

Delivering for our customers & communities

Corporate Strategy 2024-25





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0800 027 7769 پر کال کریں یا
customer@rbh.org.uk پر ای میل کریں۔

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Amanda Newton
Chief Executive

Kevin Brady
Board Chair

Introduction

The world that we live in has never been as fast paced and volatile as it is today. Things that only a few years ago felt so far from our shores are now having a direct impact on our economy and on the people and families living in our communities.

As a housing provider we need to make sure that we are providing homes that are safe, warm and free from hazards and this is the fundamental pillar of our strategy for the coming year. We are very conscious that being a good landlord goes beyond the fabric of the homes that we provide. Our customers rely on us to provide support that enables them to stay safe in their homes and we do this directly where it's within our remit and alongside our brilliant partners with whom we look to join the dots and make sure we are working together positively.

Our corporate strategy is clear and focussed, with the commitment to having a positive impact in all that we do. Social housing will remain at the core of our business, and we'll use the coming year to continue with our recovery journey with pace and ambition.

We are a Mutual Society which means that we are owned and managed by our customers and our colleagues. Every decision that we take is focused on the positive impact it can create in the homes of our customers and on them and their families. Our mutuality gives us a great opportunity to demonstrate how we are listening to customers and ensuring their voice is heard loud and clear throughout our business. We'll continue to listen to and act on feedback so that we can keep improving.

Our colleagues are at the core of what we do and are fundamental in delivering great services and creating a successful future for the business. They understand our communities and feel a sense of ownership and pride in making them successful. We need to make it easier for them to do their jobs so the next year will also be focused on simplifying what we do and ensuring they have the skills and support they need.

We are committed to creating positive impact for the people who live in our homes and making the organisation a landlord that our customers are proud to call theirs.

Amanda Newton
Chief Executive

Kevin Brady
Board Chair



Who we are

We own and manage around 13,000 homes within the Borough of Rochdale in Greater Manchester. We are the largest provider of affordable housing in the Borough and, in an economic environment where the supply of housing is at its most challenged, we take very seriously our responsibility for supporting the people who live in our homes and communities to live well and thrive.

Our core purpose is to be a provider of quality homes and services to our customers who live across the towns and villages of the Borough of Rochdale. Our role in making places and building a sense of community through the provision of homes and services is the core of our role.

The way in which we run our business is unique – we are proud to be a Mutual Society, which means we are owned by our customer and employee members and anyone who lives in one of our homes, or works as part of our team is welcomed into the membership.

Our mutuality is focused on bringing genuine voice and influence to our customers and our colleagues in how we deliver our services. We work hard to bring genuine power, voice and participation to those who want to be heard through open membership of our Society.

Our primary focus is on providing warm homes in safe communities where people want to live and raise their families. We have more to do over the next years to address many years of underinvestment and we have committed significant resources to do that – we're excited to see the changes that will be delivered over time for our customers.

We believe in the power of the local economy and work alongside our local, regional and national partners to focus on delivering great outcomes across the Borough of Rochdale. In addition to providing quality homes, this means helping people with issues that they face like the support with the cost of living, help with employment and skills and supporting health and wellbeing.

In this ever-changing economic, social, and political climate, these are not easy challenges. But we're determined to tailor our services and continue offering the right support in ways that are easy to access. We want to be part of making the Borough of Rochdale a great place to grow up, build a career, flourish and grow older.

Our vision

RBH is an organisation that is firmly anchored in its local communities. We understand the places where we work and this gives us a unique opportunity to tailor what we do for the people who call the Borough of Rochdale home.

The Borough of Rochdale as a place is wonderfully diverse and its make up is changing all the time as new communities develop. RBH has an unwavering commitment to meeting the needs of the people who live in our homes today and those who will in the future. We have many opportunities to learn and tailor what we do as the richness of the diversity of our four townships evolves. Our vision is centred around this.

We are taking the next year as an opportunity to continue with re-focusing the organisation back to our core role as a great provider of housing with our customers at the centre of everything we do.

We are also clear that behind every front door is a person or a family that relies on us to go beyond just the provision of a home. Through our partnerships and through pioneering new ways of working are building a highly skilled team to support our ambitions and delivering great services.

We are here for the long term and will change how we deliver our services with and for our customers to enable them to live fulfilled lives in places that embrace, value and welcome diversity.





Our values

As we've refocused our strategy back to our core housing role, we've taken the opportunity to work with our customers and colleagues to review and modernise the values that motivate us and will underpin everything we do.

Our mutuality is focused on bringing genuine voice and influence to our customers and our colleagues in how we deliver our services. Our values get to the root of who we really are and what we stand for.



Putting People First

We listen with empathy, respond with compassion, and make it easy for our customers to access our services.



Working As One

We embrace our mutuality and work together to deliver great outcomes for the people living in our homes and communities.



Doing What We Say

We earn trust through honesty, integrity, caring and keeping our promises.



Delivering Quality

We invest wisely in our people and make it easy for them to deliver services and create places that our customers are proud to call home.



Open & Transparent

We are curious, embrace diverse ways of thinking and seek feedback to help us improve.



Our Achievements in the past year

The past year, 2023, saw a complete re-set of RBH's purpose and strategic direction following the Coroner's report into the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Awaab Ishak.

We remain committed to continuing this journey of recovery and rebuilding the organisation. Most importantly, we have spent time learning from what happened and putting in place new ways of working focused on ensuring that no such tragedy can ever happen again in one of our homes. We have approached this with focus, determination and above all, complete humility. We will never forget that a small child passed away in one of homes, and will use what we find to help others understand how they can make changes.

Our key promise has been to share our learning about what went wrong and what we are doing to build a business where customer safety is first and foremost in the services we deliver. We have engaged extensively across the social housing sector and beyond to share our learning openly and honestly. We will not stop doing this until there is no more learning to take and nothing else to share.

Our Recovery Plan is nearing completion, and we are well on the way to making the changes that will make RBH a great provider of homes across the Borough of Rochdale. We've made significant changes to the way in which we are governed to ensure that accountability for getting things right for customers sits in the right place. Through changes to our rules that were approved by the Membership, our Representative Body has been given new powers to undertake scrutiny on the core services that RBH delivers. They will review the experience of customers, make recommendations for how we can improve and hold the business to account to deliver change.

Alongside this, the organisation has made great strides forward in delivering for its customers.



£20M investment
in existing homes



10,120 Stock
condition surveys
completed



£1.1M back
into customers'
pockets from
financial support



102k calls
answered in our
Contact Centre



73% Customer
satisfaction



350 new
kitchens fitted



61.5k number of repairs completed



22.6 tonnes of furniture saved from landfill through Pass It On



300 customers accessed Pass It On service



17,500 litres of paint saved from landfill through our Paint Shop



613 people supported with financial wellbeing



200 new bathrooms fitted



46 community groups supported



38k customer email enquiries answered



616 homes let to customers



579 families supported via our pantries



613 customers supported with Money Matters



Our Plan for 2024-25

As we continue to rebuild the organisation, work towards a return to regulatory compliance and focus on implementing all of the learning from our lessons learnt review, we have decided to replace the old corporate strategy with a new one year plan. This will focus on getting back to basics, being a great provider of homes in the Borough and rebuilding confidence in RBH as a great landlord.

Taking feedback from our customers on where our priorities lie, we have worked with our Board, our Representative Body and our colleagues to build a strategy that will focus back on our core role, whilst putting in place the building blocks for a new refocused long term strategy in 2025.

There is a lot to do, and we will only know we've got there when our customers tell us we have. Our ambitions are not diminished by this refocus of our efforts. Our objective in taking a short term view in the coming year is to ensure that we can focus on those things that will make the biggest difference to the people living in our homes. We need to build back trust and we couldn't be more committed to doing so.



Customers



Communities



People



Homes



Governance

Our plan for the coming year will focus on five strategic themes;

These themes reflect the things that our customers and colleagues tell us are important to them. Underpinning all of the themes is a drive for continuous improvement which is becoming an embedded part of our culture. As we move forward, we will look to bring new ideas and innovation to make it easy for our colleagues to do great things for our customers.

We will improve data and insight as we move forward to ensure all that we do is focused on facts and that we are making decisions based on what our customers tell us is important. Achieving value for money, with decisions driven by data and insight, and success monitored through key performance indicators will underpin our approach.

ffee Makes

Everything

Better



coffee

latte

MILA





Customers

Our services will be shaped with our customers with their voices heard in our business every day.

The people and families who live in our homes are the reason why we are here. We want to deliver services that are valued by our customers and are continuously improving based on the feedback we receive.

As a Mutual Society we have solid foundations to build upon when it comes to customer engagement – we will drive this forward to ensure we continue to have two-way conversations that are meaningful and inclusive.

Customer engagement means seeking out the views of our customers, valuing what they say and being able to demonstrate that customers' feedback is informing our decision making.

We're focusing on making sure it's easy to get in touch with us and we're making more channels available to take account of how our customers preferences differ – from face-to-face contact and being visible in our communities, thorough to web enabled interactions, we will be here for our customers when they need us.

As part of our governance improvements, we're including a formal scrutiny role for our Representative Body where they will lead and deliver deep dives into the areas of our business that customers value most.



We'll continue to review and improve our overall approach to customer engagement to make sure we are capturing views that are representative of all of our customers and this will change as communities change.

Our fundamental objective is to build trust with our customers, and the way we do this is by capturing a breadth of views that represents the people living in our homes and communities, understanding what they want and then delivering it.

What we'll do

- Give our customers choices in the services they receive through meaningful and trusted conversations and targeted engagement
- Do what we say we will do – if we get things wrong, we put it right quickly and learn from complaints and feedback
- Empower our customers to shape our strategies, scrutinise our services and make changes to improve services
- Resolve customer queries at first point of contact more effectively
- Simplify our processes, building in automation to create efficiency and an improved customer journey
- Improve the data we hold to enable us to better tailor our services to the people who live in our homes
- Encourage an increase in membership of the Society to further strengthen customer engagement
- Keep customers safe in their homes
- Provide support to those customers in need including access to money advice for those challenged by the economic conditions and cost of living

What we'll achieve by 2025

- Engage with 1300 customers across the year through our feedback channels
- Respond to 100% of customer complaints within the timeframe
- Deliver three scrutiny reviews through our Representative Body
- Complete an end to end review and refresh of our lettings and empty homes processes
- 80% of customer queries resolved within the Contact Centre at first contact
- Consistently achieve 80% overall customer satisfaction (TPO1)
- Full customer census delivered and informing the development of neighbourhood plans
- 80% tenancy audits complete
- Refresh the Membership Strategy to increase representation across the customer members
- 100% compliance on statutory health and safety indicators
- Over 600 people supported through Tenancy Support and Money Matters

Communities



We'll support the building of thriving, inclusive communities where embracing diversity makes our communities great places to live.

Working as a key partner, we will support our communities and the people who call them home to live safely, independently and well.

As a locality based landlord our role in creating places where people want to live is critically important. At an infrastructure level, many of our homes are ageing and are increasingly difficult to maintain to the standards expected in 2024. We are also dealing with a legacy of underinvestment. Over the next year we will need to explore options for how we prioritise investment and focus on regenerating areas that need it the most. We have some brilliant opportunities to make a difference to the people and communities across the Borough of Rochdale.

Our role as a landlord goes beyond the fabric of the home – the social and economic value of supporting people to stay safe and well and be able to play a role in developing the communities where they live cannot be underestimated. We already undertake a lot of this work and will continue that as we move forward.

The vulnerabilities that exist in our neighbourhoods as a result of the external challenges in the economy and beyond mean that people often need support to be able to live well and independently.

The support we provide to customers every day as part of our community investment programme shows the real value of the contribution that we make as an extension of our role as landlord.

Many of our homes are in areas where shared spaces are an integral part of the place. There are occasions where these can present challenges as a result of people's differing lifestyles and expectations. Our role as a partner is to challenge inappropriate behaviour with the best interests of the community at heart, whilst accepting the limitations of our powers and responsibilities in favour of our partners.

We are committed to playing a role in making the four townships which make up the Borough of Rochdale as vibrant and inclusive as possible. The richness of diversity in each of the areas means there are untapped opportunities for us to understand these communities more and work with them to thrive.

Whilst we make a strong contribution to our customers through our extended community investment role, we are very early on this journey. The next year will provide opportunities to explore how we bring more structure and focus to really understanding the presenting need across our communities and building a new approach to supporting the community and our customers.

What we'll do

- Continue to deliver our responsive community investment work, while we develop a longer term community investment framework
- Work alongside partners to understand how we meet the long term needs of areas that need regeneration and investment
- Review our greenspace and open space strategies to underpin the delivery of excellent services
- Invest in communal areas and shared spaces to make improvements that customers value
- Adopt a zero tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour and work with partners to use respective powers to address perpetrators and support victims
- Develop a colleague volunteering programme which brings customers, partners and colleagues together to make a difference
- Celebrate and acknowledge the contributions that different communities make to wellbeing and cohesion in the Borough of Rochdale

What we'll achieve by 2025

- Create a new Community Investment Framework to be approved by Board in quarter four 2024-25
- Develop regeneration plans for two communities, including focus on the future of College Bank
- New greenspace strategy developed and approved
- 76% satisfaction that communal areas are clean and well maintained (TP10)
- 68% satisfaction with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour (TP12)
- Work as part of the Community Safety Partnership to deliver joined up solutions to tackling ASB
- 25% of colleagues have taken part in meaningful volunteering opportunities
- Engage with community and faith groups building meaningful plans that enable all voices to be heard





People

Everything we achieve is through our people. Our focus will be on building a great place to work with a supportive and inclusive culture that reflects the diversity of our communities.

At RBH we believe that the right colleagues with the right skills and behaviours is the foundation of delivering great services to our customers. We need to make it easier for our people to do their jobs and using technology we need to remove some of the complexity in systems, in processes and generally in the way we do things. Much of this work is vested in cultural change and the work that we do in the coming year will be part of the building blocks needed to create a contemporary workforce with strong leadership and followership.

We have work to do of defining our target culture for the organisation that is truly Customer First and placing the people who live in our homes at the front of everything we do. We started this with a full culture review in late 2023 that has shaped our revised values that will now underpin the organisation and how we do things.

Despite the challenges that RBH needs to overcome, we have been fortunate to attract some exceptional talent which complements well the great people we already have in our business. The culture we will develop will be one of performance, passion, empathy and one that is focused unequivocally on doing the best for our customers.

Over the next year we will focus on compassionate, caring and strong leaders who will take the business forward. We also need to review and modernise our colleague offer to ensure that we can continue to attract talented and skilled people who want to come and work with us.

The challenges in our communities are increasing and our customer facing staff are encountering situations that challenge their resilience daily. It's our job to keep people safe so that they can keep our customers safe. We will focus on colleague health, safety and wellbeing and create support mechanisms.

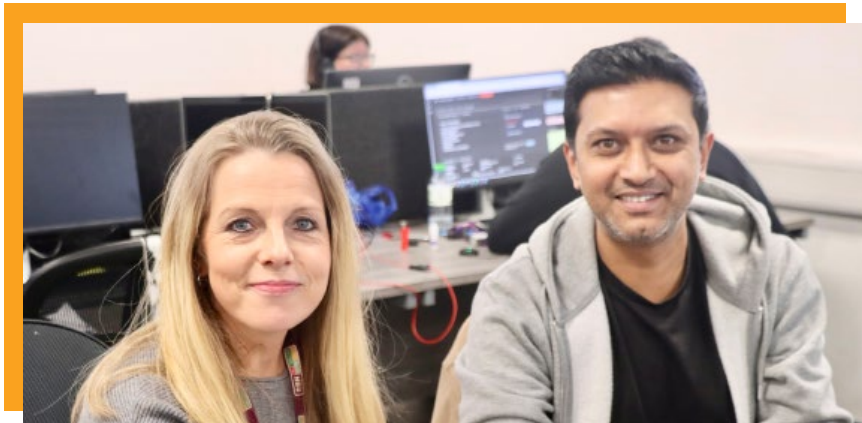
The best businesses make colleagues feel valued, respected and ensure that everyone can be who they are – we aspire to this. We'll continue to invest in making sure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded across our business and within our culture. We want everyone to believe in themselves, our business and our vision. We look after our people and they look after our customers.

What we'll do

- Develop a new People Strategy that takes account of the outcomes of the culture survey
- Review our colleague offer to build something flexible and that rewards people appropriately
- Raise awareness of the importance of health and safety across the organisation
- Improve our understanding of the root cause of work related illness and look to address them through a focus on wellbeing
- Review the performance management framework to ensure that it is fit for purpose and driving the appropriate behaviours, with specific focus on the impact of leaders
- Listen to feedback from colleagues and work with them to improve their experience and the service they deliver for our customers
- Develop colleagues to ensure they have the essential skills to undertake their roles safely
- Special interest groups will be supported to be self sustaining and to create an inclusive place to work and have a strong and meaningful voice in determining our EDI strategy
- Develop a new Diversity, Belonging and Inclusion Strategy, that provides the framework for RBH being an inclusive employer that values a diverse workforce

What we'll achieve by 2025

- Market testing of salaries completed and communicated across the organisation with plans for managing outliers agreed
- Launch a campaign of dealing with inappropriate behaviour to keep colleagues safe
- Sickness levels benchmark with the best in sector
- Health and wellbeing programme developed with colleagues
- Leadership behaviours framework complete and development programme developed
- Performance management framework reviewed and updated
- Deliver a culture survey and improvement plan that has the voice of our customers and colleagues captured throughout
- Essential training 100% complete
- Quarterly temperature check using Net Promoter Score confirms 10% uplift in those who would recommend RBH as a great place to work
- 60% of colleagues agree that we communicate well with them
- Understand where there is interest across our colleagues for the establishment of special interest groups and put these in place to enable their voice to be heard
- People strategy developed and approved
- Diversity, Belonging and Inclusion Strategy developed and approved



Homes



We'll continue to invest in our homes to ensure they are safe, warm places to live and comply with building safety regulations.

The past year has seen us refocusing our strategy to focus on investment in our homes to address the impact that many years of underinvestment has had. The starting point for this has been to really understand each of our homes and the investment required to bring them up to the standard our customers should expect. We start the new financial year with detailed information and data on the condition of each of our homes and communal areas across the Borough and the investment that will be required over the coming years.

We have worked hard to address the issue of damp and mould and will now be looking to shift from reacting to reports of damp and mould to looking at ways to prevent it happening. This is a challenge as the age and condition of some of our homes means in some cases, extensive works will be required. We are determined to address this and work with our customers to ensure their homes are safe, warm and affordable.

The next year will see us continuing to deliver an investment programme for our homes that address historic issues but also seeks opportunities to improve the energy performance of our homes. This will have benefits that are twofold; our homes will become more sustainable into the future as play our role in addressing the climate change challenge. It also means that homes will be warmer and more affordable for the people and families living in them.

The service that our customers call on and tell us they value the most is our responsive repairs. We need to improve this and make it more accessible and easier to navigate for our customers. We'll use customer feedback to help us shape a service that is informed by and for the people living in our homes to ensure that we are easy to deal with and always focused on making the customer's experience of us a positive one.

What we'll do

- Improve our repairs service to deliver better experiences for our customers
- Listen to our customers and ensure their priorities shape our plans around improving their homes
- Develop a Homes & Communities Strategy to shape how we will invest in our homes and communities, including a focus on sustainability and our contribution to the climate emergency through investment in our homes
- Use data from our stock condition survey to focus the investment in our homes to improve quality and make them places that our customers are proud to call home
- Prioritise achievement of the Decent Homes Standard (2006) in all of our homes to address the outliers and ensure all homes are compliant
- Use data and information about the occurrence and reoccurrence of damp and mould by type of home to inform our prevention programme

What we'll achieve by 2025

- Deliver the recommendations from the external review of our Repairs service to build a customer informed repairs service
- 80% customer satisfaction with the repairs service
- Include focused engagement with customers to understand their priorities for investment in homes
- Develop the Homes and Communities strategy by May 2024
- Complete 100% stock condition survey information for all communal areas
- Ensure 100% of homes have up to date stock condition survey data *only exceptions will be those where access is an issue but we will be able to evidence that we are pursuing this in every case
- Deliver year one of our three year investment programme in homes and communal areas
- Achieve statutory compliance 100% across all of our homes *only exceptions will be those where access is an issue but we will be able to evidence that we are pursuing this in every case
- Reduce the reoccurrences of damp and mould in our homes by 10% *baseline to be taken 31/3/24
- Run three customer campaigns across the year to promote how to prevent damp, mould, and condensation in the home and with the assistance of RBH, what to do when it happens





Governance, Finance & Risk

Embedding good governance, robust financial management and controls and ensuring our business is risk informed will see us strengthening the foundations that underpin RBH.

A key part of RBH's Recovery Plan has been about bringing stability to the underpinning elements of the business. Strengthening our governance structures and ensuring that decision making sits in the right place with the correct authority has been a key element of this and will need to continue to be a focus in the coming year as we embed the changes made. We have new committee structures which need time to mature, determine priorities and ensure that there is appropriate flow of accountabilities into the Board which governs all that we do.

We are a Mutual Society which means we are co-owned by members from across customers and colleagues. There are significant untapped opportunities to bring this to life to demonstrate how mutuality makes a real and tangible difference to the people living in our homes. The new Consumer Regulation framework also presents opportunities for us to demonstrate how our unique model strengthens what we do to hear and act on the voice of our membership. The membership is currently not representative of the people and communities that we serve and the Representative Body which sits alongside the Board and Executive to lead the business is committed to strengthening this and addressing the gaps.

As with all organisations in the social housing sector, we need to continually review what is the best governance and structural model for delivering great outcomes for our customers and examining whether independence versus partnerships is the best way forward. This will be a consideration in the coming year to ensure that we are acting in the best interests of the people who will call the Borough of Rochdale home for the long term.

The world is becoming more risky and what used to be localised risk factors are now having to be considered on a global scale. Much work has been done to strengthen risk and assurance and this now needs to be a continual process of evaluation and action to ensure that RBH is acting in the live risk environment. Underpinning all of this is our ongoing financial stability – we have a lot to do to bring our homes up to the standard that our customers expect and this needs to be done with the long term financial stability of the organisation in mind.

We also need to ensure that the Board has longevity in terms of membership and skills and so succession planning will be part of the focus for the coming year. We will need to extend this to the Representative Body whilst being mindful and respectful of the rules that surround recruitment of members.

What we'll do

- Embed the new governance structure and look to continually improve the performance of all elements including how mutuality is making a positive difference
- Ensure the right skills are present to meet the challenges of the future
- Focus on financial stability and ensuring the organisation has the resources it needs into the future
- Protect the business from external threats with a continued focus on ensuring the safety of our IT, data and networks
- Continually enhance our risk and assurance framework to ensure it remains current, live and focused on protecting the business from external factors
- Validate our performance against the Code of Governance to ensure we remain compliant and are evolving our approach
- Focus on working towards returning the compliance with our regulator through delivery and embedding of our recovery plan and Voluntary Undertaking

What we'll achieve by 2025

- Complete a governance effectiveness review to confirm all elements of the governance structure, including the impact of mutuality, are working effectively
- Complete a full skills assessment for Board Members and associated development plans
- Extend the skills assessment and development plan process to the Representative Body to ensure it has the requisite skills and that members have opportunities to develop to move the organisation forward
- Develop a Board succession plan
- Start to consider the long term financing arrangements including plans for refinancing
- Prepare for Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation
- Externally validate our approach to risk and assurance
- Review our merger statement to consider the benefits of long term independence versus partnership
- Continue to work productively with our regulator to oversee the recovery and return to compliance of RBH





Get in touch

Visit us at rbh.org.uk, log on to **MyRBH**,
or talk to us on **0800 027 7769** or **(01706) 274100**

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