



# Improving Lives and Places

## Our Journey to 2027



**Our Purpose & Values**  
**Improving lives  
and places**

- Every Customer Happy
- Every Home Loved
- Every Opportunity Taken
- Every Penny Counts
- Every Person Positive

**Our Purpose:**  
**‘Improving  
Lives and  
Places’**



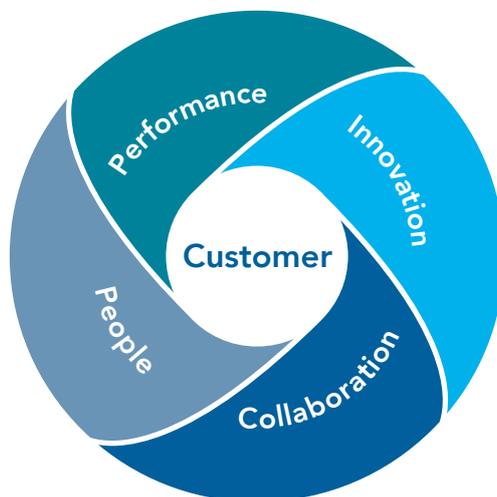
**WHY**

**Our Strategic  
Outcomes to  
deliver our  
Vision:**  
**‘Sustainable  
Homes and  
Communities’**



**WHAT**

**Core principles  
of Our  
Approach**



**HOW**

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## 1. A message from our Chair and Chief Executive

We have pleasure in presenting the five-year Corporate Plan for RCH Group ‘*Our Journey to 2027*’.

It has been informed by the invaluable insight and help from our customers, wider stakeholders and partners, and our colleagues. It sets out our plans and ambitions over the next five years.

We publish ‘*Our Journey to 2027*’ at a very challenging time for our customers and society in general. Emerging from the COVID pandemic, we are all beset with a range of continuing economic challenges. Inflation is at its highest rate in decades, and with energy and fuel prices soaring, there is considerable uncertainty in our communities around coping with the cost of living.

Both the UK and Scottish Governments have introduced various measures to counter the cost of living crisis. For the housing sector in Scotland, there is a prospect of an enforced rent freeze and rent capping may become a feature of the sector for years to come. In addition, further uncertainty still exists around the longer-term impacts of Brexit, particularly around supply chains and access to labour.

Despite this backdrop, the robust resilience demonstrated over the last two years provides confidence in our ability to deliver our ambitious plans across the following strategic outcomes.



Several enhancements have been made to the management team, taking advantage of succession opportunities as well as introducing new talent to the organisation. Furthermore, our plans are also underpinned by new financing arrangements, enabling greater investment across our housing and estate portfolio.

We hope that you can join us on our journey to delivering our vision: **Sustainable Homes and Communities**.

**Jillian Moffat**

**Chair of RCH Group Board**

**Richard Turnock**

**Chief Executive**

November 2022

## 2. RCH Group Overview

### About us

RCH Group consists of River Clyde Homes (RCH), the social landlord, together with Home Fix Scotland (HFS), its wholly owned, in-house repairs and maintenance subsidiary.



- As a registered social landlord, RCH owns over 6,100 properties and provides factoring services to almost 2,200 properties. £30m turnover.
- Formed in 2007 following a large-scale voluntary transfer of housing stock from Inverclyde Council.
- Not for Profit, charitable body with surpluses reinvested in the business.
- RCH employs 177 staff (155 FTE).
- HFS undertakes a wide range of services for RCH including repairs and maintenance, voids, capital works, environmental and various compliance. £9m turnover.
- Commenced trading in 2016 as River Clyde Property Management and was rebranded to HFS in 2019.
- Profit motive with surpluses gift-aided to RCH.
- HFS employs 115 staff (113 FTE).

### Our purpose, vision, and values

RCH and HFS are aligned in their purpose and corporate values.

Our common **purpose** is simple – *'Improving lives and places'*.

Our **vision** is what we want to be – *'Sustainable Homes and Communities'*

Our **values** are the key principles we live and work by, helping define who we are and what we stand for.

RCH Group has a strong social purpose, re-investing financial surpluses back into the business.

#### Our Purpose & Values

### Improving lives and places

- Every Customer Happy
- Every Home Loved
- Every Opportunity Taken
- Every Penny Counts
- Every Person Positive



## Generating Social Value

We pride ourselves on being more than just a landlord. We are committed to improving lives and places. We realise the importance of thriving communities and what contribution we can make to help this happen. Of course we aim to provide quality, **sustainable homes**, and deliver **excellent services** but we also aim to create **thriving communities** and hence generating social value where we can.

We recognise that many of the communities we serve face significant economic, health and environmental challenges and inequalities. These are particularly acute during this time of high inflation, and rising energy and fuel costs. By generating social value we can help tackle these inequalities. We generate social value in several ways.

Through our free **Financial Wellbeing Service** we provide customers with information, advice and representation on a wide range of welfare rights issues. This helps with the management of household budgets and maintaining tenancies, maximising access to benefits.

Our **Tenancy Support Service** team works with customers who may need assistance in maintaining their tenancy.

As a relatively large employer within Inverclyde, our organisation creates training and **employment opportunities** for those who live in our communities. Over 80% of our staff reside in Inverclyde.

Our future **regeneration** aspirations place the wider community, as well as our customers, at the heart of our business. Through consultation we will capture the wider needs of relevant communities prior to any regeneration activity.

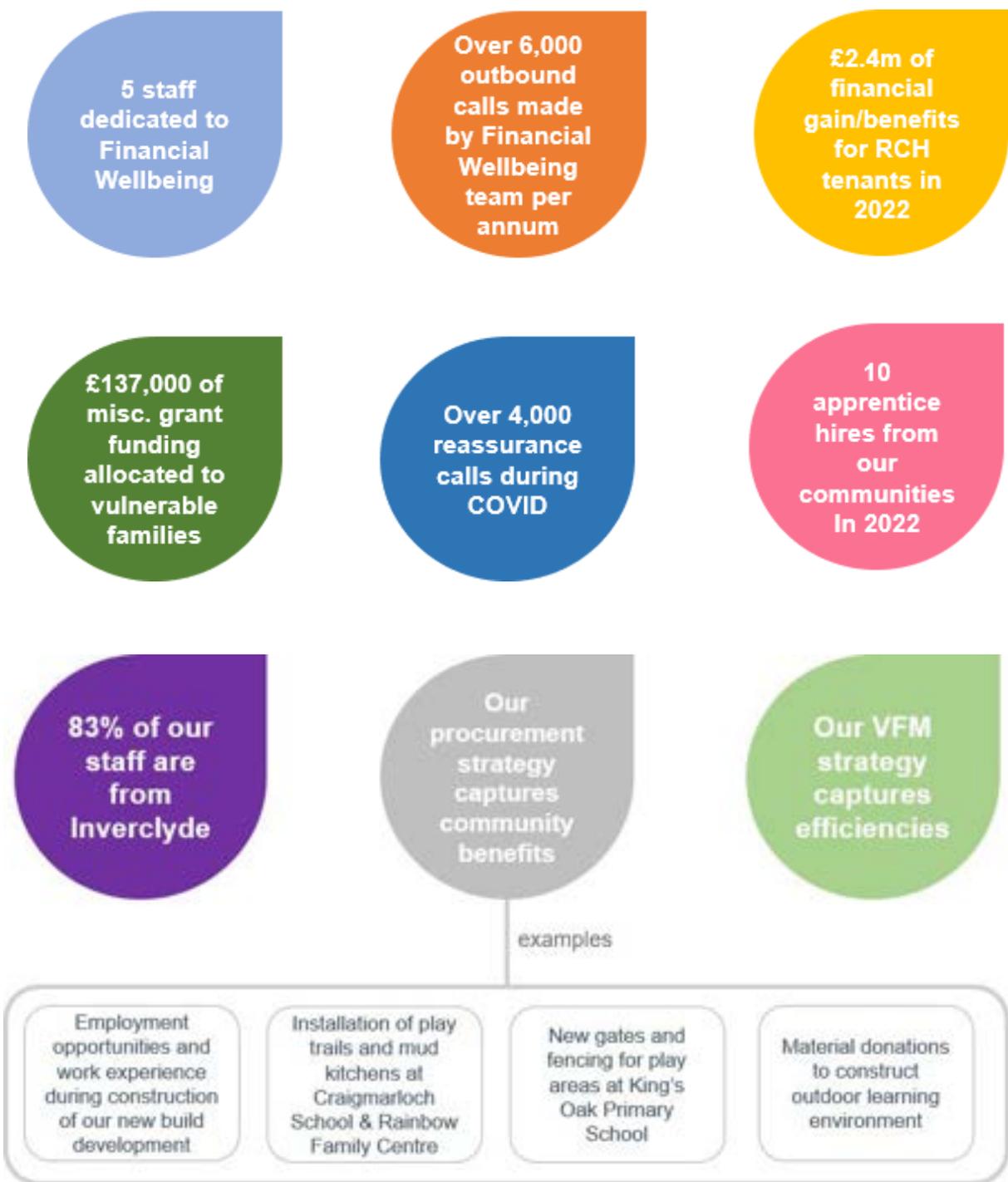
Generating social value is a key component of our **Value for Money** (VFM) strategy and action plans.

RCH Group is an advocate of **partnership working in community planning**, ensuring that management make a significant contribution to the initiatives of the Inverclyde Alliance Board, including the wider Local Outcome Plans, which incorporate actions that address inequalities.

This plan confirms our commitment to continue the generation of social value in all of our communities.



## Some examples of our social value



## Our Strategic leadership

### RCH Group Board and Committees

The strategic direction of RCH Group is provided by our Board. Our Board consists of twelve members and includes two tenant Board Members and two local Councillors nominated by Inverclyde Council. The remainder of our Board Members are experienced non-executives from diverse professional backgrounds (including legal, financial and property).

To assist with the effective governance, and financial and operational management the Board has three sub-Committees:

- Group Audit & Risk Committee
- Social Landlord Operations Committee
- Group Remuneration & Nominations Committee

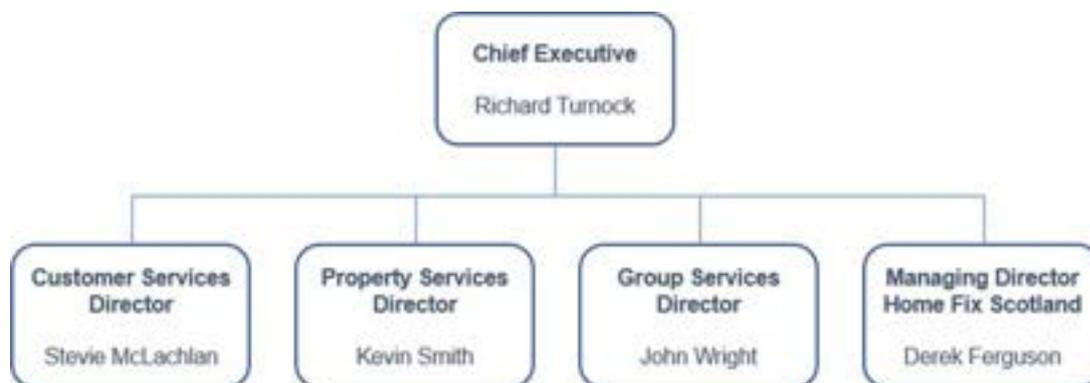
HFS has a separate Board consisting of six Board Members, including representation from the RCH Group Board.

All RCH Group and HFS Board members are committed to ongoing development. This ensures continuous enhancement of the quality of overall governance as well as compliance with regulatory and statutory governance requirements.

Supplementing our governance is our Customer Senate, which enables scrutiny of aspects of our service offerings and related policies and procedures. Any recommendations from the Customer Senate are presented to the RCH Group Board.

### RCH Group Executive Leadership

Responsibility for the delivery of the strategy and day to day leadership and management rests with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).



## 3. Our Operating Environment

### Macroeconomic and sector context

In developing this corporate plan, it is essential to consider the wider context in which we operate. Undoubtedly, these are very challenging times for society. In recent years, we have benefited from relatively low rates of inflation and low interest rates.

However, inflation rates have rapidly increased to their highest rates for decades. This has been largely driven by significant increases in the price of fuel and energy costs. Without any intervention, energy costs are predicted to increase by a factor of three or four-times normal levels and inflation is projected to reach its highest level for decades. Furthermore, many households also face the challenges of increasing interest rates.

In addition, the built environment sector is undergoing significant change. Macroeconomic forces, including supply chain challenges, access to labour and spiraling inflation are having an impact on many contractors who service the repairs and maintenance and related activities of the social housing sector. This also creates challenges for many social landlords who are increasingly experiencing uncertain delivery and high inflation from their contractors.

The UK government has very recently announced measures to combat the cost of living crisis, primarily focused on controlling energy pricing. These measures provide greater certainty around short term levels of disposable household income.

The Scottish Government also recently announced measures that are likely to involve rent capping within the social housing sector, and short-term rent freezes within the private sector. While these measures provide greater certainty for rent payers, private and social landlords require to consider the implications of such rent capping on their business models.

This emerging policy on rent setting comes only a year after the confirmation of the longer-term housing strategy for Scotland. Last year, the Scottish Government published 'Housing to 2040', Scotland's first long term housing strategy. In summary, the Scottish Government's vision is that by 2040 everyone living in Scotland would have access to a safe, warm, affordable, high quality and energy efficient home that meets their needs in the place they want to be, in a community they feel part of, and proud of, no matter their circumstances or where they live.

All social landlords have an important role to play in the delivery of the Scottish Government's Housing Strategy. Supported by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), RCH, together with other social housing providers, is playing an active lobbying role in the ongoing rent policy consultation with the Scottish Government.

## Inverclyde context

RCH Group operates exclusively within Inverclyde, a district with a rich cultural heritage. Once a major global force as a shipbuilding and marine engineering hub, the decline in these industries has meant that Inverclyde has developed a more diverse economy with new employment in financial services and emerging renewables sectors.

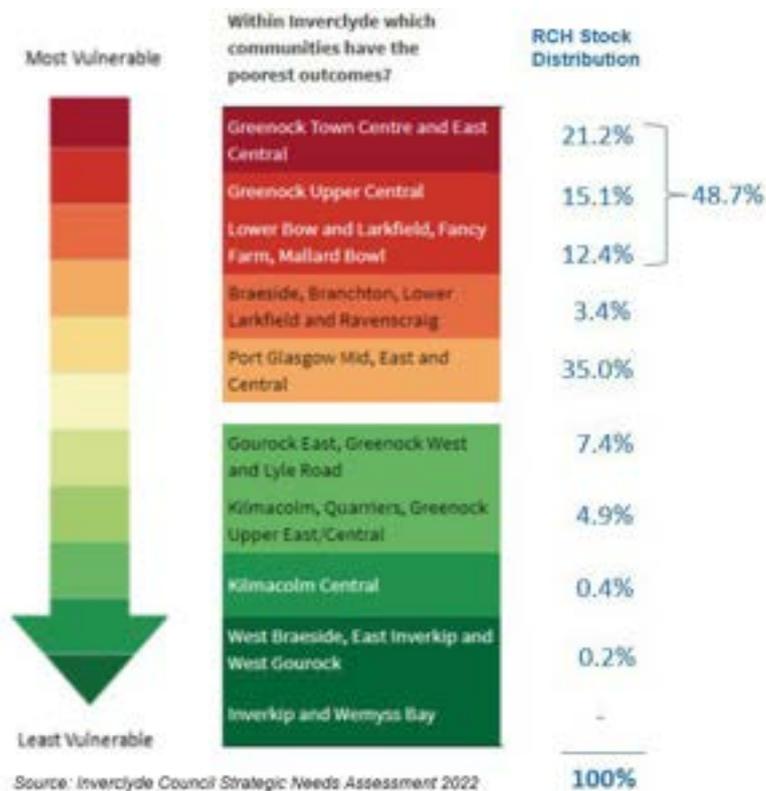
A high proportion of Inverclyde respondents to the Scottish Household Survey rate their neighborhood as a good place to live, which is encouraging. Significant investment in schools has yielded a high education attainment, which is a relative strength compared to other local authorities. Inverclyde is consistently higher than the Scottish Average. However, key challenges exist in relation to:

- Depopulation**
  - The population has fallen by over 20% in the last forty years and is currently approximately 77,000.
  - Population is further projected to decrease by a further 5% by 2028.
  - Of concern is the longer-term projected decline in young people and the working age population, coupled with a substantial increase in those aged over 60.
  
- Declining economic activity**
  - Inverclyde employment remains heavily reliant on the public and third sectors.
  - There has been a decline in the number of new enterprises.
  - Inverclyde's business base is relatively narrow.
  
- High deprivation and health inequality**
  - Income and employment deprivation is a significant issue.
  - Residents in our most deprived areas are spending a high proportion of their income on fuel (even before current fuel crisis).
  - The most deprived area in Scotland is Greenock Town centre and East Central (according to Scottish index of Multiple Deprivation 2020).
  - Stark health inequalities continue to exist in life expectancy and other health outcomes across Inverclyde communities.
  - Inverclyde consistently exceeds the rest of Scotland for rates of alcohol & drug addiction.

Outcomes for people living in Inverclyde vary across communities, with poorer outcomes being experienced by the most deprived communities.

One fifth of our stock is in the most deprived area of Inverclyde, which happens also to be the most deprived within Scotland.

Almost one half of our stock is within communities that have the poorest outcomes.



This influences customer needs and the nature of the range of services that RCH provides as a social landlord. For instance, we provide additional services that address challenges around financial wellbeing and tenancy sustainment.

An important component of our social value contribution is our active participation to Community Planning in Inverclyde. The Inverclyde Alliance is the Community Planning Partnership for Inverclyde, involving public agencies, the voluntary sector, the community, and businesses across the area. Partners are aligned in identifying priorities to enhance service delivery for the benefit and wellbeing of the community.

A new Partnership Plan is in the process of being developed and will run from 2023. The current Local Outcome Improvements Plan (2017-22) has four key priorities:

1. Repopulation
2. Economy
3. Reducing Inequalities
4. Environment, Culture & Heritage

RCH senior management contributes to these initiatives through involvement in various partnership forums and the Inverclyde Alliance Board. This includes membership of the steering group developing a new Local Housing Strategy for Inverclyde.

## 4. Our Strategic Outcomes

We have five strategic outcomes, each of which underpins the delivery of our vision, **Sustainable Homes and Communities**.



Each strategic outcome is a clear statement of intent which is supported by action plan and tasks. In developing our strategic outcomes we have considered the resources available to RCH Group, including our staffing and financial capacity.

## Excellent Services

Customers are at the heart of everything that we do. We want our customers to be engaged, empowered, and delighted with their home and the broad services that we provide.

Customer insight plays an important role in the development of our plan. Key sources of customer insight have included:

- Transactional customer satisfaction surveys
- Rent consultation surveys
- Customer Senate led scrutiny findings and recommendations
- Consideration of key themes arising from our customer complaints

RCH achieved the prestigious Customer Services Excellence accreditation in 2022. However, this is merely a first step in our plans to enhance our overall service delivery.

Our Excellent Services outcomes are underpinned by our Customer Services Strategy. The key outcomes and success measures aligned with **Excellent Services** are summarised below.

Key Outcomes	Key Success Measures
<b>Increased customer satisfaction with our services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) Survey completed (2022/23)</li> <li>■ Transformed customer feedback model introduced (incorporating transactional/pulse surveys for key services (2022/23)</li> <li>■ Customer Service Excellence Accreditation for RCH (2022/23); for HFS (2023/24)</li> <li>■ Strategic review of our factoring service (2022/23). Factoring Customer Service to exceed sector benchmark by 2025/26.</li> <li>■ Target tenant Customer Satisfaction rate of &gt;90% by 2026/27</li> </ul>
<b>Provide high quality omni-channel access for our customers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Customer Panel established to enable the development of our customer portal (2022/23)</li> <li>■ Introduce fully comprehensive self-service options across our services, using integrated technology (2024/25)</li> <li>■ Automation of tasks and processes, efficient allocation of our people resource (2025/26)</li> </ul>
<b>Service offering shaped by enhanced Customer insight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Personalised service offering launched, enabling a blend of face to face and digital service model (2022/23)</li> <li>■ Rolling programme of gathering improved customer data and feedback (2023/24)</li> </ul>

## Sustainable Homes

In recent years, our new build programme has enhanced our property portfolio, taking our total units to over 6,100. With our new build development programme completed during summer of 2022, our focus will be investment and maintenance of our existing stock.

Our plan aims to deliver a sustainable property portfolio. The ‘sustainable’ aspect comes in many forms and includes consideration of:

- *Sustainable* in terms of alignment with current and future energy considerations, particularly given the housing and climate change visions set by the Scottish Government.
- *Sustainable* in terms of scale (recognising the challenges of depopulation within Inverclyde, higher levels of social housing supply and low demand).
- *Sustainable* in terms of ongoing financial viability (our low demand homes and our long-term voids in particular).

Demand dynamics, stock condition surveys and assessment of future housing needs will inform offer valuable insight on the prioritisation of our investment spend, including stock acquisition or rationalisation. We will continue to optimise the use of our existing and new (e.g. acquisition) stock, land, and other assets.

Our Sustainable Homes outcomes are underpinned by our Asset Management Strategy. The key outcomes and success measures aligned with **Sustainable Homes** are summarised below:

Key Outcomes	Key Success Measures
<b>Raising the standard of our homes and environments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implementation of rolling stock condition programme (2022/23)</li> <li>■ Investment and capital spend will be £52m over the next five years (2026/27). Almost £100m over the next decade. This will include optimisation of funding opportunities to address fuel poverty and ongoing EESSH compliance.</li> <li>■ EESSH Compliance at least 90% (2025/26)</li> <li>■ No properties will have low energy efficiency rating (2025/26)</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable stock scale</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Completion of current new build programme (2022/23)</li> <li>■ Reduce voids to 200, excluding deactivated stock (2025/26)</li> <li>■ Expansion of the strategic acquisitions programme (2026/27)</li> </ul>
<b>Address sustainability and climate change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development of an Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2022/23)</li> <li>■ Introduce smart technologies to manage the impact of our investment choices on health and wellbeing and fuel poverty (2023/24)</li> <li>■ EESSH2 and Net Zero plans confirmed, with 10% of our stock achieving Net Zero compliance (2025/26. Note that 2040 is the current target for full compliance)</li> </ul>
<b>Deliver Regeneration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ We will commence regeneration of at least two major intervention areas (2026/27)</li> </ul>

## Engaged Employees

We believe that well led, engaged and empowered employees are integral to our success in achieving our mission.

We aim to be an employer of choice, offering great careers. We support our ambitions for employees through investment in training and development. We are proud of achieving Investors in People (IIP) Gold certification for RCH on our first attempt in 2018 and retaining this status on our assessment in 2021. We plan to build on this success, gaining IIP accreditation for HFS also.

We recognise the continuing importance of employee health, safety, and welfare. These were particular concerns during the pandemic, and we have remained committed in our provision of appropriate resources and support to all of our staff.

Our Engaged Employees outcomes are underpinned by our Organisational Development Strategy. The key outcomes and success measures aligned with **Engaged Employees** are summarised below.

Key Outcomes	Key Success Measures
<b>Embed Our Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training delivered to 100% staff (2022/23)</li> </ul>
<b>Create a high performing management team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a Leadership development programme for new management team (2022/23)</li> </ul>
<b>Achieve strong Investors in People accreditation across RCH Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HFS: achieve at least IIP Bronze on initial assessment (2022/23) and achieve IIP Gold on second assessment (2025/26)</li> <li>▪ RCH: retain IIP Gold on next assessment (2023/24) and achieve IIP Platinum on following assessment (2026/27)</li> </ul>
<b>Recognised as an employer investing in Young People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HFS Apprenticeship programme delivery (2022/23)</li> <li>▪ Investors in Young People Gold accreditation (2023/24) increasing to Platinum (2026/27)</li> </ul>
<b>Rising staff engagement survey scores</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarterly pulse surveys (from July 2022)</li> <li>▪ Achieve staff satisfaction of &gt; 80% for both RCH and HFS (2024/25)</li> </ul>

## Thriving Communities

We believe that our social landlord role goes beyond just the provision of basic landlord services. We aim to create sustainable homes **and communities**.

By generating social value we can help tackle the significant economic, health and environmental inequalities that our communities face.

The many ways in which we create social value was highlighted in Section 2 above. These activities support the delivery of our Thriving Communities outcomes.



Our Thriving Communities outcomes are underpinned by our Value for Money Strategy. The key outcomes and success measures aligned with **Thriving Communities** are summarised below.

Key Outcomes	Key Success Measures
<b>Improve quality of life for our customers via thriving, resilient communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Introduce a Mentoring Scheme, making better use of frontline resources, empowering customers, and colleagues to make positive change (2023/24)</li> <li>■ Introduce community specific satisfaction surveys (2023/24)</li> <li>■ Collaborative working with partners to reduce antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse</li> <li>■ Achieve agreed targets for housing and supporting homeless households</li> </ul>
<b>Improved Street Scene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Roll out close and back court cleaning service (2023/24)</li> <li>■ Develop a revised strategy for our open spaces (2024/25)</li> <li>■ Integrated estates and planned maintenance (2024/25)</li> </ul>
<b>Deliver our VFM Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deliver a further £2m of VFM savings (by 2024/25)</li> <li>■ Develop and publish social value reporting (2023/24)</li> </ul>
<b>Increased community benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Proactive Campaign and Customer involvement Panel established (2023/24)</li> <li>■ Maximise opportunities from contractors and attract 10 work placement, employment, and apprenticeship opportunities (2023/24)</li> <li>■ Generate £100k external funding to support our most vulnerable customers (2024/25)</li> </ul>

## Strong Partnerships

We recognise that our success depends on leveraging quality relationships with all our partners and alliances, and we believe that effective partnership working yields mutual benefit.

While significant investment has already been made in enhancing these relationships, there is more that can be done. Our key partnerships and alliances include:

- Inverclyde Council
- Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership
- Inverclyde Alliance Member Organisations
- Other Social Housing providers in Inverclyde
- Elected representatives including local Councillors and local MP, MSPs

We also continue to maintain a partnership working principle with other key stakeholders such as the Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator.

Key Outcomes	Key Success Measures
<b>Become a Partner of Choice – partners and contractors have a positive experience with RCH Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognised as being a proponent of strong environmental, social and governance (ESG) capabilities - Introduce ESG reporting (2023/24)</li> <li>▪ HFS business growth - external revenue representing 10% of total revenue (2026/27)</li> </ul>
<b>Strong Stakeholder relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Biennial Stakeholder Business Event (commencing 2022)</li> <li>▪ Customer Involvement Steering Group to introduce annual customer event (2023/24)</li> <li>▪ Formalised business updates with Scottish Housing Regulator and funders (semi-annually)</li> <li>▪ Quarterly Stakeholder briefing communication</li> </ul>
<b>Established Key Partner of Inverclyde Alliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased senior management participation in Inverclyde Alliance Board/Forums</li> <li>▪ Collaboration with Inverclyde Council, other social landlords and other agencies to enable regeneration projects</li> <li>▪ Biennial All Member Briefings with Inverclyde Council (commencing 2022)</li> </ul>

## 5. Enabling Success

Set out below is just a selection of methods and techniques that will enable our success in delivering our strategic outcomes. All of these enabling factors are subjected to ongoing validation, ensuring that we recognise the changing operating environment, adapting our approach as appropriate.

### Key Supporting Strategies

Our core strategic outcomes are underpinned by robust strategies.

<b>Excellent Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Our <b>Customer Services Strategy</b> addresses how we will deliver Excellent Services.</li><li>■ We achieved Customer Service Excellence accreditation in the summer of 2022.</li></ul>
<b>Sustainable Homes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Our <b>Asset Management Strategy</b> sets out how we will deliver our investment plans and deliver sustainability.</li><li>■ We are developing an Energy Strategy that will address our ambitions for achieving net zero.</li></ul>
<b>Engaged Employees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Our <b>Organisational Development Strategy</b> sets our plan to develop our workforce across the RCH Group.</li><li>■ This ensures are staff are well led, engaged, and empowered.</li></ul>
<b>Thriving Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Our <b>Value for Money Strategy</b> reconfirms our commitment to <i>'every penny counts'</i>, providing opportunities for ensuring our rents are affordable.</li><li>■ We continue to deliver a suite of initiatives that provide social value across our communities.</li></ul>
<b>Strong Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ We take a proactive approach to our Community Partnership responsibilities.</li><li>■ Senior management contribution to Partnership forums and Inverclyde Alliance.</li></ul>

### Effective Governance

We have a Business Assurance action plan which enhances our development of our Business Assurance framework. Board members of both RCH Group and HFS Board commit to this plan. There is also a separate Board training and development plan in place.

This ensures the continuous improvement of the Board and its Committees and RCH Group's overall governance as well as providing Business Assurance (compliance with the Scottish Housing Regulator's requirements and legislation, Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management and the Scottish Social Housing Charter).

## Reinforcing our 'Golden Thread'

Supplementing our core strategies is a suite of corporate, directorate and team level plans, providing a Golden Thread. Each directorate, department and individual member of staff collectively and individually contributes to the achievement of our strategy.



## Embedding Our Approach

Following a recent change management initiative, drawing upon contribution from key management across the RCH Group, RCH and HFS now have alignment of **Purpose**, **Strategic Outcomes** and **Values**.

Management went further and developed a set of core principles that cover **how** we operate, developing **Our Approach**.

This simple model puts the customer at the heart of everything that we do, with all staff adopting four core principles across all aspects of our work.

We have a focus on **Performance**, ensuring we are outcome driven, deliver VFM and continuously improve.

Through **Innovation**, we ensure that we continually enhance our processes, optimise the use of IT for our service delivery and embrace shared learning.

Through a focus on **People**, we aim to lead, engage, and empower our staff. We encourage and foster equality and diversity and deliver staff development and training.

Through **Collaboration**, we aim to work together more effectively both with our internal and external partnerships.



## Effective Use of our Resources

Appropriate arrangements are in place to deliver refinancing with our existing lenders. Broadly, these arrangements will enable us to invest almost £100m in our stock over the next decade.

In addition to our private funding, we will be seeking to optimise other funding opportunities, particularly in relation to the delivery of our net zero strategy and our wider plans for regeneration. This will require effective partnership working across our stakeholders, including Scottish Government and Inverclyde Council.

The effective use of our resources is a key consideration within our Value for Money Strategy which is monitored by senior management on an ongoing basis.

## Leveraging Value from HFS

As an organisation, HFS is in relative infancy and still has a journey to reach maturation. Despite its relative immaturity, HFS has many opportunities for delivering value for money. For instance, under leadership from its new management team, HFS is identifying areas for further growth, which includes opportunities for taking on work that is currently undertaken by external contractors.

A key long-term milestone would be the participation in the wider built environment marketplace, earning material revenues from sources other than RCH. Although our business plans have taken a prudent assumption that there will be no new revenue or profits from external activity, the business will still consider external market opportunities during the life of this plan (subject to business case and effective risk management).

Currently, the built environment sector across Scotland is undergoing significant change. Macroeconomic forces, including supply chain challenges, access to labour and spiraling inflation are having an impact on many contractors who service the repairs and maintenance and related activities of the social housing sector.

Even contract rates secured within the last couple of years are proving uneconomical for many contractors, necessitating renegotiation or novation of contracts to other organisations. Several major players are withdrawing from the sector, and some have gone into administration recently. For many social landlords, the situation is challenging given the inherent uncertainty concerning reliability of their existing service plus the prospect of very high rates of inflation pertaining to their repairs and maintenance. There are incidences of tender returns yielding price inflation of more than 25%.

HFS is subject to the same supply chain and material cost inflation challenges as the rest of the market. However, its function as an 'in-house' contractor within the RCH Group represents for RCH, a 'hedge' against the full impact currently being experienced by other social landlords reliant on external contractors.

## Effective Risk Management

We take a proactive approach to risk management, ensuring that we remain a resilient business. Our governance arrangements ensure that there is appropriate focus on the identification of risk and its mitigation. Consideration of our risk register is a standing agenda item at our Group Audit & Risk Committee and the HFS Board. This ensures that emerging risks are addressed appropriately.

When appropriate, management will form a Business Resilience Group to manage situations of heightened risk. This approach enabled the business to maintain resilience throughout the COVID pandemic, ensuring the delivery of front-line services.

Another example of risk mitigation relates to the very recent, unexpected announcement by the Scottish Government concerning the prospect of a short-term rent freeze, followed by a period of rent capping. This was immediately identified as a key risk to our business and prompted revised business modelling and scenario testing. As well as informing our own mitigation strategies and operational plans, our assessment enabled effective consultation with the SFHA and in turn the Scottish Government on future rent policy.

## Performance Management and Effective Business Planning

Our performance and plans are monitored regularly by senior management and our Boards and Committees. This ensures that variations in performance or emerging issues and risks (as highlighted above) can be identified, and appropriate action can be taken.

Each year, we refresh our plan for the coming year together with plans and projections covering five years and thirty years ahead. Although we have a formalised annual business plan review cycle, which includes appropriate stress-testing, we ensure that our strategy and plans are responsive to any key changes in our external or internal environment.

Ultimately, the RCH Group Board will approve changes to our strategic direction. In effect, our strategy and plans are subject to ongoing validation. For instance, regular communication between the CEO, Chair and Vice-Chair, ensures timely discussion of any strategic issues. In addition to the standing Board and Committee calendar, we incorporate ad hoc Board Meetings if required and we have formalised annual strategic review sessions with both the RCH Group Board and HFS Boards.

## Continuous Improvement

Ongoing enhancement of our services and the way that we operate is a key component of our **Performance** Group Operating principle. We use benchmarking to inform our progress and we also gain objective and independent perspective through accreditations. Here are just a few examples of our current certifications.





River Clyde Homes:  
Clyde View,  
22 Pottery Street, Greenock, PA15 2UZ  
River Clyde Homes is a company limited by  
guarantee, registered in Scotland (SC329031)  
and a Scottish Charity (SC038584). Property  
Factor Registration Number: PF000152.