



Strategic Plan

2018-2023

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If you would like to know more about Norwich Housing Society or indeed apply to live in one of our properties, please contact:

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Foreword

Norwich Housing Society is as relevant today as it was in the 1930s, when Canon Lanchester set about addressing the plight of working class people in his Parish, by buying homes fit for families, and letting them at social rents. There have been many changes in levels of funding for local authorities, many government directives such as reducing rents by 1% over a four year period, and a changed and unwieldy benefit system, which many find hard to access. All this makes the lives of us and our tenants difficult, but we do our best to guide and help them where necessary, while also providing them with homes at social rents. We are striving not only to maintain our current housing stock but also to develop new schemes within the Norwich area. Our core business is providing independent living with support for the older person, as we believe we have the skills to address this area more effectively, and our selection process for those wishing to come to us is based upon clear criteria.

In 2012 when I was invited to join the Board of Management of Norwich Housing Society, which also manages the Stuart Court Memorial Trust, I had no idea what was ahead, but I soon came to realise just how significant both Charities were, not only because of the day-to-day work we do, but because our various schemes provide good quality, well maintained stock, while encouraging independent living with support. Support for tenants comes from the three Scheme Managers, a pull cord system for after-hours assistance and diligent office staff who work hard to respond to requests as swiftly as possible. Many of our schemes have common rooms, which makes it possible for those who wish to socialise to participate in various activities, while not disturbing others who

do not wish to be involved. It is this unobtrusive support which makes people feel secure and which in turn makes for a happy relaxed community. Although we do not supply care we do care, about our tenants by helping where possible to guide them and their families, to the services which are available to them.

I am fortunate as I have a Board composed of ten very well qualified members, with the most amazing range of skills, all of whom are volunteers but give their time and talents willingly. Our Model Rules mean we serve for three periods of three years, before being obliged to stand down, although people can reapply after a one year's absence should they so wish to do so. This makes for clearer thinking, more diligence while serving and it also encourages us to seek fresh people to revitalise what we do and the way we approach the constantly changing needs and legislation. We have a small dedicated staff ably led by our CEO, who has been in post since 2014. He encourages all the staff to develop new skills and learn the work of others in the team, so that there is a breadth of shared knowledge which helps for continuity in the workplace when someone is sick, out of the office, or moves on.

These are complex times for Societies like ours, who wish to provide adequate housing for those who need to rent as they cannot afford to buy. It is this which motivates us to work hard against considerable odds to achieve the same.

Carol A. Sangster,

Board Chairman, April 2018.



About Norwich Housing Society

Canon Charles Lanchester, who was Vicar of St Barnabas, Norwich for more than half a century, formed Norwich Housing Society in 1934. His aim was to provide decent housing for his poorer parishioners, many of whom were living in poverty in unsuitable overcrowded lodgings, often in squalor.

By 1969, there were 151 properties and over the next decade much work was done to improve their condition. In the 1980s the Society began to expand further and by 1990 the housing stock had increased to 185. In 2018, Leander Court, the Society's latest flagship development in Eaton, was officially opened, bringing the total to 317.

Still maintaining our predecessor's aims and aspirations, Norwich Housing Society seeks to provide good quality, affordable housing for older people. We are a small and distinctive housing association, allowing us to get to know our tenants individually and respond to their needs accordingly. We also administer the Stuart Court Memorial Charity, a set of Alms-Houses in Recorder Road, Norwich, which celebrated its centenary in 2015.

Our flats are mainly one-bedroom and are connected to the Community Alarm System.

They are set on eleven small developments within Norwich surrounded by mature, well-tended gardens which provide a calm and attractive environment in which to live.

We are not a care provider, but endeavour to ensure that we supply the facilities and support to enable our tenants to live independently while benefiting from a friendly and caring community.

Our Scheme Managers offer various levels of support designed to meet each tenant's particular requirements and to react quickly to any changes.

We are very proud of what Canon Lanchester established over eighty years ago; the standard of our accommodation, the additional facilities that we provide and the compassionate back-up offered by our Scheme Managers. The Board of Management aims to continue this work, taking opportunities, sharing good practice and ensuring that Norwich Housing Society is at the forefront of social housing in Greater Norwich.

Our Vision

To provide decent housing at a social rent

This aspiration set by our founder in 1934 remains true today. The shortage of decent affordable housing is constantly in the public eye and under scrutiny. With record numbers of homeless people and ever more challenging requirements to get on to the housing ladder, social housing has a large part to play in

our society in 2018. Norwich Housing Society will work with local authorities, The National Housing Federation, government agencies and other local organisations to ensure that we are doing all we can to provide decent and affordable housing for our tenants.



Our Mission

Independent living with support

Again, this aspiration dates back to our founder in 1934. Norwich Housing Society's mission is to:

- Ensure that our current property stock is adequately and suitably maintained to high standards
- Provide safe, secure and happy communities for our tenants
- Ensure that our communication with tenants is timely, effective and easy to understand

- Explore potential development opportunities so that we can gently expand our property stock and reach out to more people
- Manage our finances prudently so that we may generate appropriate surpluses to reinvest into our property stock
- Work with partner organisations to offer the best possible social housing service within Greater Norwich



Governance

Norwich Housing Society is a registered social landlord and company with charity status. We adopted the National Housing Federation Model Rules 2011. A small professional staff administers the Society and is overseen by a Management Board, comprising of volunteers with particular interests and skills relevant to the activities of a small housing association.

Norwich Housing Society has a strong governance structure. Four sub-committees - Property, Operations, Finance and Governance support our Management Board. We have established and regularly reviewed risk management, financial and business planning frameworks to guide and inform our daily work.

Our values

Our values are core to achieving success

- Being Professional
- Being Progressive
- Being Transparent
- Being Caring and Fair



Our Objectives

Our Objectives for Norwich Housing Society for the next five years are as follows:



- To manage and improve our housing stock, minimising voids and redeveloping or disposing of those that no longer meet our tenants' needs
- To review our tenant base to reflect changing social and community needs
- To establish comprehensive use of the Pyramid Property Management Database, so that our property records are adequately maintained, always up to date and that data can be used to inform business decisions
- To remain a small, distinctive and individual social housing provider, but at the same time establishing and being at the forefront of a local network of housing providers, to monitor and adapt to market trends



- To ensure that our finances are managed prudently and robustly with sufficient reserves to withstand future economic challenges
- To ensure that we collect all rent and service charge income due, whilst also supporting our most vulnerable residents to sustain their tenancies
- To set an annual operational budget which creates an appropriate surplus to enable reinvestment into our current housing stock
- To explore possible development opportunities, working with appropriate partner organisations and ensure that our loan portfolio can deliver competitive funding for future projects



- To raise the profile of Norwich Housing Society within Greater Norwich, thus ensuring that we maintain healthy numbers of tenant applications
- To continue to meet regularly with our tenants and Scheme Managers, to ensure that we understand their requirements such that the current properties and future developments reflect current and future needs
- To review our marketing and communication, both internally and externally, introducing a new website, embracing social media, and further developing our Newsletter to tenants



- To be a good and fair employer, valuing our staff and the work which they do, conducting annual appraisals and encouraging professional development
- To continually review our systems of governance, ensuring compliance with statutory bodies and regularly updating our Risk Matrix and Business Plan
- To establish an environmental policy to reduce our carbon footprint and operate as sustainably as possible