

# Corporate Strategy 2017-2022



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Ark Housing can provide the Corporate Strategy in alternative formats including Braille, Large Print, Audiotape or CD. We can also help with translation into other languages. Please contact us if you require any of these services.





## Chair's Foreword

As we embark on celebrating Ark Housing's 30th Anniversary as a Registered Housing Association, we find ourselves amid political instability. The continuing endeavours by our politicians to re-establish power sharing at Stormont is welcome, however in the interim, we find ourselves operating in a climate of uncertainty.

This situation is further complicated following the outcome of the recent referendum on exiting the European Union, the absence of clarity around what shape Brexit will take, and the longer-term impact that this will have on capital and revenue programmes going forward.

We are also very mindful of the Department for Communities Social Housing Reform Programme, the challenges of Welfare Reform, and the recent announcement by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to top slice the Supporting People financial allocation for 2017 / 2018 in response to difficult budgetary circumstances.

It is with these challenges in mind that we developed our Corporate Strategy. We recognise that we need to do more, be more progressive in our thinking, and challenge more to protect our tenants and service

users who are some of the most vulnerable in society. It is our primary duty to maintain organisational sustainability and growth in order that we may continue to deliver on our social purpose and we firmly believe that our five-year outcomes based Corporate Strategy underpins the fundamentals that we need to deliver our mission.

I am delighted to commend this Corporate Strategy, and on behalf of the Board of Ark Housing wish to extend my gratitude to Staff, Board, and Committee Members for their continuing commitment and valuable contribution to Ark Housing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'D Donnelly'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Debbie Donnelly  
CHAIR





## Chief Executive's Introduction

Our 2017 - 2022 Corporate Strategy focuses on five main themes: Our People; Our Tenants and Service Users; Service Excellence; Organisational Growth; and Financial Sustainability.

It is an ambitious and progressive strategy that is outcomes focused and it has been developed at a time when the external environment is particularly challenging not only for Housing Associations but for the people and communities we serve.

The strategic operating environment, as detailed later in the document, challenges ourselves and our colleagues in the sector to do more collectively. Alongside our strategic partners, Ark Housing is committed to working through these challenges in an innovative way.

In addition to our core function as a social housing landlord, we are also a recognised leading homeless services provider.

The Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2017 - 2022, the Review of Supporting People, and the recent announcement of reductions in the supporting people revenue funding streams has challenged our thinking as to how we can do more in terms of increasing our impact. We must take the lead and do things differently if we are to realise the

mutual goals of ourselves and our strategic partners in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Department for Communities.

We look forward to the introduction of the new regulatory framework. This framework closely aligns to those areas in which we continuously strive to excel in - Governance, Finance, and Consumer standards and we welcome the Department's progressive move away from a compliance based approach to one which promises flexibility and more autonomy for Boards, enabling us to be more creative and do more to deliver on our social purpose.

This Corporate Strategy will ensure the viability and sustainability of Ark Housing beyond our 30th year, and will help us make a positive difference by empowering people and communities.

Jim McShane CIHCM, FCMI  
Acting Chief Executive

# Ark Housing Association Profile

Ark Housing Association was established in 1987 as Down and Connor Housing Association to provide social and affordable homes for those in housing need. In 1999 the organisation was renamed Ark Housing Association to reflect our history and growing ambition.

We are registered with the Industrial & Provident Society, Department for Communities and the Charity Commission Northern Ireland and currently own and manage 425 houses, bungalows and apartments across Northern Ireland. At present, we operate in North, West and South Belfast, Ardglass, Downpatrick, Newtownards, Portaferry, Carrowdore, Belcoo, Portrush, Lisburn and Bangor.

We provide a wide range of specialist homes and services to meet the needs of families, older persons and mature singles. These homes and services comprise of residential care, sheltered housing, frail elderly and dementia care, self-contained apartments for those affected by mental ill health, temporary accommodation for homeless families, mobility and wheelchair bungalows for those with a physical disability, general needs family accommodation and for those with a learning disability. We also deliver homeless services on behalf of, and in partnership with, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Our permanent housing allocations are made in accordance with the Common Selection Scheme for Northern Ireland which is administered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

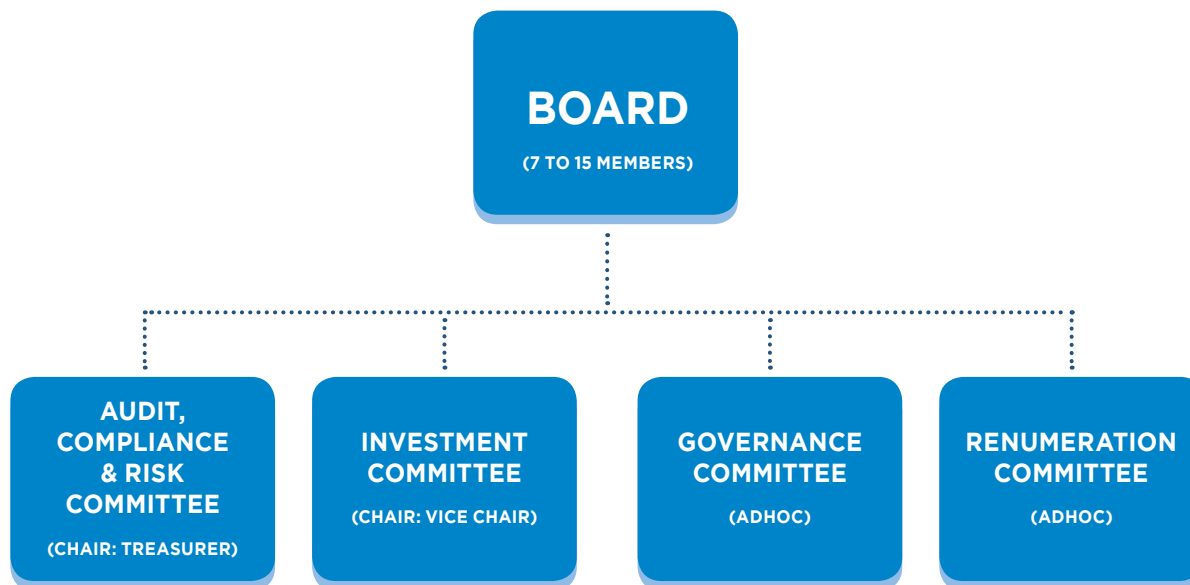
Most of our services are managed directly by a team of dedicated and skilled professionals, however we also operate several successful partnerships with specialist agencies and statutory bodies. Our strategic partners include Threshold, Inspire Wellbeing, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

We continue to be a developing Association and have ambitious plans for growth over the next five years which will enable us to have an even greater impact in the communities we serve. We combine private finance with capital funding grants received from the Department for Communities to assist us in the delivery of our Social Housing Development Programme and we are also revenue funded by the Department through the Supporting People Programme which enables us to provide bespoke housing support services to our tenants and residents.



# Governance Structure

The Association is governed by a voluntary Board consisting of between 7 and 15 persons with a wide range of skills who meet regularly to guide the work that we do, challenge performance and develop our strategy. The Board is supported by a committee structure whose purpose is to scrutinise specific areas of our business.



# Functional Areas

Central and frontline services are delivered by a staff team comprising of 36 persons on a full and part time basis.







Ravara House, Bangor

# Strategic Context

Ark Housing Association is one of 20 registered in Northern Ireland to provide a range of Housing, Care and Support services for those in need. In recent years, we have seen a significant reduction in the number of Housing Associations as consolidation has taken place within the sector primarily for strategic business purposes.

The recent operating environment has been a challenging one. Continuous change has been prevalent in the sector because of a wide range of political, economic, social, technological, legislative and environmental factors. However, Ark Housing's impact has strengthened in that time, and the Association has remained strategically relevant by ensuring that its response to those challenges was both robust and progressive.

Throughout the development of this strategy, we made considerations in response to several specific factors. The Reclassification of Housing Associations; the Social Housing Reform Programme; the introduction of Welfare Reform Legislation; the Review of Supporting People and the recent funding reduction announcement to the Supporting People Programme.

We considered the local political environment as well as the broader landscape following the recent triggering of Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon which will inevitably lead us towards an

exit from the EU within the life of this strategy. The impact of these political influences on our services and growth ambitions is unquantifiable at this stage. However, we do realise that there is real potential for capital and revenue funding streams to be affected over the short to medium term should a national and regional economic response not be forthcoming.

These uncertainties arise at a time when we see greater levels of homelessness and people in housing stress in Northern Ireland. In 2015/2016 alone we have seen 18,628 households and individuals present as homeless in Northern Ireland with 11,202 being accepted as such. In the same year, the number of people on the waiting-list for social housing was 37,586.

With such numbers presenting in need, and with the challenges faced by many of our tenants and residents due to welfare reform, we understand that despite these risks to the sector our impact must be greater in terms of our contribution to the Social Housing Development Programme and the development of our services. Therefore, this strategy sets out our solid commitment to growth and service excellence.



## Financial Context

The five-year corporate strategy has been developed in conjunction with, and is underpinned by, our rolling five-year Financial Business Plan.

This plan is revised each year to reflect our economic reality and the most recent is our 2016 to 2021 version. The main highlights of this plan are as follows:

- We will invest approximately £21 million in building new homes and improving existing homes ones over the five year period;
- This will provide approximately 180 homes for those in need and replace components in existing homes of approximately £500k;
- This investment will be funded with approximately £11 million being received in Capital Grants from the Department for Communities and new private borrowing making up the balance;
- Annual Income is expected to increase from approximately £2.7m to almost £4 million by 2021, with operating costs, including maintenance costs increasing to over £2.6 million by 2021;

- Surpluses generated over the total five year period and which will be reinvested in new homes and services will be in the region of £2 million;
- All major bank covenants comfortably met.

We are confident that our financial strength and capacity will support our ambition for steady growth over the next five years as well as enhance our contribution to the sector as a developing association





2017 - 2022

## **Vision**

Making a positive difference  
by empowering people  
and communities



2017 - 2022

## **Mission**

In partnership, provide quality homes and support services to meet housing need and contribute to the well-being of communities





2017 - 2022

## Values

- P** **Progressive**  
Forward thinking, supporting change and transformational
- R** **Respect**  
Treat everyone with dignity and esteem
- I** **Integrity**  
Maintain the highest professional and personal standards
- D** **Diversity & Equality**  
Value diversity and equality in everything we do
- E** **Excellence**  
Strive to deliver the highest standards of quality and customer care





Owenroe Drive, Bangor



## Strategic Themes, Desired Outcomes & Positive Indicators

### Strategic Themes



**Leading Employer**



**Better Homes, Greater Diversity**



**Engaged Communities, Greater Impact**



**Service Excellence, Satisfied Customers**



**Corporate Governance, Sustainability**









CORPORATE MISSION



By providing, creating, leading and  
improving services and  
supporting communities and  
individuals

ON

DAILY VISITORS LOG



## Strategic Theme 1: **Leading Employer**

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

Our staff are highly motivated, engaged and satisfied

Our staff are recognised and rewarded for their contribution

Our staff enjoy a healthy work-life balance

Our staff are empowered and feel valued

### POSITIVE INDICATORS

Increased staff retention rates

Increased staff satisfaction / approval ratings

Lower sickness absence rates

Increased learning & development opportunities for staff





Manor Drive, Lisburn





## Strategic Theme 2: **Better Homes, Greater Diversity**

DESIRED OUTCOMES	POSITIVE INDICATORS
<p>We have provided more homes for people in housing need</p>	<p>Increased growth in housing stock</p>
<p>Our SHDP has had a significant social &amp; economic impact</p>	<p>Social &amp; economic impact of SHDP measured as significant</p>
<p>We have diversified our service offering</p>	<p>Delivery of new services</p>
<p>Our homes are sustainable and energy efficient</p>	<p>Improved average home energy ratings and affordable rents</p>
<p>We have improved our tenant's homes</p>	<p>Delivery of property investment programme</p>





## Strategic Theme 3: **Engaged Communities, Greater Impact**

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

Our tenants and residents have shaped our policies and practices

Our homes and services have enhanced people's lives

Our homes and services have brought people together

### POSITIVE INDICATORS

Increased tenant engagement through successful delivery of our Tenant Participation Strategy

Increasing social impact and tenant well-being over the lifetime of the strategy

Increased numbers of inclusive community and social events taking place annually







## Strategic Theme 4: **Service Excellence, Satisfied Customers**

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

Our tenants and residents enjoy excellent housing and support services

We are recognised as a leading housing association for service and operational delivery

We are progressive and forward thinking in our approach to service delivery

### POSITIVE INDICATORS

Increased tenant and resident satisfaction levels.  
Lower levels of formal complaints received.  
Increased occupancy levels

Consistently ranked in top 10 in annual benchmarking data across 70% of all operational performance indicators

We introduced new ways of working and engagement through the adoption of new technology



strong communities

quality homes

HOUSING

A





## Strategic Theme 5: **Corporate Governance, Sustainability**

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

We are a financially sustainable organisation

Our financial systems, structures and processes are robust

Our governance structure and systems are robust

### POSITIVE INDICATORS

Financial targets and indicators on track, rents are affordable and sound short, medium and long term financial plans are in place

Regulatory financial assurance achieved. Consistently sound internal audit reports received

Regulatory assurance on Governance matters. Consistently sound internal audit reports received.



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