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of customers signed up to the customer portal. 90% of services digital. Over £1.5 million of customer rent paid online and at least 70% of repairs reported online. Successful roll out of Alexa. New HR system. Single view of the customer.



Housing
Solutions