

choice-housing.org



# Asset Management Strategy 2021–2024

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**Together  
we enrich  
lives**



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## Foreword

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Choice Housing continue to build on the hard work of the last Asset Strategy and have now taken the opportunity to review in totality our vision for our Assets and our customers. Our new strategy will build on the successes achieved over the last two years and over the next three years will focus on our strategic goals of:

- *Great Homes*
- *Great Services*
- *Great Communities*
- *Great Delivery*

We have taken the opportunity to restructure our teams with a new Asset Services Directorate who will drive this strategy to meet our goals. They will also build on the work already completed to upgrade the Victoria Housing Estates properties by delivering significant investment to ensure the properties comply with the Decent Homes Standard, Current Building Regulations and Choice Standard Specification.

This strategy will continue Choices ongoing investment in our portfolio which will see us spend over £25m per annum for the next 3 years. This not only helps us maintain the asset value of our stock but improves the quality and efficiency of accommodation for our customers.

New challenging targets are outlined within the strategy that will impact across each of the four group strategic goals but we are looking forward to the challenge and working in collaboration with our valued customers, colleagues, contractors, suppliers, consultants and Supporting Housing partners to successfully deliver an asset portfolio that meets the needs and enhances the comfort of the living environment for our customers.

**Michael McDonnell**  
Group Chief Executive

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# Introduction

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Choice Housing Ireland Limited is an Industrial and Provident Society registered as a Housing Association and Charity by our regulators, the Department for Communities and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. The Association is a social enterprise, has a voluntary membership and all surpluses are reinvested to fulfil our charitable purpose.

Our charitable purpose for over 40 years is 'to benefit the community'. We do this through the provision of social and affordable housing, through the provision of assistance to help house people, and through associated facilities, amenities and services for the 'prevention or relief of poverty or for the relief of those in need'.

**This Asset Strategy is built upon the successes of our previous strategy including:**

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## 20 million

Invested in our properties through our Planned Maintenance Programme (PMP) from 2019-2021



## 97%

Level of customer satisfaction achieved for major projects



## An excess of 95%

response maintenance performance level for repairs



## ISO9001, ISO45001 and ISO14001

An integrated quality, safety and environmental management system has been implemented for the Asset Management Team's activities

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The aim of this Asset Management Strategy is to shape the future direction of the property assets to ensure that they meet corporate objectives and customer expectations. Asset Management goes beyond investing in a quality repairs and maintenance service. Asset management is about reviewing and changing the asset base to achieve the right accommodation in the right location supported by flexible services for our customers. Excellent asset management considers quality

and value for money, particularly the whole life of a home and how future running costs will impact the customer.

From April 2021, the Asset Management strategy is the responsibility of the new Asset Services Directorate. This Directorate includes most aspects of maintenance, compliance, planned maintenance, stock condition management, energy and sustainability, and the in-house maintenance services provided by Choice Services.



Our core values will underpin all of the work we do within this strategy, namely:

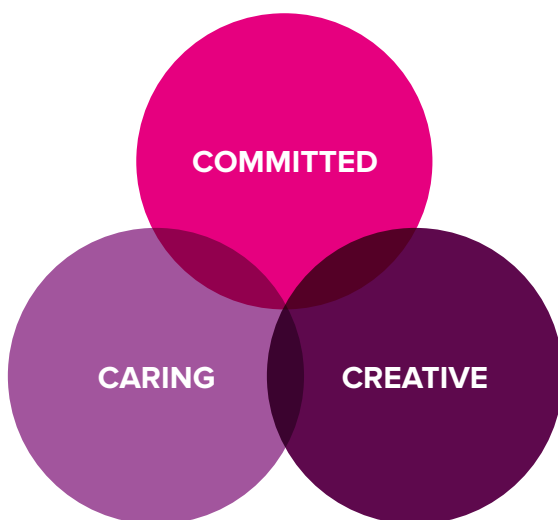
- **We will be Caring** – through listening, being helpful and always acting professionally;
- **We will be Committed** – through determination, being reliable and always acting with integrity; and
- **We will be Creative** – through innovating, being responsive and always seeking to improve.

We will strive to be a ‘**force for good**’ for our colleagues, our tenants and society as a whole.

We are caring and committed in that we also involve customers throughout improvement projects, providing choice in specifications and colours where appropriate and also seek feedback upon completion of work enabling us to ensure we continuously improve the services we deliver. We are also creative, offering an expanding range of services to both internal and external clients and will maximise opportunities from new IT.

We will continue to demonstrate leadership and engage with relevant stakeholders and partner organisations to benchmark, identify, implement and share knowledge on best practice.

This Asset Management Strategy builds on the achievements of previous strategies setting out a framework to provide excellent housing and support services, invest in our homes and communities, grow the organisation sustainably and continuously improve our financial strength.



Over the past 2 years Choice have invested over £20 million in our housing stock, to ensure that our housing meets the needs of our clients



## Vision

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This Asset Management Strategy reflects the wider current strategic framework to 2024 for the Choice Group ie:

Element	Framework to 2024
Charitable Purpose	<b>‘to benefit the community’ through ‘prevention or relief of poverty or for the relief of those in need’</b>
Mission	<b>‘to enrich lives through great homes, services and communities’</b>
Vision	<b>‘to be recognized as the leading housing association group in Northern Ireland’</b>
Values	<p>We will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Caring</b> – through listening, being helpful and always acting professionally;</li><li>• <b>Committed</b> – through determination, being reliable and always acting with integrity; and</li><li>• <b>Creative</b> – through innovating, being responsive and always seeking to improve.</li></ul>
Strategic Goals	<p>We have 4 strategic priorities to 2024, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Strategic Priority #1 – ‘Great Homes’;</b></li><li>• <b>Strategic Priority #2 – ‘Great Services’;</b></li><li>• <b>Strategic Priority #3 – ‘Great Communities’; and</b></li><li>• <b>Strategic Priority #4 – ‘Great Delivery’.</b></li></ul> <p>For each priority we have identified a number of strategic goals which will shape our business plan objectives over the 3 years of the corporate plan.</p>

In implementing this Asset Management Strategy to our 11,000 plus homes, the benefits we aim to achieve include:

- Assets aligned with corporate aspirations and customer needs;
- Homes which will be more affordable to customers;
- Maximising component life cycles through life cycle costing and planned preventative maintenance of building components;
- Homes which are more sustainable, including reduced CO2 emissions and alleviation of fuel poverty for our tenants;
- Value for money delivered through smart procurement and targeted investment with the appropriate use of in-house resources;
- Continuously improving levels of customer involvement, feedback and satisfaction;
- Improved risk awareness and mitigation to Choice and our customers;
- Streamlined efficient services delivered through our Quality Management System;
- High levels of health and safety maintained in accordance with our Health and Safety Management System;
- Consideration of our environmental impact through objectives set out within our Environmental Management System;
- Appropriate disposal of ageing assets, enabling investment in new homes and reinvestment in existing homes; and
- A clearer understanding of asset maintenance needs at senior management.

Our Vision to 2024 is 'to be recognised as the leading housing association group in Northern Ireland'



## Our Stock Profile

The Choice Housing stock is maintained to high standards with significant investment in the last five years. We work to an established stock condition assessment process and plan our investment accordingly. All stock is maintained to comply with the Decent Homes Standard as a minimum.

We hold detailed records on the lifecycle of the various components of our assets supported by regular physical stock condition surveys to assess the requirement and priority for component replacement or multi-element improvement.

The current Choice Housing stock profile includes the following:

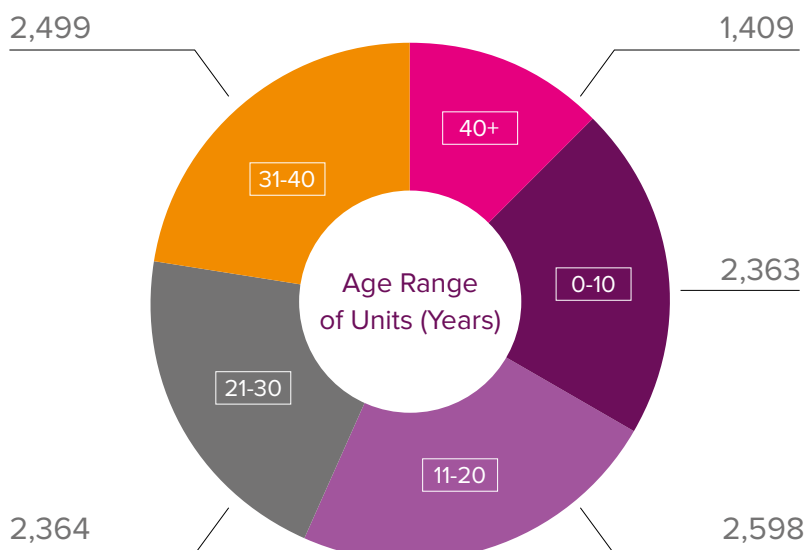
Council Area	Choice Housing Stock Profile				
	Bedsit	Bungalow	Flat	House	Maisonette
Antrim and Newtownabbey		18	227	195	
Ards and North Down		231	351	261	1
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon		53	253	124	
Belfast City Council	5	437	2491	1736	21
Causeway Coast and Glens	22	23	97	41	
Derry and Strabane		82	510	156	2
Fermanagh and Omagh		75	71	71	
Lisburn and Castlereagh		101	312	596	
Mid and East Antrim		105	397	162	5
Mid Ulster		25	62	24	
Newry, Mourne and Down		49	313	321	2
Grand Total	27	1199	5084	3687	31



Count of Address	Choice Housing Stock Profile (Cont.)			
	Office	Supported / Room	Community Facility	Grand Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	6	53	2	501
Ards and North Down	6	121	2	973
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	6	120	1	561
Belfast City Council	20	371	3	5084
Causeway Coast and Glens	2	25	1	211
Derry and Strabane	3	46		799
Fermanagh and Omagh	2	69	3	291
Lisburn and Castlereagh	6	97		1112
Mid and East Antrim	3	60	1	733
Mid Ulster	3	22		136
Newry, Mourne and Down	4	88		777
Grand Total	65	1072	13	11,178

The above excludes properties managed by Oaklee Housing in Rol and the Comhar Properties.

**The age profile is as follows:**



# Our 30 year Investment Plan

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In Choice Housing we take a long term approach to investment in our assets to maintain their value. This is necessary to ensure that we can meet our commitments to our customers in terms of the quality and safety of the homes we provide, that we meet statutory requirements and to ensure that we financially plan for the anticipated investment.

At the core of our 30 year planning is our stock condition surveying process whereby we survey 20% of our stock annually. The life expectancy of asset components is validated and financial requirements profiled accordingly. This allows us to plan and profile our budget expenditure in the long term. In addition, urgent issues identified in any surveys are also addressed through our response maintenance and tenancy management process.

We will aim to 'smooth out' the investment in major repairs over the next 30 years to enable better planning and use of resources to deliver the investment. Over the next 3 years of this strategy, our investment will be over £25m per annum. Investment planning will also take account of changing needs and standards. We will ensure that we monitor and plan, taking account of changing practices, technologies and expectations within the sector.

We are also aware of future requirements to meet net zero carbon targets by 2050 and that we intend to conduct research to identify the implications this will have for our 30 year investment plan, and liaise with relevant stakeholders such as DfC. It is possible that achieving such targets may require significant additional investment and require additional funding sources.

We have also evaluated the financial performance of our stock and the Existing Use Value of the portfolio at the 31st March 2021 is £486m. This Asset Management Strategy therefore aims to maintain and enhance the value of these assets not only over the next 3 years, but also in to the long term.

In terms of funding the maintenance services, life cycle replacement, void works and other maintenance activity, this is wholly funded from rent collection. The exception to this is the investment in the former VHE stock where we will be utilising other existing sources of funding for a £20m investment over the next 3 years.



We will aim to 'smooth out' the investment in major repairs over the next 30 years to enable better planning and use of resources to deliver the investment.

# Asset Management Objectives 2021 – 2024

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In delivering this strategy, a number of strategic objectives have been identified:

- To ensure the value of Choice’s assets are maintained and increased to support future loan facilities and borrowing;
- Future proof our homes to make them more sustainable, facilitating reduced CO2 emissions and alleviation of fuel poverty;
- To ensure that all homes maintained meet the ‘Decent Homes Standard’ as a minimum;
- To ensure our assets meet the current and future needs and aspirations of our customers;
- To provide excellent, customer-focused repairs and maintenance services;
- To ensure adherence to all regulatory, legislative and approved codes of practice in relation to property compliance;
- To ensure value for money in the delivery of services;
- To ensure policies and procedures are appropriate and reflect our commitment to continuous improvement;
- To maximise the use of technology systems to improve efficiency and data analysis, audit and assurance and minimise waste;
- Develop systems to identify, manage and minimise property disrepair;
- Property Services Compliance and Assets merging with Choice Services will bring all property compliance areas within a single directorate and allow for closer co-ordination between risk assessment and planned works whilst striving to maintain and improve communication with the Area Management teams within Tenant & Client Services; and
- Implement an inspection regime using Housing Health and Safety Rating methodology.

To provide an excellent, customer-focused repairs and maintenance services.



#1



# Strategic Priority #1

## Great Homes

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We recognise the impact that living in a good quality home has on our customer's everyday lives. We will therefore continue to deliver significant capital investment to our existing stock to ensure the properties comply as a minimum, with the Decent Homes Standard, Building Regulations and Choice specifications.

### Planned Maintenance

Over the next three years, we aim to invest circa £30 million in planned maintenance and related projects in our existing stock and a further £20 million in the stock transferred from Victoria Housing Estates (VHE) in 2020. This will be undertaken in the context of our detailed 30-year financial investment plan.

To ensure we maintain Great Homes, our annual stock condition survey programme will provide us with the vital information to prioritise planned maintenance projects. Each year we complete a 20% cycle of stock condition surveys of the entire asset base. Each survey details the condition of individual assets and components within our properties and identifies and prioritises issues to be addressed. The survey information is used to produce life cycle costing reports that prioritise our planned maintenance projects based on anticipated lifecycles and the actual condition of our properties. This enables us to provide great homes that are consistently compliant with, or exceed the Decent Homes Standard.

We set lifecycle profiles in line with good practice in the sector. Our annual planned maintenance budget is set according to the stock condition data and in consultation with Tenant and Client Services staff. As part of the Stock Condition Survey, we record the actual condition and can adjust lifecycles to reflect under performance or over performance of the asset.

Examples of lifecycles that we model for replacement are:

Attribute \ Component	Lifecycle (Yrs)
Domestic Bathroom Suite	30
Domestic Kitchen	18
Domestic Gas Boiler	15
Dwelling Entrance Door	30
Roof Covering (Slate/Tiles)	50
UPVC Windows	40


We invest in our assets using a priority-managed methodology, which includes consultation with Tenant & Client Services through project appraisals, repairs data analysis, risk assessment and consultation with specialist service providers. We hold detailed records on the lifecycle of the components within our homes and balance this with physical stock condition surveys to assess the requirement for replacement or improvement.

Annually we balance the requirements of improving assets, replacing building components at the end of their lifecycle, compliance requirements and ad-hoc requests via project appraisals to create the annual Planned Maintenance Programme (PMP).



Prior to commencing any PMP project, we will consider if the existing component and attribute life cycle targets have been achieved. If not, we will consider any changes or enhancements to specifications that are required, to ensure that components last the anticipated lifecycle. Investment will also look to deliver improved VFM in future proofing our homes such as aligning works or projects with additional work streams to reduce long term costs. For example, increasing the specification now, rather than having to replace these components earlier than expected in the future.

We have identified a number of significant projects for investment over the next three years including £4m in Fire safety works and £30m in investment in planned maintenance in our existing stock, over and above day to day maintenance.



All maintenance is undertaken to defined service levels and continually monitored against budgets, contractual standards and tenant satisfaction.

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## Response Maintenance

As well as providing a robust investment programme to our stock via the Planned Maintenance Programme, we also manage a comprehensive response maintenance service. Providing response maintenance services is the process of repairing assets to the desired operating conditions after breakdown, damage, asset failure or poor performance is observed. We have dedicated services for response maintenance including direct labour through Choice Services, and a range of external service providers. All maintenance is undertaken to defined service levels and continually monitored against budgets, contractual standards and tenant satisfaction.

## Energy & Sustainability

Providing Great Homes is not limited to maintenance or the Planned Maintenance Programme (PMP) in this strategy. Choice also commits to a £250k energy budget within the PMP to carry out enhanced energy projects. These are projects which would not normally be included within our typical planned maintenance works within a specified financial year i.e. these would not include the 'normal' significant expected investment in heating upgrades, fabric improvements and lighting upgrades. Enhanced energy projects include LED upgrades at schemes, more innovative or trial based projects. This includes alternative heating controls and projects based on other drivers aside from lifecycle of attributes such as improving homes with low EPC ratings to help alleviate fuel poverty.

Over the last decade we have demonstrated our commitment to improvements in Energy and Sustainability, with significant investment in new and existing homes, an experienced Energy Management Team in place, and the delivery of substantial financial savings for our customers through various initiatives and projects.

We are aware of our impact on the environment and wider challenges which we will face, such as climate change, and so we commit to continued action in this area and ongoing work with our stakeholders and customers. To support our ambitions we have a separate Energy and Sustainable Development Strategy (2021 – 2024) which provides further context and outlines our approach and targets.

In order to deliver Great Homes and address energy & sustainability we will continue to:

- Provide Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and have set a target to achieve an average energy efficiency rating of 78 by 2024, on a path towards an average rating of 80 by 2030. We have also committed to investing £250,000 on enhanced energy projects by 2024.
- Develop some of the most energy efficient homes on the Island of Ireland. We will continue to work with stakeholders and develop homes which will facilitate low energy costs and reduced environmental impact for our tenants, within the context of a 2050 net zero carbon target.

Choice commits to a £250k energy budget within the PMP to carry out enhanced energy projects.

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#2





# Strategic Priority #2

## Great Services

The provision of great asset management services is a prerequisite to comply with our mission ‘to enrich lives through great homes, services and communities’ and deliver on our vision ‘to be recognised as the leading Housing Association group in Northern Ireland’.

Choice Housing has legal/regulatory obligations and a common law duty of care to our customers, staff, visitors and contractors to ensure our properties are safe, meet lettable standards and that all building components meet legislative and regulatory standards and Approved Codes of Practice. Additionally planned preventative cyclical maintenance reduces the likelihood of component failure or inefficient operation and the associated adverse impacts on customers. It also reduces response maintenance costs and maximises the service life of components.

Choice recognises its responsibilities and obligations for property compliance and considers this to be a critical function. Controls in place include:

- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for all key areas of property compliance: including gas safety, electrical safety, fire safety, lift safety and water hygiene;
- Accurate and appropriate data capture and management;
- Agreed levels of responsibility, oversight and reporting;
- External Assessors and audit;
- Suitably skilled and qualified staff and contractors;
- Appropriate contractor management;
- Contingency planning;
- Tenant information and awareness.

### Current cyclical maintenance programmes are in place for the following:

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1.  | Annual Gas and Oil Boiler Servicing  |
| 2.  | Maintenance of fire extinguishers, fire alarms, emergency lighting, disabled refuse systems and smoke extraction systems |
| 3.  | Periodic Electrical Testing of fixed wiring (plan in place to move to a maximum interval of 5 years)                     |
| 4.  | Portable appliance testing   |
| 5.  | Lift and hoist maintenance   |
| 6.  | Smoke Alarm and Carbon Monoxide Detector servicing (annual – with boiler service)  |
| 7.  | Mechanical ventilation systems and air conditioning systems  |
| 8.  | Renewables including heat pumps, solar PV, solar thermal and rainwater recovery  |
| 9.  | Generators   |
| 10. | Water booster sets   |
| 11. | Sewage pumping systems   |
| 12. | Grounds maintenance  |
| 13. | Water hygiene  |
| 14. | Fall arrest systems  |
| 15. | Pest control   |
| 16. | CCTV   |
| 17. | Wardencall   |
| 18. | Laundry equipment  |
| 19. | Automatic doors/gates  |

With regard to current Risk Assessment Programmes, we undertake the following in accordance with good industry practice:

1. Fire Risk Assessment
2. Legionella Risk Assessment

Inspection regimes are also in place for the above and include:

1. Weekly/monthly inspection of block accommodation
2. Annual detailed inspection of block accommodation
3. Corgi Audit of gas contractor performance (5% of completed annual services)
4. 100% post inspection of fire safety and legionella

## Fire Safety

Choice is committed to applying the highest standards of fire safety management and statutory compliance across its estate. As a minimum we shall ensure our legal duties and obligations around fire safety are fully discharged and meaningfully engage with our various stakeholders for the betterment of fire safety standards.

We will provide bespoke fire safety training to our employees to ensure they are suitably equipped to help mitigate fire risk. Additionally we will engage with our tenants to raise fire safety awareness and help them to protect themselves from the effects of fire. We will focus on fire prevention as the principal control and ensure our buildings are designed and maintained to the highest fire safety design standards.

We will cooperate with regulatory bodies, especially the NIFRS, and work to develop a positive culture around fire safety.



We will work to develop fire safety throughout Choice, both in our built assets and staff and customer awareness.



## Energy

In relation to the Energy services that we provide, we will continue to undertake the following:

- Raise awareness of energy and environmental matters, and embed sustainability within our organisation. Our Energy Management Team regularly provides support and advice to colleagues throughout our organisation and will aim to provide specific and relevant training each year.
- Raise awareness of the impact that fuel poverty has on households and we will seek to alleviate fuel poverty for our tenants, through continued energy efficiency improvements, and advice and support. Each year we will review the information provided through our literature and on our website, and we will also update our tenants' energy booklet during this strategy term.
- Take opportunities to procure our energy costs effectively each year and engage with suppliers to identify any opportunities to reduce energy costs.
- Innovate - Choice have repeatedly demonstrated our proactive and innovative approach to energy management over the last decade, partaking in various research projects with partner organisations. We will continue to work with partner organisations such as universities, and we will review technologies and financial models each year to identify future opportunities.



Raise awareness of the impact that fuel poverty has on households and we will seek to alleviate fuel poverty for our tenants, through continued energy efficiency improvements, and advice and support.

#3



# Strategic Priority #3 Great Communities

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There are a number of key areas where this Asset Management Strategy will help in supporting and strengthening our communities.

## Safety

First and foremost Choice will make sure that our assets are safe. We will ensure that our dwellings meet lettable standards and that all building components meet legislative and regulatory requirements and Approved Codes of Practice. We will do this by having in place robust planned preventative maintenance programmes and ensure that our response maintenance service prioritises safety issues and takes account of the needs of individual customers.

We will continue to invest in security services, CCTV and access control systems to deter Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and assist in effective management. In addition, we will ensure that new developments are 'Secure by Design' and that we proactively design-in security measures to address ASB.

## Voids

We will minimise the length of time that properties are unoccupied due to remedial works required. We commit to ensuring that Choice Housing has efficient and cost effective processes in place that will minimise the void period and the loss of rental income, and to maximise the use of our stock.

Void works include works required to make the property fit for in-coming residents and overdue planned maintenance refused by the previous tenant as well as statutory testing of gas and electrical systems. Work to void properties is carried out in accordance with the Voids Letting standard, agreed with the Tenant's Forum. This standard ensures that homes are fit for purpose and Decent Homes compliant for tenants at the of start their tenancy.

We will deliver by:

- Minimising the length of time a property is vacant before reletting through effective operational policies and procedures. With the exception of major void works projects, our target is to have all works necessary to ensure occupation, completed within 3 weeks of the end of the tenancy.
- Consider re-modelling of unlettable stock. Where a property is due for remodelling or a significant investment, we may temporarily delay the works to ensure that they are included as part of any wider planned maintenance or refurbishment programme including using void properties for decant or demonstration purposes.
- Ensuring the Group's properties are allocated to a consistently high lettable standard.
- Setting clear service standards in relation to void properties.

## Adaptations

Choice recognise that enabling our Tenants to remain in their homes for as long as possible, helps our communities. We will continue to provide an adaptations service in association with NIHE and Health Trusts to enable residents to continue to live independently in their homes, have a positive effect on their well-being and improve their quality of life.

We will continue to carry out essential adaptations to meet the needs of the increasing number of tenants and household members with disabilities or sensory impairments.



Adapted properties are recorded in our asset management database, so that these properties can be re-let, where possible, to households with similar needs.

Our new homes are built to the Lifetime Homes Standard allowing simpler, cost effective adaptations to meet changing tenant needs during their tenancy. In addition a proportion of the new homes are built to full wheelchair standard.

## Tenant Engagement

Engagement with Tenants is fundamental to the delivery of a high quality service that meets the needs and expectations of Tenants and to ensure we deliver on our strategic priorities of Great Homes, Great Services, Great Communities and Great Delivery.

We will continue to develop and improve by:

- Liaison with members of the Tenants Forum.
- Enabling Tenants to interact with the Choice Services Centre in a way that best suits them.
- Taking feedback from Tenants following the completion of works.
- Identifying issues specific to Tenants.
- Property Services Officers dealing with technical issues identified by Tenants and monitoring work undertaken by contractors.
- The appointment of a Tenant Liaison Officer for Planned Maintenance Projects.
- Provide good practice \ advice to Tenants on our website.
- Support and participate in an annual Energy Week.
- Continue with the development of the Tenants Portal to allow Tenants to report and manage their repairs.

## Sustainability

Choice will ensure that our assets are managed for our customers and their communities in a sustainable manner. We will do this by:

- Having challenging targets on our carbon emissions within our Energy and Sustainable Development Strategy and reporting on them annually.
- We will ensure that legal compliance is a minimum standard and we aim to demonstrate best practice in terms of our energy and environmental management. We will carry out at least three environmental management and sustainability initiatives each year in areas such as ecology, waste reduction or water etc.
- We will continue to show leadership to our sector and beyond, by working with our sector representatives, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, other Housing Associations, the energy industry, and relevant Government Departments. We will continue to work with stakeholders to support an annual Northern Ireland Energy Week which will be promoted to all our customers.

With direct energy costs in the region of £1.5million each year, we are acutely aware of our responsibility to manage our energy consumption effectively. Our Energy Management Team will continue to work with colleagues and partner organisations, with a target of reducing our energy use by 3% by 2024.

## Open Spaces

Our property portfolio includes a range of open spaces. We will ensure that such areas are well maintained via a cost effective Grounds Maintenance contract and inspection regime. We will ensure that these spaces add to the sense of community and we will work with communities to ensure that they are functional. We will also endeavour to improve bio-diversity within such areas, over the term of this strategy.

## VHE

The period covered by this strategy also sees the addition of the former Victoria Housing Estates stock and our programme of investment of over £25 million in both the assets and the communities. As we welcome these new Tenants to Choice, we will be ensuring that works are undertaken in a sustainable way that does not damage the existing communities that have built up over the years.

## Disposals

During the life of this strategy we will identify assets in the portfolio that may be uneconomic to maintain or invest in. In such circumstances, we will consider all options for their future and where appropriate, disposal. Should such an option be identified, it will require approval by the Senior Management Team and decisions will take account of any impact on the local community and housing need in the area.

Engagement with Tenants is fundamental to the delivery of a high quality service that meets the needs and expectations of Tenants and to ensure we deliver on our strategic priorities of Great Homes, Great Services, Great Communities and Great Delivery.





#4



# Strategic Priority #4

## Great Delivery

The delivery of this strategy is the responsibility of the newly formed Asset Services Directorate, working closely with colleagues across the Choice Group, suppliers, contractors, consultants and other stakeholders.

We will deliver services in the following ways:

Service	Delivery Mechanism
Project Management	In-house professional team
Specialist Design and Management Services	Consultants via a Consultants Framework
Energy & Sustainability	In-house professional team
Response Maintenance	MTC contractors (including Choice Services)
Compliance Services	MTC contractors (including Choice Services) and specialist contractors
Planned Maintenance Projects \ Annual PMP	MTC contractors (including Choice Services) and select list Tenders
Adaptations	MTC contractors (including Choice Services) and select list Tenders
Voids	MTC contractors (including Choice Services)

Services will be delivered in a balance of in-house and external resources. The performance of all Consultants and Contractors will be monitored against contractual requirements. When contracts are procured, we will ensure that contractual requirements reflect the best working practices in the sector. We will ensure that all services are benchmarked and costs reviewed annually.

### Planned Maintenance Delivery

The delivery of the PMP projects is managed by our professional team who are allocated specific projects to plan and deliver within the financial year. There are currently three main methods of delivering the projects:

1. Projects with single component replacement can be awarded to our pre-approved Measured Term Contract contractors. Our internal management team act as Project Manager

ensuring that CDM Regulations and all statutory requirements are in place and that all work are delivered within budget and timescale.

2. Specific in-house projects designed and managed by our internal professional team. The team will undertake all the design work and project manage the works through to completion. There will be a full tender exercise for larger projects in line with the public procurement regulations.
3. Complex projects, made up of Multiple Element Improvement works will be developed into a project brief. This is then awarded to a consultant led integrated design team to deliver the project. Larger projects will be tendered in line with relevant public procurement regulations. Our internal team will project manage ensuring that CDM Regulations and all statutory requirements are in place and that all works are delivered within budget and timescale.

## Response Maintenance Delivery

Our Services Centre receives response maintenance requests by email, telephone call and via our Tenants Portal. Work is then assigned to one of our Measured Term Maintenance (MTC) or specialist contractors and / or to relevant Choice Services staff for inspection.

**Contractors work to detailed service standards on the following priorities:**

Category	Response SLA
Immediate	Commenced immediately and no later than 2 hours and completed or made safe within 4 hours.
Emergency	Complete or make safe within 24 hours.
Urgent	Commence and complete within 4 working days.
Routine	Commence and complete within 28 calendar days.

In delivery of an excellent response maintenance service we will take account of particular needs or vulnerabilities of customers

Where pre-inspection by Choice staff is required, staff are expected to contact the Tenant within one working day to arrange a suitable appointment.

Each MTC contractor is monitored against detailed contractual requirements and KPIs and are formally reported monthly.

**Typical definitions for each category of response maintenance are as follows:**

Category	Definition
Immediate	Defects immediately affecting the safety, security or health of the tenant, public or property.
Emergency	Defects affecting the safety, security or health of the tenant, public or property or where the defect is likely to cause major inconvenience.
Urgent	Defects causing loss of facility to the tenant or likely to cause further deterioration to the structure, fabric, fittings, fixtures or services to the building.
Routine	Defects which can be deferred without serious inconvenience to the tenant or does not present a danger but should not wait for a planned programme of work.

In delivery of an excellent response maintenance service we will:

- Provide a professional service from the receipt of a request through to the completion of the work;
- Enable customers to be able to report repairs with ease;
- Provide a 24/7 service for emergency repairs;
- Try to identify the issue using scripting of calls to minimise pre-inspection;
- Take account of particular needs or vulnerabilities of customers;
- Maximise first time fix rates and minimise inconvenience to customers;
- Exceed the statutory response maintenance performance targets;
- Monitor the number of response maintenance requests per call category
- Analyse data to inform and target planned and cyclical maintenance; and
- Ensure value for money.

## Energy and Sustainability Services Delivery

In order to deliver on our energy and sustainability targets across our objectives, we will continue to maintain a commitment to ensure that adequate resources are in place within our Energy Management Team, and across the organisation, and to ensure that staff are adequately resourced and trained.

Each year we will create an annual working plan to identify when our targets will be met throughout the year, with appropriate internal and external reporting to be carried out. We recognise the changing environment around energy and sustainability, with our Energy and Sustainable

Development Strategy intended to provide a framework for continued improvement.

We will therefore seek to work with Government Departments and partner organisations on areas such as the new Northern Ireland Energy Strategy, in order to clarify future direction and identify opportunities to develop further and deliver benefits for our customers.

## Audit & Review of Delivery

Audit and review of services provided is essential to ensure the great delivery of safe dwellings, value for money, adherence to policies and procedures and to prevent poor working practices or potential fraud.

Over the course of this strategy, audit and review will occur as follows:

- Ensure that proper levels of authority are in place for the issuing and authorisation of orders to contractors.
- Independent audit by external auditors.
- Monitoring of works undertaken by Contractors by Property Services Officers \ Asset Services team members.
- Formally benchmark overall stock, response, planned and void maintenance costs on an annual basis to ensure that we are obtaining value for money and identify areas for improvement.
- Tenant feedback.
- Technical review by in-house team members, including PMP asset reviews of component failure.
- Energy team feedback.
- Increased audits of works invoiced by contractors.

In addition we will maintain an up to date risk map and register relating to services provided via this strategy and manage all risks proactively.

# Strategic KPI's

In the next three years we will focus on:

STRATEGIC GOAL - <b>GREAT HOMES</b>	
SPECIFIC ASSET MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE	TARGET
Planned Maintenance Programme (PMP) Budget	Deliver 100% of agreed Planned Maintenance Programme Budget annually.
VHE stock refurbishment	100% of transferred units to be refurbished, completed by May 2024.
Stock Condition Surveys	Deliver 20% stock condition surveys on an annual basis.
Support enhanced energy projects	A minimum of £250k of enhanced projects over the three year term.
Response repairs completion	90% of response repairs completed within contract service levels.
Sustainability and Energy Strategy	Develop and implement a new 3 year strategy.
Energy efficient and sustainable Homes	Provide EPCs and use as a tool to identify improvement. Target to improve our average EPC rating to 78 by year 3 (currently 76).



## STRATEGIC GOAL - **GREAT SERVICES**

SPECIFIC ASSET MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE	TARGET
<b>Safe Homes</b>	Achieve 100% compliance of service standards for Fire Risk Assessments, Gas Servicing, Legionella, Asbestos Management, Electrical Safety and Lift Servicing.
<b>Fire Risk Assessments</b>	Deliver 100% of Fire Risk Assessments to programme.
<b>Fire Risk Assessment remedial works</b>	Ensure programmes of remedial works are up to date and appropriately programmed.
<b>Asset Sustainability</b>	Maintain up to date, long term stock investment profiles that are reviewed annually and are sustainable.
<b>Fuel Poverty</b>	Provide appropriate regular advice and support to tenants.
<b>Customer Service</b>	Review and improve mechanisms for measuring and reviewing customer service across all services offered and contractors utilised.

## STRATEGIC GOAL - **GREAT COMMUNITIES**

SPECIFIC ASSET MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE	TARGET						
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	Ensure 100% compliance with the Choice Group policies for all compliance related matters.						
<b>Voids</b>	<p>The average period for the turnaround of a lettable void to be less than:</p> <table> <tr> <td>2021/22</td><td>63 days</td></tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td><td>56 days</td></tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td><td>49 days</td></tr> </table>	2021/22	63 days	2022/23	56 days	2023/24	49 days
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2023/24	49 days						
<b>Tenant Engagement</b>	Ensure that customers have a full ability to interact digitally on Asset matters by March 2022.						
<b>Environmental and Sustainability Community Initiatives</b>	A minimum of three environmental and sustainability community initiatives per annum.						
<b>Scheme Energy Usage</b>	Reduce our energy usage by 3% by 2024.						
<b>Trading Subsidiaries &amp; Social Purpose</b>	Trading subsidiaries to return a fair and reasonable sum on an annual basis that is reinvested in communities.						
<b>Sustainability</b>	Develop resourcing and support for Group wide sustainability matters.						

## STRATEGIC GOAL - **GREAT DELIVERY**

### SPECIFIC ASSET MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE

### TARGET

#### **Delivery Excellence**

Average target completion for response repairs to be above 90%

#### **Deliver VFM**

Formally benchmark stock, response, planned and void maintenance costs on an annual basis to ensure that we are obtaining value for money

#### **Use of Data**

To proactively use data to improve the overall delivery of asset management services

#### **Digital enabled services**

Use existing systems functionality and capabilities to maximise usage of electronic exchanges with our customers and contractors.

#### **Risks managed**

Maintain an up to date risk map and manage risks proactively



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