



catalyst

Homes People Love

Catalyst Strategy and Plan 2020–2023 (2021 refresh)

We are Catalyst

We are one of the UK's leading housing associations – a member of the G15 group, with 37,000 homes and 70,000 customers in London and the Home Counties.

We are proud of our heritage and can trace the roots of Catalyst back to the 1920s in Kensington.

A century later, much has changed, but the requirement for homes for those in need is just as great.

In the latest chapter of our history Aldwyck Housing Group joined us in 2019 creating a strong and ambitious new business, and in 2021 we entered into an exciting new partnership with Rosebery Housing Association.

A 2020 Sunday Times Top 100 Best Companies to Work For and SHIFT Gold Sustainable Housing Provider, we're multi award winners for our development, regeneration and the services we provide in our communities.

Before we produced our post-merger plans or fixed our targets we had to be clear about the identity of new Catalyst.

What should our enduring purpose be?

How would we translate the objectives of our merger into a vision for the organisation?

Only once that was clear could we decide what our short, medium and long term objectives should be.

Through an extensive and collaborative process with our customers, our stakeholders and our colleagues we defined the new purpose, vision and values for the new Catalyst.



Our homes

Affordable
2,466



Social rent
17,859



3,420
Leasehold



Shared
ownership **4,851**



Shared equity
Help
to Buy **1,535**



Supported, care and housing
for older people



1,907



687

Key workers and
student housing

Managed
for others

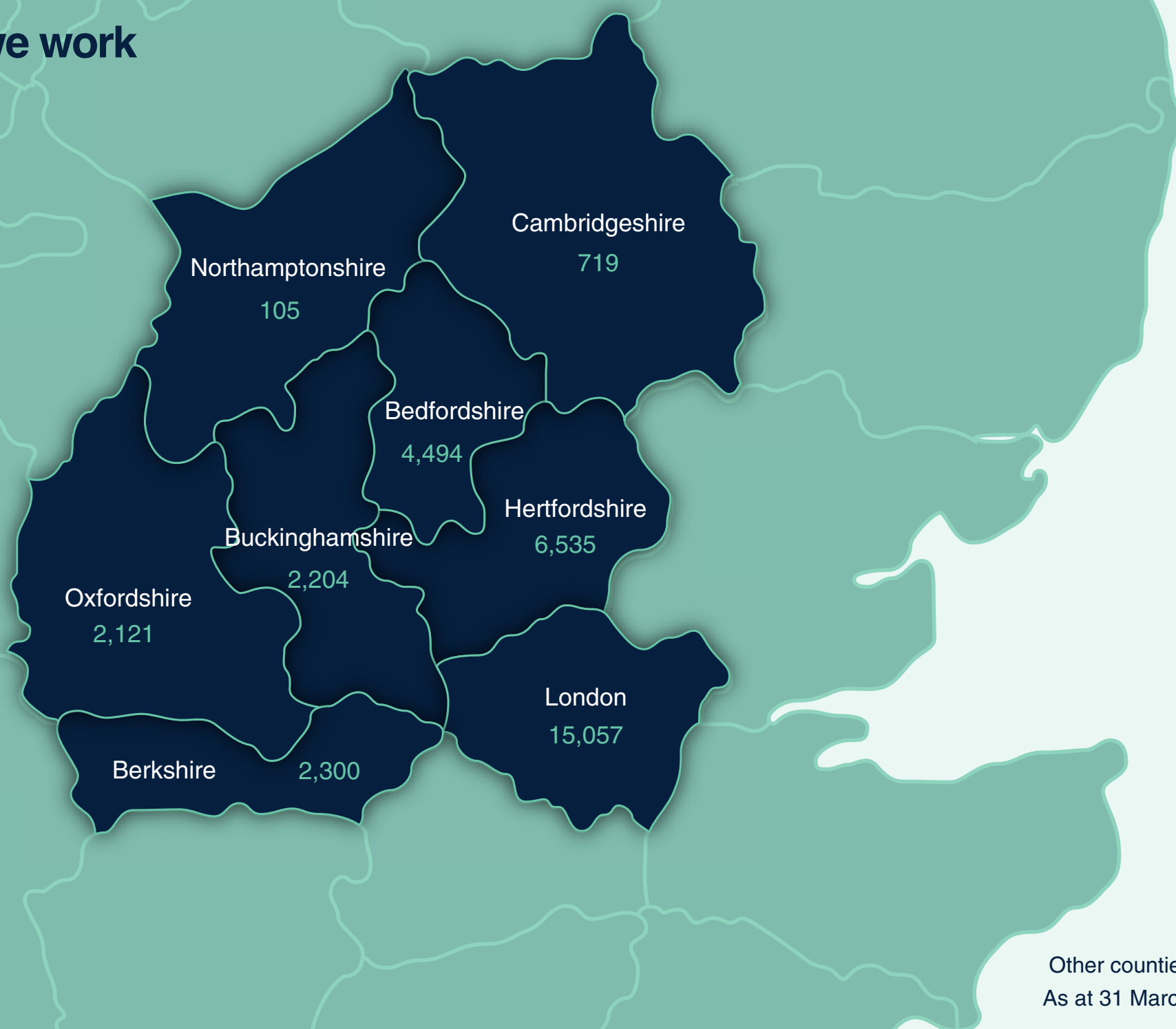
602

403

Intermediate
and market rent

As at 31 March 2021

Where we work



Other counties 195.
As at 31 March 2021

Our purpose – homes people love

What does it mean to love your home? It's more than a roof over your head. It's more than being warm and dry. It's more than feeling comfortable.

It's more than a well-designed space made with quality materials. It's more than a location you like and surroundings that are well looked after.

It's more than feeling safe. It's more than renting, buying or sharing. It's more than private or social. It's more than someone responding when you have a problem. It's more, even, than someone solving that problem for you quickly.

It's more than a sense of community. It's more than family and friends coming over. It's more than getting value for your money. It's more than feeling like your landlord is on your side.

It's more than the smell of toast. It's more than getting to your front door after a tough day. It's more than a place to call your own. Loving where you live is more than these, because it's all of these.

And more. It's what it means to you.

This is what drives us at Catalyst. We're not just about housing, we're about homes.

Homes people love.



Our vision – to earn and keep your trust

We will only succeed as an organisation by earning and keeping the trust of our customers, colleagues and partners. Trust is never accidental. The continuous commitment and hard work needed to earn and keep trust will never stop.

Our values

Deliver on promises

We do what we say we're going to do,
when we say we're going to do it

We never mislead

We do the right thing



Be accountable

We do not hide from our responsibilities,
as individuals or as a business

We acknowledge our mistakes – and fix them

We measure and report on our impact in open, relevant ways



Give respect

We treat people as they want to be treated

We value and actively encourage diversity
and inclusion

We treasure the planet



Show kindness

We take time to understand the
person as well as the problem

We share in people's happiness
– and sadness



Designing our strategy

In designing our strategy, we considered what we believe are the fundamentals of a great organisation, and what we want to strive for, as well as what we must protect during our journey.

Our strategy makes sure we can navigate and thrive in the complex external and housing sector environment and be a customer-centred, modern, competitive, disciplined and successful organisation.

We have identified five objectives for the next three years that form the basis of our strategy. They all clearly contribute to our purpose and vision, and our values will guide how we approach everything that we do.

Our strategy was finalised during the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of writing the crisis is ongoing, and our way of working has undoubtedly changed for ever. While 'how' we deliver our plans may be different, we are confident that 'what' we stand for and the objectives and priorities set out in this strategy remain true.

We are confident that our strategy is aligned to and will respond effectively to the emerging legislation and regulation set out in The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper published in 2020.



Our objectives – Get closer to customers and deliver great services

Unapologetically our first objective – this is our commitment to putting customers and customer experience at the centre of what we do – creating homes people love and earning and keeping the trust of our customers. We will strengthen our relationship with our customers, improve and modernise our services and give customers a clear and effective voice.

Our priorities:

Service delivery

We will deliver services which are efficient and designed to always meet our customers' needs. We'll improve customer satisfaction in our core service areas of repairs, complaints, estate services and anti-social behaviour and review our offer to our shared ownership customers.

We'll also review our independent living services, which provide invaluable support to some of our most vulnerable customers, and consider opportunities to grow our local provision.

Through our customer experience programmes Together and Hello, we will redesign our operating model and make our services easier to use, with digital services which put the customer in control and offer a far greater level of convenience. We'll make our face-to-face services accessible and available to provide a local human touch.

Our processes will be re-designed from the outside-in, starting with customers' requirements.

Service behaviours

Learning from our experience and the outside world, we'll introduce and embed consistent service promises and behaviours for our colleagues, and our contractors.

There will be greater emphasis on customer experience training for our teams and expected service behaviours will form part of our recruitment and reward and recognition programmes.

Customer insight

From our customer insight we will understand and predict our customers' needs and preferences. We'll use this to target our services and our community investment activity and identify opportunities to improve and to innovate. We will understand where our services are failing and address the problems.

Customer engagement

Through our customer engagement and community investment activities, we will develop a close relationship with our customers, creating new ways for them to connect with us, and us with them. We will co-design the services of the future with our customers and we'll make sure their voice is clearly heard across Catalyst and that they can hold us to account.




Our 2023 targets:

82% 
of customers who love their homes

74% 
of customers trust us


77%
Customer satisfaction (rented)

30% 
increase in engaged customers


66%
Customer satisfaction (shared owners)

Our objectives – Build more quality homes

We are committed to building more homes – and increasing the proportion of affordable rented homes we build. But it's not just about numbers – over the life of this strategy we plan to forge a reputation for quality and safety without compromise. We'll set high standards of design, specification and construction and make sure they are delivered.

Our expertise in estate regeneration, community investment and exemplar mixed tenure communities will see us develop neighbourhoods people love, filled with homes people love.

Our priorities:

How and where we grow

We'll take a focused and blended approach to growth, targeting our resources to the right acquisition routes. We'll use a mix of land acquisition on the open market and, with trusted private and public-sector partners, longer term strategic land purchase and the regeneration of our own stock.

We will limit bulk purchase of completed homes, including Section 106 deals, to those with contractors we know and trust. In the first year of this plan we'll define our growth strategy – our programme will concentrate on our heartlands in London and the Homes Counties, with specific focus on the Oxford-Cambridge corridor and West and North-West London.

More affordable homes

We plan to increase the proportion of affordable rented homes we build to support our social purpose and respond to the housing crisis. The proportion of our programme developed for market sale will reduce, but this will continue to generate profit to cross-subsidise our affordable homes and create the mixed communities we fundamentally believe in.

Famous for quality

With our customers at the forefront of our thinking we will create and embed stringent design and technical standards to make sure every new Catalyst home meets an uncompromising level of safety and quality. We'll aim for zero defects at handover through rigorous quality control and we will establish an exceptional aftercare service.

Great design

We'll continue to grow our award-winning reputation for placemaking, urban design and regeneration, making a commitment to great design regardless of tenure and thinking beyond the bricks and mortar at the very earliest stage. We'll build homes that are energy efficient and cost effective for our customers to run. Quality of design will be embedded in our decision making with a champion on our Board.



Our 2023 targets:



Our objectives – Safe and sustainable

The national focus on safety, particularly fire safety following the tragic events at Grenfell, and the 2050 net zero carbon target make it clear why safe and sustainable is one of our objectives. But these are not the only, or even the most important, reasons for Catalyst. For our customers to love their homes, and to trust us, those homes must be safe, affordable to run and built and maintained on sustainable principles.

Some of the technical solutions to achieve zero carbon have not yet been invented. Our focus will be in preparing the ground to make sure that we are ready and understand the investment needed. As the position becomes clearer we will adjust our business plans and take a strategic approach to our assets for the long term.

We know that sustainability is about much more than our environmental performance and impact and we want to play our part in safeguarding a sustainable future for our customers, communities and our business.

Our priorities:

Safe homes

We will continue to review our tall buildings and invest in making them safe. We will set clear priorities for remedial work and prepare for the new building safety regulator by developing safety cases. Never again will Catalyst build homes that will later, based on current standards, require remedial work. But it is more than compliance – we will create and maintain a safety culture throughout our organisation,

communicating, engaging, listening to and learning from our customers, our colleagues and best practice.

Developing our data and knowledge

We'll continue to improve the information we hold about our existing homes to make intelligent and informed decisions about our safety and sustainability plans. We'll develop proposals to pilot retrofit zero carbon schemes based on property types common across our portfolio of homes. We'll trial insulation, heating and power solutions capable of being deployed for Catalyst homes at scale.

Setting standards

We'll create and adopt sustainability standards for our new and existing homes which will support our commitment to reach zero carbon by 2050. We recognise the increasing importance of environmental, social and governance criteria to investors. We have adopted the Sustainability Reporting Standard to capture and report on our impact, and are committed to maintaining our Certified Sustainable Housing Label accreditation achieved in 2020.

Expertise and research

We'll develop our in-house skills and capability and gain experience in new technologies. We will sponsor and support research into alternative green energy, including but not limited to the universal replacement of gas boilers. We'll work closely with housing association and energy companies to develop solutions – recognising that what is needed is a sector-wide response to a global issue.

Our 2023 targets:



New homes meeting energy efficiency SAP standards average SAP 88 (EPC B)



Overall property compliance (fire, legionella, asbestos, gas and electrical) 100%

Our objectives – Revolutionise our data and technology

We will unlock the power of our data and new technology to improve our service delivery, make the way we work more efficient, reduce our costs and enhance our decision making and performance. We'll focus first on a strong and secure data and technology infrastructure and use it as a springboard to implement innovative digital services. Customers need to know they can trust us with the information we hold about them and have confidence in our digital solutions.

Our priorities:

Foundations for the future

We'll invest in improving our systems and their resilience and introduce a single set of IT applications and business systems and a new Customer Relationship Management system. We'll refresh our website and introduce digital services for our customers as part of our objective to deliver great service.

Data and digital culture

Greater discipline and ownership in managing our data quality will come first. We'll introduce new and increasingly sophisticated data integrity checks to proactively guard against service failure because of poor data. We'll use our data as a robust single source of the truth and predictive analysis to make decisions, improve our performance and develop future strategy. As well as digital for our customers, we'll adopt a digital culture for our business – streamlining our processes and making us more efficient and able to work in an agile way.

Building Information Modelling (BIM)

We'll develop and execute our plans for digitalising our asset information and introduce BIM to store our records. BIM will give us the insight and tools to more efficiently plan, design, structure and manage our homes. We will use complete comprehensive assessments of the performance of our assets to support financial modelling. We'll introduce a pilot in 2020 before developing a programme to roll out across our portfolio of homes.

Innovative technology for homes and services

After the first year of our strategy we'll explore innovative technology to expand our digital services for our customers and transform the management of our homes.



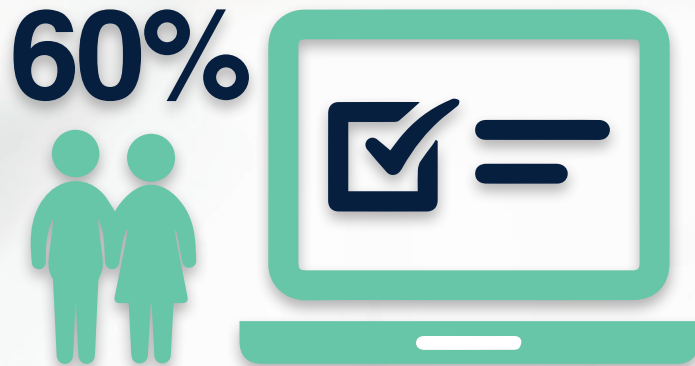
Our 2023 targets:



of customers find us easy to deal with



Progress against technology platform projects



Number of customers registered to use online services



Cyber security maturity

Our objectives – Invest in our people and define our culture

We cannot deliver our strategy without our people. To provide homes people love, we need to develop and foster an organisation where talented, engaged people aspire to work and grow. To provide services with love requires connection, commitment, pride and trust.

Our aim is to build a high-performance culture, driving up our financial and operational results in the interests of our customers.

Our performance focus will ensure that all Catalyst colleagues know what determines success in their role. They will be accountable for their contribution, recognised for their achievement and live our values in everything they do.

Central to our commitment to our people and our culture is our pledge to increase diversity and promote inclusion within our organisation. We are committed to taking robust action and setting and delivering against stretching targets to drive the diversity agenda throughout Catalyst.

Our future ways of working will be blended and agile. We recognise that when and where our people work are enablers for them to do their jobs brilliantly. Our priority is always providing the best possible services for our customers.

Our priorities:

Thriving organisation, thriving individuals, thriving leaders

Our success begins with caring about and paying attention to our people and our culture. Our values matter and we will make them

non-negotiable in every aspect of how we carry out our work. We'll support all our colleagues to achieve their potential regardless of their background and create a strong and consistent leadership ethos.

Growth ready

We'll create a Catalyst that is growth ready and embraces and thrives through change. We'll welcome new ways of working and the opportunities that digital working brings. We'll foster innovation adopting a learning culture and an agile hierarchy where the best placed, not the highest placed person, can lead and make decisions.

A recognised employer of choice and great place to work

We'll develop an attractive employer brand that appeals to a multi-generational working population, establish a compelling employee proposition and respond to the changing nature of work. We'll review our approach to how and where our people work, offering a consistent high-quality employee workplace experience regardless of location.

A culture that enables high performance, growth and opportunity for everyone

In a competitive market we will attract, retain and nurture our talent and skills and develop the diverse workforce of the future. Our learning and development offer will be geared to help us deliver objectives and support individual professional growth. We'll offer a range of early careers opportunities including our comprehensive apprenticeship and graduate programmes.

Our 2023 targets:



Sunday Times
Best Companies
to Work For



696.5
Employee
Engagement
Score



Underpinning our success

Financial capacity and resilience

Our delivery plans and our targets are dependent on our ability to fund them. Our Golden Rules on interest cover, gearing and liquidity are never at risk. We must ensure that we remain financially attractive to lenders, investors and stakeholders, repay debts as they fall due, are able to withstand financial stress and achieve strong financial performance.

Value for money

We'll continue to focus on performance to drive improvement in service delivery and business efficiency, and provide assurance on compliance and risk. Value for money and return on our investments will be central to our decision making – we have a responsibility to our customers to make sure that their rent and service charge money has been well spent.

Our emphasis on value for money ensures our operating margins and our cost per unit metrics are comparable, or better, than our peers.

Our 2019 merger was one of ambition. We will realise that ambition in part by improving the quality of our homes and services, which we'll measure by an increase in customer satisfaction. We'll realise financial savings and efficiencies in the second half of this strategy once integration of our infrastructure is complete.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

To thrive and innovate we know we need diversity of thought, experience and background. We recognise that we have significant work to do before we are a diverse and inclusive organisation at all levels. We are committed to making a purposeful change and we'll be open and transparent about where we are on our journey.

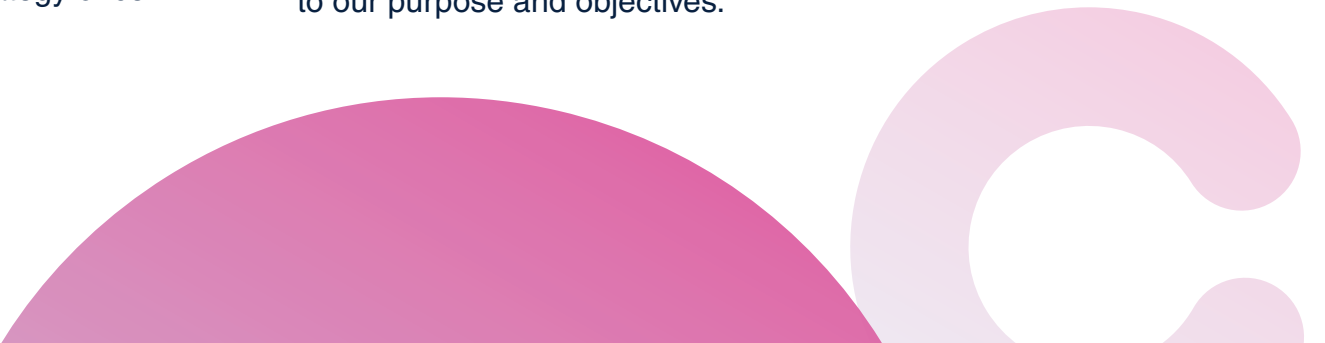
We embrace the role we play in tackling stigma in social housing and will provide services that are truly accessible to meet the diverse needs of our customers.

Excellence in governance and risk management




Both are essential attributes to maintain our corporate health and our ability to achieve our objectives. We'll seek to maintain the highest possible rating from our regulator and take a robust approach to risks in our work and the outside world.

Successful partnerships and reputation



We will work to earn and keep the trust of the partners who are crucial to us maintain and growing our reputation. We'll use our reputation as a leader in the sector as a force for change, to influence policy and innovate in areas that are complementary to our purpose and objectives.



Our delivery plan milestones

	Year 1 2020/21	Year 2 2021/22	Year 3 2022/23
<p>Get closer to customers and deliver great service</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce new service promises • Complete shared ownership review • Launch customer engagement model • Increase customer satisfaction in key areas • Increase diversity of engaged customers • Customer segmentation project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hello: Introduce digital offer for customers • Hello: Introduce text analytics • Develop approach to managing large complex neighbourhoods • Review independent living services • Review customer policies and accountabilities • Conduct internal customer experience survey • Together programme Year 1: Implement service delivery changes and process reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hello: Expand digital offer for customers • Hello: Introduce predictive analysis for proactive intervention • Together Programme Year 2: Implement service delivery changes and process reviews
<p>Build more quality homes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh growth road map • Develop new design standards • Design review checkpoints introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh growth road map • Review aftercare services • New design standards implemented on all new projects • New homes zero carbon plan in place • All new projects meeting BIM Level 2 standards for data capture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh growth road map
<p>Safe and sustainable</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop future repairs model • Review repairs policies • Sustainable new build specification delivered • Partnership delivered with low cost fuel providers with beneficial rates for customers • Secure contracts with green electricity and gas providers for all offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised asset appraisal methodology rolled out • Programme of environmental and community initiatives rolled out • Revised energy management model implemented • Revised communal energy scheme implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrofit pilots delivered • Implement biodiversity and green space action plan • Implement new environmental management model • Implement sustainable transport strategy

Our delivery plan milestones (continued)

	Year 1 2020/21	Year 2 2021/22	Year 3 2022/23
<p>Revolutionise data and technology</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales and Marketing Ecosystem • 3rd Party Multi-Channel Integration • BI Reporting (PowerBI) • Business Analytics • Flexible/Remote Working • Revolutionise Data (Master Data Model) • Launch single core systems (QL and Sun) • Trial repairs tracking system • Introduce BIM digital modelling • Integrate sustainability and asset data across Catalyst 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected Customers (Multichannel) • Social Networks (“Off” Portal) • Process Robotics • Operation Technology Systems • Predictive Analytics • Colleague Portal/App • Customer Portal/App • Launch new Catalyst website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentiment Analysis (Customer Feelings) • Development Integration (Revit, BIM etc.) • Partner-Facing Public APIs • Connected Customers • Smart Homes • Cloud Integrated Ecosystems (SAML compliant)
<p>Invest in our people and define our culture</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define and embed new culture • Leadership and management development programme – behaviours, responsibilities and culture • Launch Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Plan • Integrated performance and talent framework • New pay, reward and recognition offer • Refreshed tailored learning and development offer • Wellness and wellbeing programme • Increased colleague engagement • Design and phase one delivery of workplace programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch and embed new ways of blended working • Embed new culture • Launch and embed leadership and management development programme – behaviours, responsibilities and culture • Evolve and embed integrated performance and talent framework • New pay, reward and recognition offer • Embed and evolve tailored learning and development offer • Wellness and wellbeing programme • Increased colleague engagement 	



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