

Local Strategy

2023–2025





Introduction from Bob Heapy

**Chief
Executive**
TOWN & COUNTRY HOUSING



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Town & Country Housing's (TCH) Local Strategy 2023–25. As part of the Peabody Group, our strategy is aligned with its inaugural business plan 2022–25, including its purpose, values and strategic priorities.

We are delighted that this strategy represents a new period in our 30-year history by bringing together TCH and Rosebery Housing Association Ltd (Rosebery), which is based in Epsom. The development of this document coincided with a period of national economic turbulence. Social rents have been capped at 7% during 2023–24, rising inflation and interest rates, combined with uncertainty about the future strength of the housing market, are creating a hugely challenging operating environment. Regardless of these factors, we will remain nimble and agile, making robust decisions based on what we can afford to deliver, while continuing to always put residents first.

Our new organisation is collaborative and resilient, enabling us to tackle head-on the key issues faced by the sector and our residents. We will work together to ensure that we protect core services, continue to invest in existing homes, while using any spare financial capacity to develop exceptional new homes. In all that we do, we will deliver value-for-money and ensure that any potential savings and efficiencies benefit all stakeholders including Peabody Group.

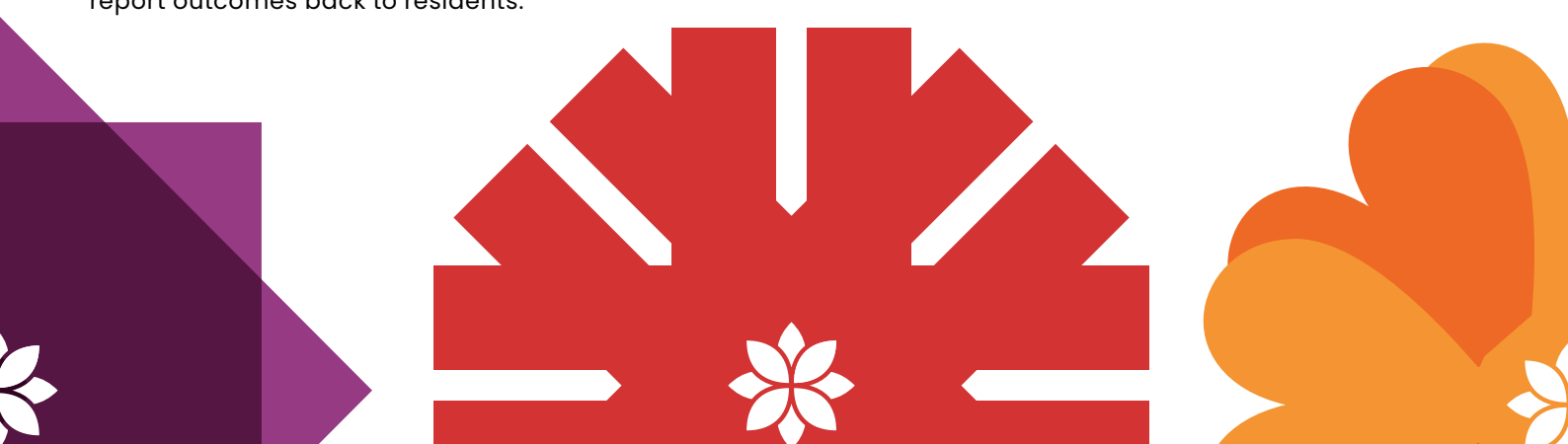
Our residents are our number one priority. We will improve our customer offer and do more to reflect and embed the 'resident voice' in every aspect of our organisation, regardless of whether services are customer facing or non-customer facing. Specifically, this means enabling co-production and using complaints, feedback and satisfaction data to tangibly influence and improve services, while not forgetting to report outcomes back to residents.

We will also invest more in local communities so that they flourish and reach their full potential. Equally, we will continue to invest and develop colleagues because our talented workforce is critical to delivering excellent local services.

We will focus on getting the basics right. This means prioritising safety, improving resident satisfaction across all services; but particularly in repairs and maintenance and the delivery of the new TCH repairs service through our joint venture arrangement with Fortem. Meanwhile, Rosebery's repairs team will continue to deliver fantastic services to residents in that locality. We will also further develop and improve our self-serve offer for those residents who prefer digital interaction.

In the context of the many external challenges we face, it is more important than ever to create a sustainable TCH. We will remain a leading regional developer, delivering affordable housing which meets the housing needs of residents today and in the future, as well as improved energy efficiency in new and existing homes.

This strategy was launched to colleagues in early 2023 to ensure that every individual understands the value of their contribution to the overall performance of TCH. The accompanying local delivery plan contains the success measures detailed below, as well as other key deliverables and is reviewed each year or more frequently as needed to ensure it remains a 'live', relevant document. The local delivery plan is also the organisational 'golden thread' because it directly informs departmental and team plans and staff appraisals. In other words, it requires all colleagues to be stakeholders because everyone will be working towards at least one of the strategic priorities at any given time.



INTEGRATION

As of April 2023, TCH and Rosebery have joined together to form an exciting new partnership, while remaining part of the Peabody Group. Bringing TCH and Rosebery together facilitates resource and expertise sharing and the potential to expand our development programme to deliver more affordable housing.

Both organisations are committed to delivering outstanding services for residents, excellent resident satisfaction and improving the quality of homes. Together, we will form a new organisation and become the southern counties operating region of the Peabody Group. This will bring Rosebery's operations in Surrey and West Sussex together with TCH's operations in Kent and East Sussex, further strengthening our influence as a leading regional place maker.

Delivering local, responsive services based on local intelligence will be a key priority. From 2023, we will ensure our operating principles align with the Group's 'locality model', namely ensuring our service offer to customers gives them access to a local team who are visible, accessible and have the power to make decisions and resolve issues promptly. The Rosebery brand will remain in use for the local services it delivers to residents for continuity and brand recognition.

Coming together offers a unique opportunity to learn from each other and bring about even greater service improvements. We will also pro-actively identify innovative stakeholder relationships to deliver our ambitious plans.

Rosebery was awarded a 'gold' accreditation in the 'Investors in People' and 'Investors in Wellbeing' awards in 2022. We are excited to build on these foundations and identify opportunities to incorporate best practice throughout both organisations.

SOUTH COUNTIES 12,871



PHASES

Year one

From day one in early April 2023, our Boards will merge, a joint executive team will be created, and our governance structures will be aligned. In the first year, the focus will be on collaborative working to strengthen the new organisation by learning from each other's insight and expertise. This may include the integration of some services where this has been identified as a priority. Given the similar culture and ethos of both organisations, we anticipate that integration will be a relatively straightforward process with positive benefits for residents and colleagues alike.

By collaborating, working in partnership, and pooling our knowledge and resources, we will strengthen and improve together.

Throughout year one, we will review our local priorities, including the priorities within this strategy, to jointly align and refine strategies, policies and targets for implementation from April 2024.



Year two

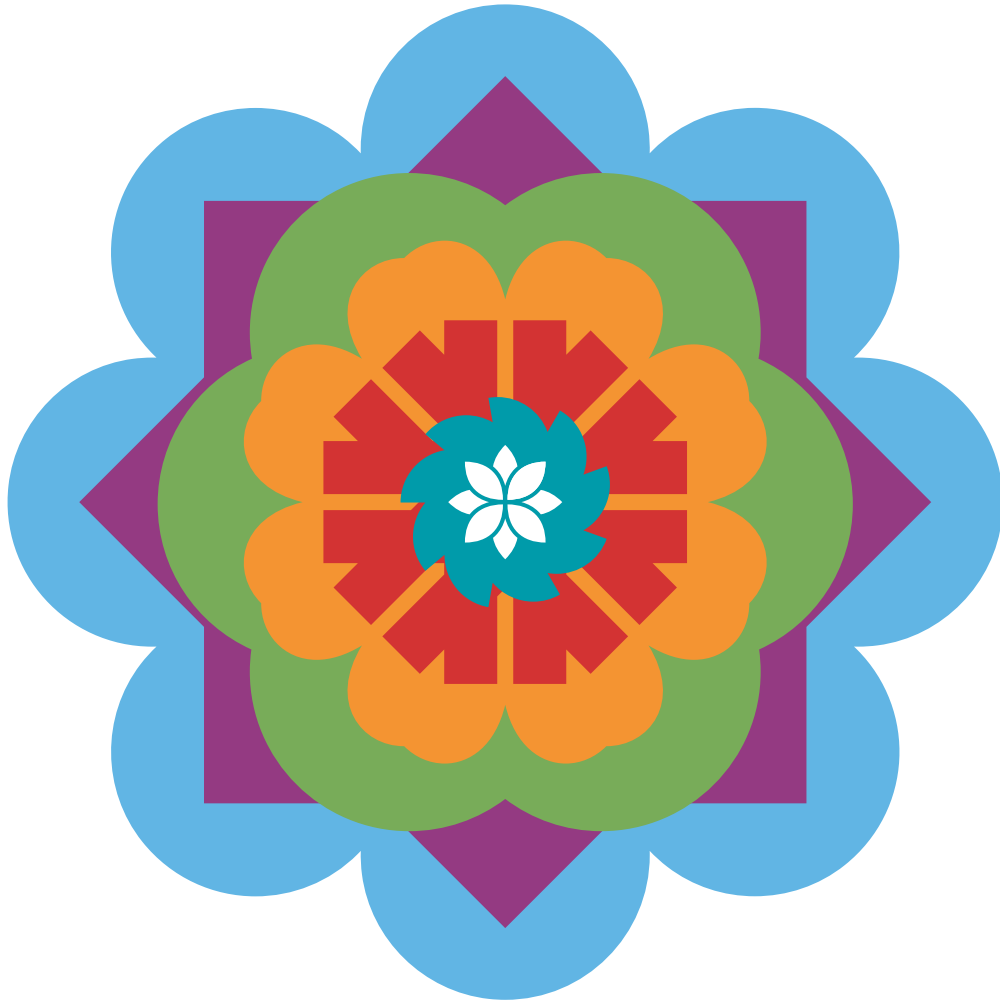
From April 2024, we will integrate our systems and align our key operational and corporate resources to maximise the impact of the combined organisation. For example, through the exploration of joint procurement processes, further strategy and policy integration, all designed to leverage wider Peabody Group efficiencies and value-for-money benefits.

We will:

1. Work as 'one team' with a clearly defined aspirational culture
2. Move towards integrated systems, investing and innovating in service delivery, homes, technology and people
3. Be locally focused and well connected with residents and local communities
4. Continually review our integration plans and processes to ensure they are relevant and fit-for-purpose now and in the future.

OUR PURPOSE

George Peabody's letter to his original trustees emphasised a clear social purpose: "to ameliorate the condition of the poor and needy of this great metropolis and to promote their comfort and happiness". 160 years later, this social purpose still stands true. As well as helping people escape poverty, our modern organisation provides a broad range of services and support programmes to make a positive impact and help people flourish.



We have developed a new purpose statement for the combined organisation, which captures the key elements of what we are seeking to achieve:

HELPING PEOPLE FLOURISH

We do this by providing great homes and services, by making a positive difference to the communities we serve and by providing an inclusive and inspiring place to work.

OUR VALUES

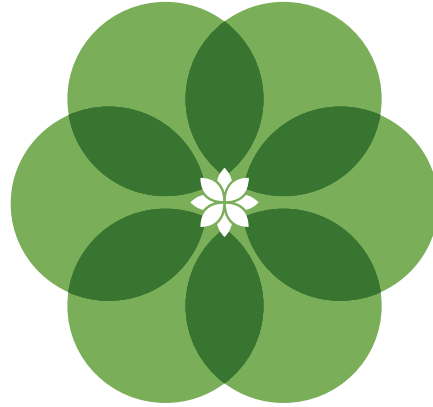
Our culture is about the shared values, beliefs and behaviours that determine how we do things, and the ways and systems of working that help to get those things done.

Our new values, principles and behaviours will continue to put customers at the heart and provide the foundation for the culture of the new organisation. Only by delivering a cohesive and customer-focused culture will we be able to achieve our purpose and priorities.

We have taken an inclusive and collaborative approach to developing the following values, working together with colleagues, customers and the Board:



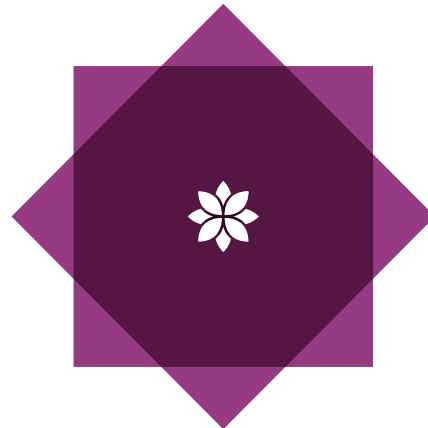
DO THE RIGHT THING



PULL TOGETHER



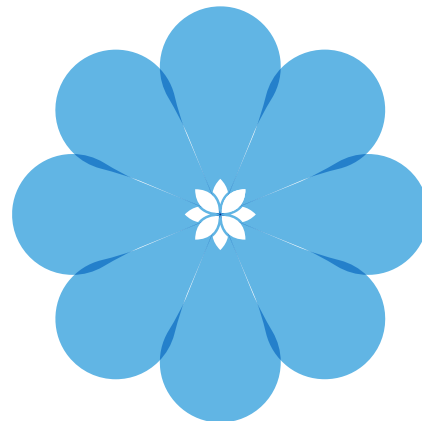
CELEBRATE DIVERSITY



LOVE NEW IDEAS



BE KIND



KEEP OUR PROMISES

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

WE ARE ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

- As our organisations fully integrate, we will ensure that the 'resident voice' is reflected in all areas of service delivery throughout our operating region. We will further evidence how we have embedded the 'resident voice' and work together to deliver the commitments in the 'Together with Tenants' charter. Our Board will ensure the 'resident voice' is integrated throughout our new structure and we will continue to anticipate the government's expectations as set out in the Social Housing White Paper (the Charter for Social Housing) ahead of any legislation.
 - We will focus on maintaining outstanding communication with residents and treat every individual with respect and empathy. We will use the Peabody Academy, an in-house training capability, to facilitate colleagues and residents learning together to build productive, mutually beneficial relationships that promote inclusion.
 - We will support our residents and communities to thrive through community investment initiatives. We will focus on supporting good mental health and wellbeing. We will also address social isolation, enable skills training, employability, financial resilience and digital inclusion. We will explore expanding Rosebery's highly commendable focus on increasing the employability of residents throughout the wider region.
 - Where required, we will help and sign-post residents to external agencies to sustain their tenancies. Following the transfer of Peabody SouthEast Care and Support services (now the Home Improvement and Support Team), we will provide a wider, improved range of support services to local communities.
 - Our collaborative approach will meet and exceed the needs of residents, within the framework of Peabody Group's locality model. We believe we are already a centre of excellence for the locality model and will share this expertise with Peabody Group for the benefit of colleagues and residents alike.
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- We will continue to make further progress on equality, diversity and inclusion during the integration period and when co-creating new or reviewing existing services. We will improve and publish information about gender and ethnicity representation and any gender and ethnicity pay gap.
 - We will prioritise colleague wellbeing, engagement and training to become the local employer of choice. In addition, identify and promote opportunities in Peabody Group for further learning and career progression. Rosebery's award-winning approach to people development is much admired and we will seek to emulate this throughout TCH.
 - We will recruit talented individuals who share our values and social responsibility commitments. We will also create more employment and development opportunities for young people, including graduates, as well as those with disabilities or other support needs.
 - Our modern office environment, first rate IT and remote working arrangements will continue to enable flexibility and ensure colleagues are best placed to deliver responsive, easy-to-use services that are accessible to all.

SUCCESS MEASURES

Demonstrate successful outcomes from community investment initiatives

Deliver 'human and kind' training to all colleagues

Increase colleague satisfaction to more than 85% with TCH via the annual survey and develop a baseline

Increase the number of internal appointments to 30% for all roles

Decrease annual staff turnover

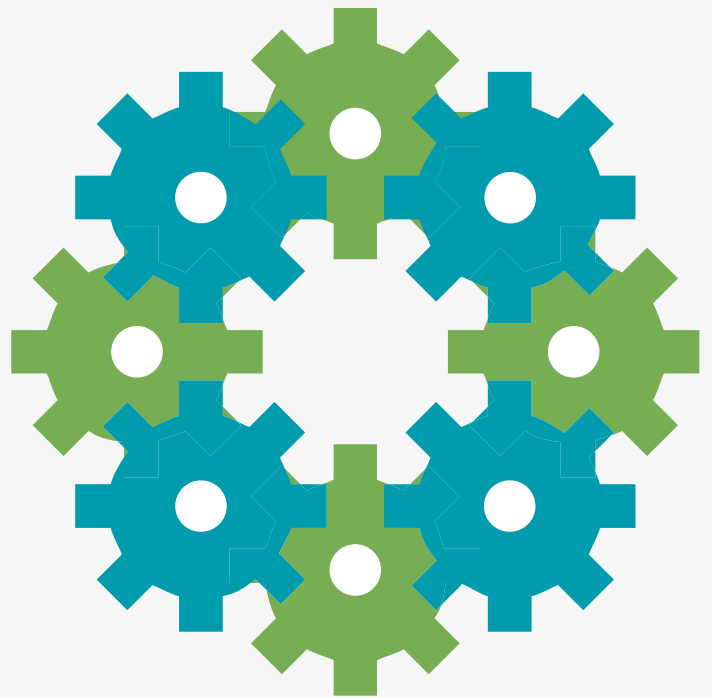
Increase workforce and TCH Board diversity, including BAME and disability representation where possible. Publish information about the gender pay gap

Complete a review of workplace accommodation.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

WE ARE FOCUSED ON GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

- Our priority is improving resident satisfaction. As our organisations come together, we will learn from each other and work together to become a high performing organisation when compared with our peers. TCH will focus on delivering an excellent quality repairs service through our new repairs and maintenance contractor Fortem, and explore lessons learned from the equivalent high performing Rosebery Repairs in-house service.
- We will continue to improve our customer service offer. Colleagues will be equipped to resolve queries promptly and residents will know who to contact.
- We will ensure that residents and homes are safe. The Building Safety Act 2022 will continue to inform our methodology. We will further embed a safety-first culture and deliver a ‘whole house’ approach. We will improve how we engage with residents about safety matters, and ensure we have the right systems and processes in place to meet and exceed our statutory obligations.
- We will integrate our IT systems where appropriate, in the context of Peabody Group strategies. We will also invest more in digital self-service options to give residents more choice, convenience, and control about how they communicate with us and receive their services, regardless of geographical location.



SUCCESS MEASURES

Improve overall resident satisfaction in all areas of the business to more than 75%, with staged targets from 2022-25 (where local services have already exceeded this target, we will agree equally ambitious targets for improvement)

Improve resident satisfaction with last transaction to more than 85% (where local services have already exceeded this target, we will agree equally ambitious targets for improvement)

Improve resident satisfaction with last repair to more than 90%

Demonstrate how resident feedback and lessons learnt from complaints have been used to influence and improve services

Reduce the number of complaints that progress to stage two by 10%

Ensure alignment of performance reporting information between TCH and Rosebery and positive performance against the new tenant satisfaction measures, when compared to our peers (data gathering from April 2023, published by the Regulator of Social Housing from April 2024)

Annual completion of all priority fire risk assessments

No medium and high-risk fire safety works outstanding by 2025, with annual staged targets from 2022-25

Review non-core expenditure to assess continued viability and value-for-money

Implement, monitor and report progress against a two-year integration plan for the integration of Rosebery with TCH

From April 2023, TCH and Rosebery will continue to operate on legacy IT systems whilst enabling the teams to collaborate closely. In the meantime, we will consider how best to bring together and present data to maximise transparency and visibility, including for Peabody Group requirements.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT CREATING A SUSTAINABLE TCH



- We will continue to be the regional developer of choice and provide genuinely affordable housing. The number of homes we deliver will increase every year. We will use our regional brands to strengthen development partnerships and positively influence the local, regional and national housing agenda.
- We will build new homes in places where people want to live, utilising both traditional and modern methods of construction. Residents who purchase our homes will receive tailored and attentive aftercare support to ensure that they get off to the best possible start as homeowners.
- We will deliver our sustainability strategy to construct energy efficient homes and improve the energy efficiency of our existing homes and operations.
- We recognise the need to remain flexible and responsive to local needs and circumstances, meaning we will transition the development programme from 30% social rented homes to 45% rent, 35% shared ownership and 20% sale by 2025.
- To ensure long term sustainability, we will deliver quality homes with in-built digital connectivity and technology designed to minimise utility costs which are increasingly prohibitive and can impact affordability.
- A key priority is delivering the ongoing maintenance and improvement of existing homes to a high standard. Homes will meet the revised Decent Homes Standard by 2025. We will continue to collect detailed property data to better inform and target resources. This will also support decision making about disposals of low performing homes, with the proceeds invested directly into new homes. Rosebery has taken its repairs and voids services in-house and as our organisations come together, we will seek to learn from each other about quality improvement and identify opportunities for joint staff training and development.
- As part of the corporate social responsibility programme, we will enable colleagues to volunteer with local charities or community initiatives and maximise social value in supplier contracts.

SUCCESS MEASURES

Increase the development programme to deliver 45% rented homes

Aim to reduce the running and utility costs of homes in real terms by 2025

Begin to implement the sustainability strategy, starting with annual staged SAP/EPC targets, towards a minimum C rating by 2030

All homes to meet revised Decent Homes Standard by 2025

Deliver one apprenticeship for every £1m of spend on capital and revenue programmes

Ensure the new joint venture partner delivers a legacy initiative every five years

Assess the social value derived from supplier contracts using the TOMs (Themes Outcomes Measures) framework and publicise the outcomes

Expand the colleague volunteering programme to benefit local communities.

LOOKING FORWARD

Our united organisation will build on our shared cultures and the expertise to become a stronger local provider of quality affordable housing. Our staff are our greatest asset, and we will demand that all colleagues demonstrate our values in their day-to-day behaviours and through the delivery of exemplary services. Our residents and local communities are our first and foremost priority and we exist to serve them. To further embed this ethos, we will explore the development of overarching success measures or one team key performance indicators. We are truly excited about the new opportunities created through our merger with Rosebery – our future is bright and we are determined to succeed.

