



## Value for Money Statement 2022/23

At Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) we strive to generate value in all we do. Our vision is “to provide homes which enable people to live happy and healthy lives in enriched communities”. To deliver this vision, it is essential that value for money (VfM) is central to our business.

Our key strategic priorities are:

- to deliver and maintain high quality homes and estates,
- to deliver high quality customer focussed housing services,
- to improve empowerment, opportunity, and access for all,
- to develop and maximise partnerships to build stronger, safer, and thriving communities in Northampton; and
- to be an open, inclusive, effectively managed, and trusted organisation.

During 2022/23 NPH had chosen to move from a 3-year VfM Strategy to a single year. The rationale for this change was to allow a full review to take place from 2023/24 onwards considering the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) new consumer regulations bringing accountability to landlords and their tenants. This covers safety, quality, neighbourhood, transparency, tenancy, and engagement. NPH will embark on Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) surveys to assess progress from 2023/24 in compliance with the new RSH requirements. The VfM Strategy takes account of our wider strategic objectives and describes how VfM fits, recognising that there is a strong link between our ‘critical success factors’ for delivering the strategic objectives and VfM.

For us, VfM means obtaining the maximum benefit from the resources available to meet the needs and aspirations of our tenants and leaseholders. This requires us to be effective in how we plan, manage, and operate our business.

NPH does not believe VfM is solely concerned with achieving the lowest cost and we maintain a strong focus on improving services for tenants. Any gains made are reinvested back into the delivery of frontline services and the Happy to Help Community Interest Company. We look for outcomes that can be measured and which demonstrate our trajectory towards increasing VfM.

### NPH VfM - 2022/23

NPH began operating in January 2015 to provide and improve housing services, with the requirement of refreshing and reinvigorating the Council’s housing offering. As an arms-length management organisation (ALMO), NPH is wholly owned by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC).

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

The performance of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is where overall financial performance is demonstrated. This statement therefore uses metrics that take account of HRA performance and position, within which NPH's accounts are the fundamental contributor. For example, the HRA has an annual revenue cost of approximately £35.4m (2023/24 business plan) and NPH has a budgeted management fee of £32.8m to enable the delivery of housing services across Northampton for 2022/23.

### NPH Corporate Approach to VfM

NPH has adopted a holistic approach to embedding VfM into the way it provides corporate support services, day to day service delivery and in overall management decision making.

This approach started at the point of set up in 2015, through the implementation of a set of performance measures put in place to monitor performance. These are the set of performance indicators that the Council uses to review quarterly performance. These measures and the associated targets are reviewed annually with the Council.

In addition to the agreed measures, NPH has introduced other operational practices through the delivery of key corporate services and activity, acknowledging that they have a major role to play in providing organisational controls, minimisation of risk and exploitation of opportunities to drive efficiency and service improvement. By doing this, NPH ensures VfM is considered at the point of decision making. The key contributing corporate VfM control activities include:

- Procurement
- Corporate Programme and Project Management
- Workforce Management
- Performance Monitoring, benchmarking, and customer satisfaction tracking
- Happy to Help Community Interest Company (CIC)

### Procurement

Driving efficiencies in procurement activity, creates one of the greatest opportunities to improve VfM at NPH. The function plays a key role in delivering VfM for all works or services we buy in from external companies. This year was the third and final year of our current procurement strategy (2020/23).

Procurement delivery is reviewed and approved by the Executive Management Team every financial year with monthly reporting to assess progress and any arising risk or challenges. In 2022/23 there has continued to be due consideration of the ongoing impact on materials and subcontractors cost inflation which has also been adversely affected by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the UK leaving the EU. The rising costs and capacity issues has on occasions caused delays in key areas of activity (e.g., delivery of the new build programme), however NPH has supported its supply chain and continued to provide a critical service to our community whilst maintaining a clear focus on VfM.

The Procurement function is provided internally with additional resource through the WNC procurement shared services supporting all areas of the business across the full procurement lifecycle.

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

This support includes the initial appraisal of options for delivering the work or service, working with specialist frameworks to secure additional VfM and/or social investment assistance, developing specification and procurement documents, setting the tender evaluation criteria, and assisting throughout the tender process until the contract is awarded. During 2022/23 there has been investment in the Procurement function with the appointment of a Procurement Officer. This has enabled additional support and guidance across the business as the level of activity has continued to gain pace. The embedding of existing frameworks and knowledge transfer to key stakeholders has allowed further benefits to be realised particularly through a Neutral Vendor Framework for Consultancy, Works, and Services. This has provided an easy, efficient, transparent, and compliant solution for consultancy. The framework provides a platform from which we can invite and utilise the local supply chain. In addition, this has provided value for money for both NPH and the supply chain due to reduced framework fees whilst providing a competitive platform with savings over budgeted figures.

Our approach to assessing value is to focus on the elements of each contract that are of most importance to the service area. This could be cost, service delivery improvements, efficient processes, risk management or social value. We then develop tender evaluation criteria that is weighted according to the importance of each for that particular contract. We don't have a standard price / quality split or standard evaluation criteria, as the factors are different for each contract. During 2022/23, we have generated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) monies to support our community interest company, Happy to Help of £127,000 which supports our residents and their communities. In addition, there are further collective savings during 2022/23 of over £400,000. The next 3-year procurement strategy (2023/26) was approved by Board in April 2023, and this will see the expansion of the Procurement function as all support is provided from in-house resource. This will also see the implementation of the changes as the new Procurement Bill comes into force.

### Corporate Programme and Project Management

NPH introduced a bespoke corporate Programme and Project Management Framework in 2019 to ensure that resources, both budget and people, were aligned to delivering against NPH corporate priorities, as set out in its Corporate Plan and that any resources used provided VfM and identifiable benefits.

The framework enables flexibility whilst ensuring that project ideas that require multi service resource input or have potential for organisation wide impact, are considered by a Virtual Programme Management Office (VPMO) prior to seeking formal approval from EMT. As part of these improvements, assessments are made of the ongoing savings both in time, cost and resource to ensure these maximise VfM for NPH as well as ensuring we meet compliance and/or regulatory requirements. The agreed programme is monitored monthly, with both benefits and delivery tracked. The approach has been assessed by Internal Audit with a 'Substantial Assurance' outcome.

During the year, key corporate projects include:

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

- Continued rollout of the use of our mobile working application to visiting officers, including multiple further processes across our housing management section. The total savings across the whole programme for the reduction in printing costs is £25,000 which includes over 40 pages of printing for every new tenant. Officer time has also been saved across the services from Housing officers completing tenancy visits to repairs managers compiling disrepair reports by appx. 1.5FTE allowing the re-purposing of staff to concentrate on other priorities.
- Stock condition data is now collected in real-time with auto updating of property components leading to more extensive and accurate data. Efficiencies have been realised in obtaining, collating, storing, and maintaining up to date data. The assets service area has seen a reduction in process steps and double handling with auto data updates eliminating reliance of spreadsheets, re-keying, and officer knowledge, thereby releasing valuable officer time, and increasing data quality by removing re-keying steps.
- Implementation of an integrated Customer Relation Management system, to realise and manage our customer contact at the 1st point of contact and to implement a single view of our customer and a consistent and transparent way of dealing with customer contact. This has provided simpler and more timely officer access to customer contact information and enables performance reporting and monitoring to drive ongoing performance improvement. This will continue to provide opportunities to increase customer satisfaction through improved customer contact experience.
- Compliance Manager module implementation allowing for all compliance management information to be recorded and actioned in one place with a consistent approach, actions are managed using a new Power Business Intelligence tool and provides assurance that we comply with the new Building Safety Act requirements. In addition to improving NPH's ability to demonstrate the necessary compliance assurance internally to NPH Board, RSH, and the Council, moving compliance sub-contractors into the contractor portal has led to reduced administration within the compliance team, thereby releasing capacity to accommodate additional technical tasks and reduce the need to increase staffing levels to meet further administration requirements.

### Workforce Management and Development

NPH recognises that its workforce is a significant resource and active management, oversight and control of this resource is a key contributor to ensuring VfM. NPH actively monitors sickness absence levels and ensures that management processes support individuals to return to work. Staff turnover is tracked to monitor trends and reasons for staff leaving are important to understand as recruitment processes are costly and gaps in resources can have a negative impact on remaining staff. All vacant positions are challenged by EMT to agree whether the resource is still needed or not, allowing budget for roles no longer considered a priority to be utilised elsewhere.

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

Staff training and development spend is also considered by EMT in terms of VfM as it is an investment to reduce turnover and should also be expected to provide other benefits to the organisation. NPH considers all requests for Post Entry training and all training programmes include evaluation.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target
Staff turnover %	7.53%	15.44%	17.15%	n/a
Average days lost to sickness per employee	6.4	6.8	10.8	8.0

The data table above shows that staff turnover reduced during Covid, which is to be expected however, since then levels have increased again consistent with national trends. Through active management, sickness absence levels have been consistently reducing since 2018/19. In 2022/2023 levels of sickness increased due to long-term sickness which in some cases led to ill health retirement. Low sickness absence minimises agency costs for temporary staff and protects service delivery within existing salary budgets. One of the ways sickness absence reduction is managed is through employees being able to access a confidential direct self-referral Employee Assist Service.

### Performance Monitoring, Benchmarking and Customer Satisfaction Tracking

Satisfaction with service and the value achieved from rents received are strategic, critical success factors. A suite of operational service level satisfaction and key performance measures are reviewed annually, and targets agreed with the Council as part the governance arrangements.

Tenant satisfaction is usually formally measured by NPH every two years using a Tenants Survey. The last full survey took place in October 2019. A mini sample survey of 2,000 tenants was also carried out in the Winter 2020, to gauge tenant views following the long first Covid lockdown.

NPH set out an objective to achieve accreditation through the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) to drive service improvement through a focus on the needs of customers. As a result of this, NPH moved to reporting satisfaction using the Customer Service Index (CSI) scoring methodology. The CSI methodology provided results based on actual service experience and the level of importance to the customer of the service received.

NPH's approach is now changing again due to the RSH introducing a new set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) that all Registered Providers must comply with. The new set of measures were introduced from April 2023. When notification of the change was received NPH decided to suspend planned Tenant Surveys for 2022/23 due to the need to commence the new survey methodology from April 2023. The results of the first annual TSM survey will be available in March 2024 and thereafter, quarterly surveying will commence from April 2024 to provide regular feedback that will be combined

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

for the sample required throughout the year. By introducing quarterly reporting of customer satisfaction against the new TSM's, results will provide the ability to identify root causes of dissatisfaction at an earlier point and enable more timely improvement interventions. The RSH TSM results will be published and available to NPH and the Council as well as tenants. Benchmarking results against other providers will enable comparisons of levels of NPH's performance compared to the rest of the sector. NPH will use this data, together with cost benchmarking to assess VFM in future.

Internal service satisfaction trackers have been introduced as part of a corporate Customer Service Programme and this data enables services to quickly identify issues and make changes to improve services to customers. From September 2023 the same independent external provider who will be conducting the annual TSM Survey will also conduct up to six transactional satisfaction surveys on behalf of NPH.

Relevant historical satisfaction data is detailed in the various data tables shown below. While progress has been made since 2015 the levels of satisfaction are still not where we would like them to be. When benchmarking externally against the best performing organisations we still have work to do in this area.

We use HouseMark to benchmark our performance against peers, however there are still differences as NPH is an ALMO and the peer organisations are generally Housing Associations, as such not all data is comparative.

### Happy to Help Community Interest Company (CIC)

During 2022/23 our Community Interest Company (CIC), Happy to Help expanded its services to benefit tenants made possible by the 'Corporate Social Responsibility' money that we secure through procurements and via frameworks. This financial year we have supported 421 vulnerable people with furniture, white goods, and essential items, doubling our previous years support. We have also provided a further 374 people with food parcels and over 250 vulnerable households with Christmas hampers. We also provided £10.5k of support to 11 foodbanks located within NPH tenant communities.

Across the wider communities and groups who directly or indirectly support tenants across Northampton, we have provided 28 Communities Fund grants, for a total of £5,850, estimated to support 840 people. These funds have allowed a multitude of support from day trips and the late Queen's jubilee celebrations, to supporting litter picking, art, crafts, drumming, and folk-dance opportunities.

We have continued to operate our Paint Shop in Kings Heath, expanding our opening hours to three sessions per week reflecting the increase in demand. This also allowed almost treble the number of volunteering hours, reaching 713 hours helping 558 households to decorate on a budget and recycled enough paint back into the community diverting 4,194 litres of paint from landfill, an increase of 82%.

Following on from the success of our handy person service we launched our subsidised gardening service, helping 127 households that may struggle due to old age, disability, or long-term illness, to have the maximum benefit from their outdoor spaces. We also launched our helping hands service

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

helping those at risk of developing hoarding behaviours which delivered 15 interventions including professional organising, cleaning materials and skip hire. Both services reflect our continued commitment to our tenants and communities recognising a previously unmet need as identified by our tenants.

Lastly, we were able to support our local communities by working with the East Midlands Ambulance Service identifying appropriate community hubs and the installation of 9 defibrillators together with bleed kits.

### VfM for Overall NPH and Service Area Performance

In addition to the above corporate mechanisms in place to drive organisational VfM, NPH also uses metrics both corporately and across individual service areas to assess and benchmark performance. Working to achieve these measures are critical success factors for NPH and several of the key measures feature in the metrics overleaf:

Key Measures	Actual 2020/21	Actual 2021/22	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24
<b>Across NPH</b>				
CSI with overall service**	67.6%	N/A	N/A	
CSI with advice and support**	79.7%	N/A	N/A	TSM's**
CSI for contacting NPH **	60.0%	N/A	N/A	
Headline social housing cost per unit	£5,419	£6,225	£5,770	£8,141
Headline social housing cost per unit excl capital	£2,346	£2,581	£2,695	£3,039
Headline social housing cost per unit excl capital % change	-0.2%	10.0%	4.4%	12.7%
<b>Capital performance</b>				
CSI for major improvement works	66.6%	N/A	N/A	TSM's**
Capital spend per unit	£3,096	£3,670	£3,110	£5,182
Reinvestment <sup>1</sup>	5.6%	9.9%	4.6%	7.3%
New supply <sup>2</sup>	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%
<b>Service delivery</b>				
CSI for communal services**	54.7%	N/A	N/A	
CSI for grounds maintenance**	61.1%	N/A	N/A	TSM's**
CSI for antisocial behaviour**	53.1%	N/A	N/A	
CSI for repairs service**	81.7%	N/A	N/A	
Housing management cost per unit	£1,240	£1,268	£1,379	£1,452
Repairs service cost per unit	£1,043	£1,209	£1,211	£1,419
Staff costs per unit	£890	£995	£1,133	£1,140
Current tenant rent arrears (CTA)	2.57%	2.80%	3.05%	3.15%
Former tenant rent arrears (FTA)	1.28%	1.45%		no target
CTA and FTA write off as % of rent roll	0.53%	0.31%		no target
Annual inflation - CPI (year to March)	0.7%	9.2%	10.1%	N/A

Note:

\* At the time of writing the latest statutory accounts are for NBC (2020/21), WNC are currently preparing their inaugural accounts for 2021/22 and plan to complete these and for 2022/23 during 2023/24.

\*\* CSI Customer Satisfaction measurement was carried by an independent survey organisation, following the Customer Service Institute scoring approach. A full census Tenant Survey was usually conducted every two years, however due to the

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

expected introduction of new RSH Satisfaction Measures from April 2023, these are being replaced with Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) from 2023/24. See full details in Appendix 1.

<sup>1</sup> Reinvestment is the cost of investment in current and new stock as a percentage of housing properties book value in total

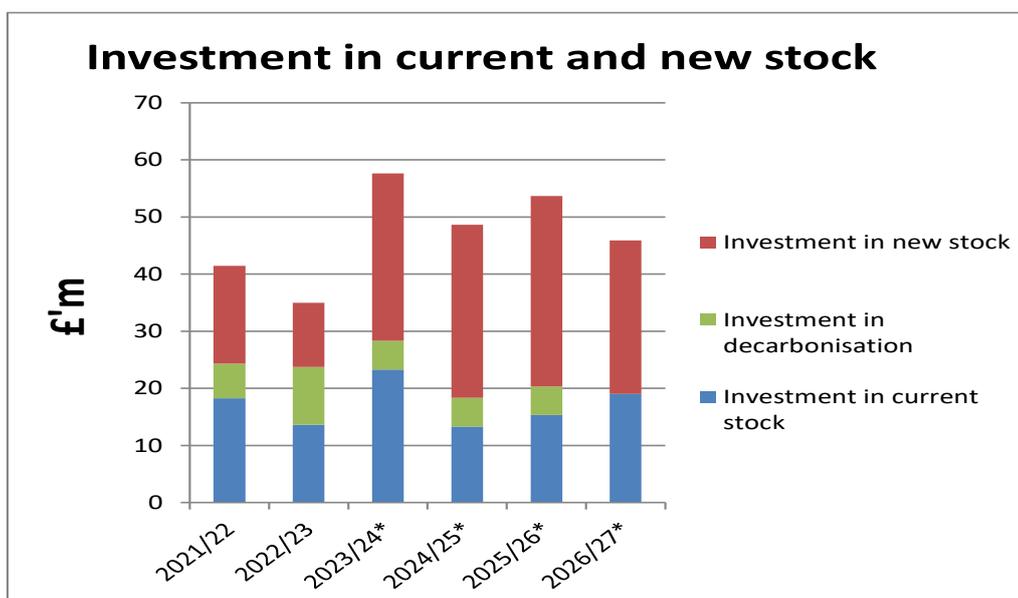
<sup>2</sup> New supply is the number of new units as a percentage of the closing stock for the year.

The Headline Social Housing Cost for 2022/23 has reduced back from the peak seen in 2021/22 (the Covid catch up year) and now stands 6% above the 2020/21 levels. This reflects that whilst there continues to be demand for services, there is no longer the Covid related backlog impacting this metric.

### Asset Management and Development

Between 2017/18 and 2022/23 NPH have delivered 379 new homes.

The current and forward capital investment plans are highlighted in the graph below. This includes the decarbonisation work completed on the existing housing stock and our ambitious plans for the next three years, setting aside £5m which we anticipate will be supplemented with further SHDF funding opportunities. The graph also shows that the investment in new build to expand stock and meet the growing demand, is not to the detriment of expenditure needed on existing stock.



The plans for substantial investment in the new build capital programme (2020/25) continues with ambitions to deliver over 1,000 homes by 2025. During 2022/23 there have been a few redevelopment schemes that had complications resulting in delivery falling into early 2023/24. This is reflected in the slippage moved into 2023/24 and future years. This ongoing investment has been made possible due to the removal of the HRA Borrowing Cap from October 2018 onwards, 1-4-1 receipts, together with accessing additional funds through other sources including Homes England, the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and NHS England.

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

This is also the second year of investment through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) as we have secured (through the Council) funding for Phase 1, waves 1.1 and 1.2 and very recently wave 2. This has generated additional funds over and above the pilot funding (£3m) of £6.1m (wave 1) and £1.2m for wave 2, (due in 2023/24). This funding will allow for retrofitting of over 400 homes.

The retrofit to these homes is making a substantial difference to energy efficiencies reducing tenants living costs but also allowing NPH and the Council to progress towards the Government's net zero carbon target of EPC C rating for tenants' homes by 2035.

The demand on housing in Northampton is significant as evidenced by the increase in the housing register and therefore the need to increase housing stock. As tenants exercise their Right to Buy (RtB) this depletes the housing stock year on year. Fortunately, in 2022/23 this reduced to 87 (2021/22: 119), reflecting the increased mortgage rates and financial challenges many households are facing in the current economic climate. With the delivery of 88 new homes in 2022/23 we have marginally increased stock. It had been anticipated that this would have been a higher growth however this was due to the delay in completion of the redevelopment schemes mentioned above. These schemes will, however, increase the housing stock for 2023/24.

There are several new schemes underway; New Southbridge Road, Castle Street, and the penultimate garage infill sites (lot 1), collectively providing 63 more homes over the next 12 to 18 months. There is also welcomed ongoing dialogue with the Council to consider the optimum way forward for St George's Campus and Belgrave House, taking into consideration the Council's local plan and evolving needs of residents and tenants across West Northamptonshire. We are actively working to further increase new housing stock by building new homes and have increased the number of larger scale projects over the forthcoming years, in line with our ambitious plans as stated in our new 10-year Development Strategy.

Investment in this area will grow the HRA housing stock enabling the Council and NPH to support the temporary accommodation and waiting list pressures and provide valuable long-term assets that strengthen the HRA balance sheet.

### **Housing Management Services**

Investment in new housing is very important across West Northamptonshire and provides significant value both socially and economically. This is evident due to the growth in demand for housing with the housing register having increased by over 16%, from 3,178 last year to 3,692 at the end of March 2023. There has also been a reduction in capacity due to a reduction in the number of properties terminated and therefore available for allocations, reducing by 21% from 644 in 2021/22 to 506 in 2022/23, adding to the shortage of council homes.

With the ever-growing need for temporary accommodation there has been an increase in the number of homes being reappropriated from available housing stock for temporary accommodation an

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

increase of 28% rising from 120 homes in 2021/22 to 154. At the end of 2022/23 there were some 600 families living in temporary accommodation across West Northamptonshire.

New housing investment is very important across West Northamptonshire and provides significant value both socially and economically. This is evident through the growth in demand for housing with the housing register having increased by over 16%, from 3,178 last year to 3,692 at the end of March 2023. This has also been impacted with a reduction in the number of properties terminated and therefore available for allocations, reducing by 21% from 644 in 2021/22 to 506 in 2022/23, adding to the shortage of council homes.

There has been an increase in the past year of homes being reappropriated from available housing stock for temporary accommodation to support this growing need of 28% increasing from 120 homes to 154. There were some 600 families living in temporary accommodation. This reaffirms the ever-growing homeless problem that is a symptom of the housing crisis across the country. This presents a critical need and the investment made in this area clearly adds value.

The housing management cost has increased in the year by 8.7% this reflects the increase in the delivery model particularly in relation to the complex needs and behaviours of those within specialist accommodation and investment in the Lifeline Service completed in the year, moving from an analogue to a digital solution, benefitting our most vulnerable tenants.

During the last quarter of the year, we allocated a Support Officer to work within the Complex Needs blocks to ensure the benefit maximisation is undertaken at the point of sign up for every resident. This has been invaluable to ensure tenants have a more streamlined introduction into new residential surroundings. Whilst a new initiative, this has already provided substantial benefits, including the combined back dated housing benefit of over £25,000 over two facilities.

The support team received 355 referrals for Housing related support during the year and provided support including back dated PIP payments, refunded Council tax, grants, food vouchers, winter fuel and other grants, directly benefitting vulnerable tenants with over £276,000. This in turn supports rent collection levels and helps to minimise increases in rent arrears levels and other cost of living impacts for some of the most vulnerable tenants, whilst also supporting them to maintain their tenancies.

In 2022/23 there were 657 allocations to WNC properties, and an additional 342 allocations to Registered Social Landlord properties. Of these allocations, 174 properties were specifically allocated to applicants who required Older Persons accommodation. There were 211 new referrals to the Welfare Service bringing the total number now being regularly visited to 583.

On average we receive between 15-20 applications per month for mutual exchanges. To support understanding and knowledge the Mutual Exchange Coordinator has developed leaflets and flyers for the Guildhall, for Housing officers to provide to tenants, and has increased the communication via our Social Media platforms. This year there have been 163 Mutual Exchange applications completed.

# Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

## Repairs and Maintenance Service

Whilst repairs satisfaction levels have reduced, we are aware these are predominantly related to the wait time for responsive repairs. Despite this, satisfaction remains above reported satisfaction levels for the sector, which are also reducing. Although costs per unit have increased, this is minimal. The significant increases in labour and materials across the industry, impacted on the cost of providing the service. In 2022/23 there was a budget overspend, mainly due to an increase in materials and contracted labour, together with a general increase in demand and expectations. This resulted in a backlog of 2,700 jobs during COVID times, which is still being worked through, with a plan in place to revert to a business-as-usual service by the end of 2023. In July 2023, there was an operational change which brought the major void work in-house allowing reductions in cost of £7k per property. This has also allowed void turnaround time to markedly improve allowing the maximum availability to support tenants in need of homes. The number of voids continues to rise and during 2023/24 we will be closely monitoring this trend and taking mitigating action where possible to ensure this trend is controlled as far as possible.

As with the other services however, the satisfaction levels of tenants and residents are below target and we continue to strive to make improvements. Our target for customer satisfaction is 90% for our transactional surveys, and we are currently performing at a 90% satisfaction level. The targeted (and budgeted) position for 2023/24 is to reduce the cost per unit of repairs but considering the current economic position and target it is acknowledged this is going to be a challenge.

## Compliance

The Building Safety and Compliance team have been working to ensure we are compliant with new fire safety and building safety legislation implemented in 2023. During the year there has been substantial compliance work completed, in preparation for the Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Bill. The team have also continued the migration from a 10-year electrical testing programme to a 5-year programme, ensuring we are compliant with new legislation within this area of service delivery.

## Income from HRA homes

Tenant arrears and debt levels have an impact on value. The more rent collected; the more resource we have available to invest through the HRA. During 2022/23 there was a rent increase of 4.1% the largest since the inception of NPH. Understandably this impacted on the level of current tenant arrears increasing to 3.05% (2021/22: 2.80%) though still within the target of 3.15%. This shows that performance has continued to exceed target. Managing arrears has continued to be challenging because of the issues with presenting cases at court initially seen in 2021/22 as a result of the new unitary structure.

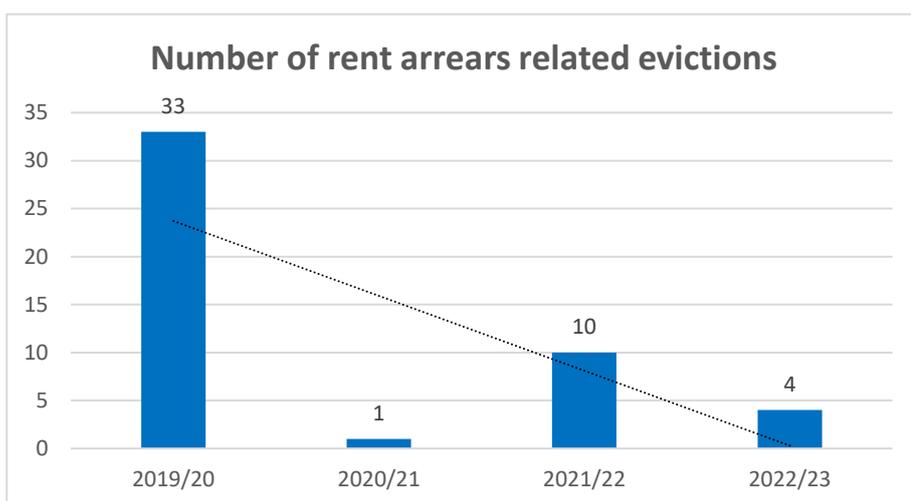
At the end of the year, the number of Universal Credit claimants stood at 4,516 rising almost 12% in the year from 4,036. Universal Credit claimants now represent just over 40% of all live tenancies.

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

The financial inclusion and welfare reform team have continued to support tenants who have faced financial challenges securing over £500,000 in grants, benefits, and other goods/vouchers, £200,000 more than 2021/22, amplifying the hardship our tenants continue to face.

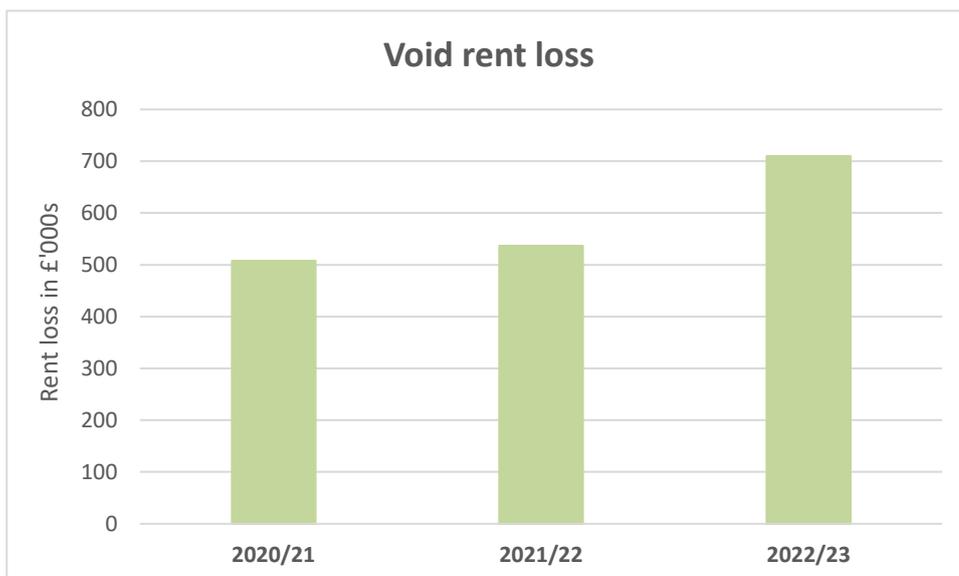
The number of evictions has increased, however only slightly to 10 this financial year, due to technical issues following the transfer of the housing stock from NBC to WNC and the role of NPH as an ALMO, however this issue was finally resolved in the last half of the year. It is anticipated that evictions will increase in 2023/24 in line with pre Covid activity. The lower level of evictions due to non-payment of rent resulted in lower court costs than budgeted, releasing funding to support other areas where costs continued to rise due to inflationary pressures, particularly materials and subcontractor costs.

The following graph illustrates the significant reduction in evictions, although it should be noted that at the end of the financial year there remained several stayed cases due to additional clarifications required following the unitary changes and change of ownership from NBC to WNC which will be progressed in 2023/24:



Void rent loss during the year has risen by 0.3% from 1.0% to 1.3% (£710,000). Whilst this exceeded target, to a large extent this was attributable to the onboarding of the Beaumont redevelopment properties. The impact of supporting 60 households in a single phase has been recognised and lessons learnt. When similar, larger schemes complete in the future, these will be delivered in phases to prevent this situation reoccurring.

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes



### Sustainability

At NPH, we believe that each of our residents, employees, suppliers, and stakeholders has a crucial role in creating a sustainable future for Northampton. To help us become a more sustainable organisation we have adopted the One Planet Living framework based on ten simple principles that provide a holistic approach to sustainability

The NPH Sustainability Strategy and Environmental Policy commits NPH to manage our environmental impact and reduce carbon emissions, as well as compliance with all relevant environmental legal obligations.

The specific carbon reduction targets within the Sustainability Strategy aim to achieve continual reduction of 7% per year, and an overall 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2023 compared to a 2018-19 baseline.

#### Progress Towards Net Zero

WNC have made a commitment to the UK100 Net Zero pledge, to cut its own emissions to net zero by 2030, and for WNC residents and businesses to be net zero carbon by 2045. NPH has a key role to play in helping WNC meet these targets across all housing management services delivered under the management agreement.

Consumption of natural gas, primarily for communal heating systems, accounts for over 60% of the NPHs carbon emissions footprint. Reducing our reliance on gas whilst continuing to deliver a best value service to NPH customers will be a significant challenge. To help on this journey, air source heat pump domestic heating technologies are being explored, with a particular focus on the tenant experience, and we are supporting the Council on a feasibility study looking into potential development of a Northampton low carbon heat network.

## Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

NPH carbon emissions from electricity are low due to REGO electricity supply. To improve on our current position and to develop a more robust net zero carbon energy system, we will continually seek to minimise energy consumption and increase the proportion of onsite renewable energy generation.

As an example of this, an extensive project to upgrade communal lighting systems is underway, aiming to improve lighting standards and reduce energy consumption. Approximately 1,350 outdated lamps in multiple apartment blocks have been replaced with low energy LEDs with motion sensors. This is modelled to reduce energy consumption by roughly 325,000 kWh per year, saving almost £100,000 and 63 tCO<sub>2</sub>e annually.

NPH manage almost every type of waste stream imaginable, including building waste, office waste, hazardous waste, and much more. Coupled with the high volumes collected, this makes waste a complex and challenging environmental aspect. Waste has the second highest environmental impact, accounting for almost a fifth of the total carbon footprint.

Diesel used in the fleet of NPH vans accounts for 12.5% of total carbon emissions. The transformation to a zero-carbon fleet is anticipated to see the uptake of electric vehicles being gradually blended in over the coming years. Consideration has been made for how this will impact NPH operations, and our expectation is for the NPH fleet to be diesel free and zero carbon before 2030.

### **Carbon reduction of the housing stock**

The portfolio of circa 12,000 homes managed by NPH has a modelled carbon footprint of 22,039 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Our aim is to transform to a net zero carbon housing portfolio by reducing energy consumption and increasing the provision of renewable energy.

More than 1,600 homes in the portfolio currently have solar PV, providing more than 3MW of renewable power. For the period 2022-23 this generated 2.8 million kWh of renewable electricity, saving 550 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

Our Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) demonstrator scheme completed in December 2022. The project completed whole house retrofit to 149 solid wall homes in Kingsley and Kingsthorpe, installing high performance energy efficiency measures such as external wall insulation, new windows, and doors, and 70 new solar PV systems.

This has significantly reduced the energy consumption of the retrofitted homes, saving tenants hundreds of pounds on energy bills, and offering some protection from the energy price rises seen over the past 18 months. Reduced energy consumption has also resulted in significant reductions in carbon emissions. SAP modelling estimates 400 tCO<sub>2</sub>e will be saved. An SHDF Wave 1 scheme is currently underway and Wave 2 funding secured.

An additional advantage of the proactive stance NPH has taken with the SHDF initiative has been to access RetrofitCredits through the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (HACT), a scheme that allows corporate organisations to support the decarbonisation agenda where direct delivery isn't possible. This allows funding for 20 years based on the level of verified emission reductions. For 2022/23 with the completion of the demonstrator phase this has generated social value for NPH of £4,092.

# Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

## In Summary

We aim to continue to make cost savings while improving services. At times costs have increased in 2022/23 driven by inflationary pressures impacting materials and, subcontractor costs. We have also been impacted by an increase in the number of vacant positions from the scarcity of skilled labour and the affordability of schemes over the longer term where risk and uncertainty of cost pressures continue. We are however, pleased with the direction of travel since our inception in 2015.

Performance against strategic critical success factors is strong and we are looking towards improving the long-term value and viability of the HRA. Investment into new and existing stock is growing and, whilst we have had to revisit two of the larger schemes with the Council, our pipeline continues to grow and will continue over the coming years to ensure that NPH is able to deliver good quality housing that meets the needs of West Northamptonshire.

We are particularly proud of our involvement with the SHDF initiative, building on the success following the demonstrator phase and expanding into the next two waves of Phase 1, securing funding not only to support delivery but also through HACT recognising the social value this has brought.

However, we do recognise that continued progression is essential. When compared to external benchmarks in several areas we still have much to do and are not complacent. With the new RSH metrics we recognise the depth of understanding we will gain from the TSM results, allowing focussed delivery to ensure we support the needs of tenants and address any emerging issues swiftly.

The investment we have made with the Institute of Customer Service over the last few years, supports our goal to put tenants and leaseholders needs at the heart of service delivery. This focus will continue, and we will work to demonstrate the positive impact this focus on customers has made. We look forward to continuing our training and culture change programme as well as listening to tenants to make sure we address concerns and actively involve customers in service design and delivery.

Services that are efficiently and effectively delivered at the right price mean that over the long-term NPH will be able to deliver happier and healthier communities that support more of those in need and most importantly, provide people with the strong foundation of a home that is essential to furthering aspiration.

# Northamptonshire Partnership Homes

## APPENDIX 1

For 2023/24 the following RSH Tenant Satisfaction and Management Measures will be recorded and reported.

TP01	Overall satisfaction
TP02	Satisfaction with repairs
TP03	Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair
TP04	Satisfaction that the home is well maintained
TP05	Satisfaction that the home is safe
TP06	Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
TP07	Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
TP08	Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect
TP09	Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints
TP10	Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean, safe and well maintained
TP11	Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
TP12	Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour
RP01	Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
RP02	Repairs completed within target timescale
CH01	Complaints relative to the size of the landlord
CH02	Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales
NM01	Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord
BS01	Gas safety checks
BS02	Fire safety checks
BS03	Asbestos safety checks
BS04	Water safety checks
BS05	Lift safety checks
ELT01	% of electrical tests done against target

NPH also produce and monitor additional VfM metrics across all areas, tracked alongside the NPH corporate plan. This also includes the following:

Additional Measures	Actual 2020/21	Actual 2021/22	Actual 2022/23	Target 2023/24
<b>Corporate health metrics</b>				
Staff turnover	7.5%	15.4%	17.1%	N/A
Average days lost to sickness per employee	6.4	6.8	10.8	8.0
% of calls answered within target (180 seconds)	87.4%	78.1%	50.4%	N/A
Average days taken to re-let minor works void properties	21.1	20.5	19.59	18
Average days taken to re-let major works void properties	46.9	50.5	39.44	38
Average days taken to re-let ALL void properties	26.9	29.1	26.53	26
% rent loss due to voids	1.0%	1.0%	1.3%	0.9%
<b>Customer metrics</b>				
Average seconds to answer inbound calls	160	237	321	180
Calls answered per property	4.7	5.32	4.7	N/A
Stage 1 Complaints received per 1,000 properties	7.2	4.05	45.5	N/A
% complaints responded within target time	73.6%	86.2%	87.1%	92%
% complainants satisfied with case handling	98.1%	100.0%	50.0%	