



# Building better for the North East

**A prospectus for people,  
with housing at its heart**





North East Housing  
Partnership

The North East Housing Partnership is made up of the following North East based housing associations and stock owning local authorities:

- believe housing
- Bernicia
- Castles & Coasts
- Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association
- Gateshead Council
- Gentoo
- Home Group
- Johnnie Johnson Housing
- Karbon Homes
- Livin
- North Star
- North Tyneside Council
- Northumberland County Council
- South Tyneside Homes
- Thirteen
- Tyne Housing
- Your Homes Newcastle on behalf of Newcastle City Council

# About us

The North East Housing Partnership (NEHP) brings together the majority of the North East's social housing sector. Our members are housing associations, local authorities and arms length management organisations (ALMOs), that have a strong presence in the part of the North East covered by the new Mayoral Combined Authority.

Our members are in many ways diverse. Some are small and locally focused, while others operate across several regions. Some are specialists, while others focus on generalist provision. But all are united by the idea that greater collaboration across the sector can bring economic, social and environmental benefit to the region. We provide a single, collective forum through which the North East Mayoral Combined Authority can engage with the social housing sector to bring about positive change.

Our members are rooted in their communities. We are transparent and accountable to our customers, who are consulted on the homes we build, the services we provide and the way we govern our organisations. We have deep roots and strong relationships with people in the cities, towns and villages of the North East. In turn, we provide a solid anchor point around which communities can coalesce and thrive. While we don't always get it right, research shows that social housing tenants in the North East are the most satisfied in the country (74% satisfied, 13% not)<sup>1</sup>.

Our role as anchor institutions is shown in part by the size of our footprint. NEHP members own and manage more than 214,000<sup>2</sup> homes in the North East. In fact, more than one in six households across our region live in the homes we provide. We built almost 7,000<sup>3</sup> homes in the last four years and invest millions of pounds each year in regeneration. Not only do we directly employ over 10,000 people but the work of building and maintaining our homes supports a substantial proportion of the 96,000<sup>4</sup>-strong workforce in the North East's construction sector.

The evidence shows that social housing development offers a significant economic multiplier. Local Government Association (LGA) research indicates that "every £1 invested in a new social home generates £2.84 in the wider economy."<sup>5</sup>

But our status as anchor institutions is based on more than our physical scale and reach, and our role as catalysts for economic development. It is rooted in the way our social impact endures for generations.

Members of the NEHP hold onto a simple belief. That a house is more than a roof over your head. A good quality, well-connected and well-insulated home is something you can build a life around. The evidence is clear that good homes lead to good educational outcomes for children and young people. That well-connected homes allow people to take advantage of economic opportunities. And that warm, comfortable homes, with wraparound support services, mean that older people can stay independent for longer, increasing their quality of life and reducing costs for the NHS. Investing in good homes generates lifelong returns.

Helping people build better lives, and having the capacity to scale that impact, makes our sector an attractive partner. In addition, our long-term stability and resilience allows us to lever in private finance alongside our own investment to accelerate our social impact. While the housing sector goes through cycles, in which development rushes ahead and then stalls, social housing providers can operate counter cyclically, investing and building during downturns to maintain the supply of affordable homes and serve as anchor institutions for our communities.

<sup>1</sup>DLUHC research

<sup>2</sup>RSH SDR/LADR 2022

<sup>3</sup>Based on DLUHC Live Table on Affordable Housing Supply Table 1008C- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>.

<sup>4</sup>Chartered Institute of Building - "The Real Face of Construction" April 2023

<sup>5</sup>Delivery of council housing: a stimulus package post-pandemic | Local Government Association



# Foreword

The Mayoral Combined Authority area, and the North East as a whole, are home to some striking contrasts.



Vibrant cities, but areas of severe deprivation. World leading universities, but high numbers of people who are unskilled. A home to globally renowned technology businesses, but also to the lowest employment rate in England and Wales. And a place with enormous pride in its identity, that suffers the lowest life expectancy in the UK.

These are two different pictures drawn on the same canvas. The distance from Gosforth to Byker, or Sedgefield to Shildon, is short, but the lives of their residents are vastly different.

Devolution presents a significant opportunity to address these disparities and build our region better. To capitalise on our attractiveness as a place to live and invest, and to tackle the challenges that make life hard for many people. With new powers and new funding, managed and delivered close to local needs, we can take on deep-seated problems that have long held us back.

But devolution isn't a magic wand. It's a starting point from which to build for the future. That future rests in all our hands and high quality, affordable housing must be at its heart.

If we're to maximise the success of devolution, then anchor housing institutions across the region need to get behind it, lend their enthusiasm and expertise, and align their own work and investment with that of the new combined authority. That's what this prospectus is all about.

**Paul Fiddaman**  
Chair, North East Housing Partnership

Between the members of the North East Housing Partnership (NEHP), we manage 214,000 homes. We are embedded in communities across the region. But our potential is far more than the sum of our parts suggest.

When we invest together, work together and plan together, we can achieve economies of scale, shape supply chains, regenerate communities, decarbonise our region, prepare people for jobs and support them to live longer, healthier lives. If we align ourselves in each of these areas with the new combined authority, we can achieve even more.

So this prospectus is about three types of partnership. The strong, determined, ambitious partnership between the NEHP members, who are committed to working together for the interests of the region as a whole. Our long-standing partnership with communities, which gives us insight and understanding about what works. And our new partnership with the Mayoral Combined Authority, through which housing can be a strategic catalyst for economic and social transformation. Together, we can set out on this exciting journey to change our region for the better.



# The North East

The housing market in the North East is relatively affordable and the region can offer an excellent quality of life, but it also has a particular set of challenges.

Over 41,000<sup>6</sup> households in the North East are currently on the social housing waiting list because the private market isn't able to meet their needs. In some cases there are more than 200 applicants<sup>7</sup> for each of the new homes we develop. The waiting list is growing in part because of higher rents in the private sector, which result in affordability and supply issues.

While the region is home to a host of successful businesses and continues to attract inward investment, we also face economic and social challenges. A greater percentage of the workforce in our region is low skilled than in other parts of the country. That skills shortfall is partly due to higher rates of older workers leaving the job market, but we also have a high number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). In all, the region has the lowest employment rate in England and Wales (74.5%).

Like many areas of the country, we are seeing rising levels of poverty in response to soaring food and energy costs, alongside wages that are falling in real terms. Fuel poverty is one expression of the challenging times, and our region went into the energy crisis with levels of fuel poverty above the national average.

These issues and others manifest themselves in poor health outcomes. People in the North East have the lowest life expectancy in the UK, living three years less than the best performing regions, and we also have the highest rates of economic inactivity due to ill health or disability.

## A prospectus for change

This prospectus sets out how, as a partnership, we can tackle these challenges by making progress together in four thematic areas:

- 1. Regeneration, development and placemaking.** We can build new homes to meet the need for truly affordable housing, bring abandoned sites back into productive use and create great places to live where communities can thrive.
- 2. Net zero and sustainability.** We are in a strong position to accelerate retrofit across the North East, decarbonising our own stock and paving the way for decarbonisation in owner occupied and privately rented homes.
- 3. Employability and social inclusion.** We can help people into work, support them in employment, help them develop new skills and strengthen the regional economy.
- 4. Health, care and homelessness.** We can be instrumental in helping people live longer, healthier lives, by working in partnership with others across the region.

In each case, housing provides a starting point to wider social, environmental and economic outcomes. And in each case, these outcomes can be strengthened and enhanced by close partnership with the new Mayor and regional authority.



<sup>6</sup>Live table 600: Local Authority Waiting Lists - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

<sup>7</sup>Survey of members



# PLACEMAKING



# Regeneration, development and placemaking

## Background

The North East is widely recognised as a great place to live, with vibrant cities, world renowned landscapes, and a wealth of heritage and culture. There is a strong sense of regional identity that brings people together and the successful regeneration of Gateshead and Newcastle's quayside shows how new communities can put down roots in areas of historic decline. The region has plenty more opportunities to bring brownfield sites back into productive use, such as Forth Yards in Newcastle, North Shields and Wallsend in North Tyneside, Horden in County Durham, South Shields riverside and Sunderland. Across the Mayoral Combined Authority area, 28,400<sup>8</sup> plots of brownfield land await development for new housing.

## Our record

Our members have a strong track record of delivering high quality, sustainable and affordable homes. We have done so by working in partnership with local authorities and with agencies such as Homes England. In fact, over the last four years, councils, ALMOs and housing associations in the North East have delivered an average of 1,739<sup>9</sup> new homes each year.

In 2021/22, our housebuilding work accounted for 26%<sup>10</sup> of all completions across the NEMCA area, and we currently manage around 18%<sup>11</sup> of all homes in constituent local authorities. In the North East as a whole, 37%<sup>12</sup> of new homes are built on brownfield land, but our record in social housing is far stronger. 55%<sup>13</sup> of our homes are built on previously developed land, bringing it back into productive use and turning derelict places into communities where people can thrive. We actively embrace a placemaking role in these communities, building and sustaining places by investing not only in the quality of the built environment but in the community infrastructure and social support necessary to support vibrant, successful places.

Our record for quality holds true long after the homes are built. Independent surveys<sup>14</sup> show that the homes we own and manage reach higher levels of property decency and energy efficiency than similar homes in the private rented sector and their owner-occupied equivalents. And of course, our homes are truly affordable. The rents charged by NEHP members are among the lowest in the country, at around £80 per week on average.<sup>15</sup>

We understand that communities are comprised of people of all ages and this is reflected in the mix of properties we provide. Around 20% of the homes we build are suitable for elderly people and groups with specialist needs or mobility issues, and in the past four years we have built over 600 specialist accessible homes.

<sup>8</sup>NHC collation of individual local authority brownfield registers

<sup>9</sup>DLUHC Live Tables on Affordable Housing Completions – Table1008C

<sup>10</sup>1,620 affordable completions and 6,140 completions in Tyne & Wear, Northumberland and County Durham - DLUHC live tables on affordable and total completions

<sup>11</sup>Data - ONS 'Households by size, regions of England and GB constituent countries' 2022 dataset, published 18 May 2023

<sup>12</sup>DLUHC Land Use Change statistics - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/land-use-change-statistics-2021-to-2022/land-use-change-statistics-new-residential-addresses-2021-to-2022#fn:2>

<sup>13</sup>Survey of members

<sup>14</sup>Northern Housing Monitor

<sup>15</sup>Live Table 704 – Private Registered Provider weekly rents, Dept. for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

## The regeneration of York Hill



In just two years, the transformation of the York Hill estate in Durham by Livin has been extraordinary. Once a run-down estate where people were reluctant to live, 150 homes have been renovated and modernised for local people. Old fashioned construction techniques had left a legacy of buildings that lost heat and were expensive to run, so the regeneration programme has made each home far

more efficient and reduced energy bills for local people. A mix of tenures on the site means that owner occupiers, social housing residents and people using the Rent to Buy scheme are able to benefit from the improvements to the local area. A sense of community has built quickly, supported by an investment of £50,000 in activities at the local community centre.

## Ambition for Wallsend

Wallsend in North Tyneside is the focus of the Mayor and Cabinet's plans for 5,000 affordable homes, set within easy reach of a vibrant town centre that's well connected to opportunities for employment. Positive changes over the last 10 years have included new council housing, a new health centre, managed office space and the revitalisation of Richardson Dees Park and other open space. Ideas have been developed

to improve the streetscape and public places, and to support residents into work with a new Working Well employability hub. The town centre will be remodelled, and the Segedunum world heritage site will be completely redesigned. A combination of new build and refurbishment will attract economically mobile new residents who can support local shops and services.

# Our offer

By bringing together councils and housing associations across the region, the North East Housing Partnership offers regional impact through local focus.

Collectively, despite the economic challenges, we already have plans to deliver at least 6,500<sup>16</sup> new affordable homes across the combined authority area over the Mayor's first term. We believe there is scope to increase this target given the right support. We will work with the Combined Authority to develop a realistic stretch target for the development of new affordable homes that recognises the huge levels of unmet demand in the region.

We are determined to accelerate the delivery of new affordable homes, particularly at strategic sites highlighted in the devolution agreement such as Ashington, Gateshead, Hebburn and Easington. In addition, between the members of the Partnership, we have identified a number of opportunity neighbourhoods across the region that would benefit from housing-led regeneration.

As members of the Partnership, we will:

- Accelerate the delivery of new, high-quality, green, affordable homes across the region.
- Bring forward new affordable homes on derelict land.
- Work with the MCA and Homes England to develop a Strategic Place Partnership that delivers for the North East.
- Support the MCA as it gains greater influence over the allocation of housing investment funds over time, continuing to identify suitable sites for potential development.
- Deliver place-based physical and economic regeneration through a housing-led approach, across the opportunity neighbourhoods that we have already identified and beyond.
- Collaborate with partners to provide specialist and supported housing, including for those at risk of homelessness, elderly residents and those with mobility difficulties.
- Work with the MCA to codesign an approach to investment in rural affordable housing in the North East.

## Further and faster

Together with the MCA, we can go further and faster, if the new authority can support us by:

- Working with NEHP and other likeminded stakeholders to create a strategic plan to deliver our shared placemaking, housing development and regeneration ambitions, with an explicit focus on the region's affordable housing needs.
- Aligning the authority's funding pots for regeneration and brownfield land with our own investment and other grant funding, in order to accelerate existing plans and unlock new opportunities for affordable housing development, regeneration and placemaking.
- Using the land assembly and compulsory purchase powers in the devolution agreement, with the intention of assembling sites suitable for affordable housebuilding and regeneration.
- Working closely with us to engage with national government bodies, such as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Homes England, and involving us in a direct relationship with government advisers and policy makers, so that we can present a collective voice to influence change on behalf of the region.
- Developing growing influence over the allocation of Homes England resources, as has been the case for the Greater Manchester Mayoral Combined Authority in the Greater Manchester Trailblazer Devolution Agreement.
- Establishing Mayoral Development Corporations for specific priority areas, and including the social housing sector as key partners in the shaping of those corporations, and their governance and decision-making.

<sup>16</sup>Survey of members



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 **NET ZERO**

# Net zero and sustainability

## Background

There is a strong regional consensus on the importance of net zero and the need to take urgent action. Our members are focused on their corporate environmental impact, adopting electric vehicles and improving the efficiency of their sites and operations. But our most significant opportunity lies in the decarbonisation of our housing stock, with high quality new builds and extensive programmes of retrofit. Here, the benefits lie not only in the destination, but on the journey, since the path to net zero promises three valuable gains.

First, and fundamentally, since existing homes are responsible for around a quarter of the North East's carbon emissions, our concerted efforts to reduce those emissions will have a significant environmental impact for the region and beyond.

Second, this long-term environmental benefit is accompanied by an immediate economic and wellbeing impact for the people who live in upgraded, well-insulated homes. Modern methods of insulation can improve wellbeing, reduce energy bills and put money back in people's pockets, reducing the fuel poverty that impacts on many people in our region.

And third, retrofit presents a significant economic opportunity. Social landlords will be investing approximately £520m<sup>17</sup> in upgrading the region's homes to EPC C by 2030, and will make further significant investments to reach net zero by 2050. Investment at this scale is a huge stimulus for the region's economy, increasing job opportunities and driving a need for more green skills, in line with those identified by the skills needs assessment of domestic retrofit commissioned by the North East LEP and North East and Yorkshire Energy Hub Board<sup>18</sup>.

## Our record

Net zero depends on new homes that are built to a high standard and on programmes of retrofit that deliver change at scale, at pace, and in an affordable way. Social housing providers are making great strides in each of these areas. Over 80%<sup>19</sup> of our newly built homes achieve EPC B or above. We ensure sustainable travel options are factored into all new home and regeneration scheme plans, and we have invested millions in improving the energy efficiency of our homes.

In partnership with other key stakeholders, such as Homes England and North East and Yorkshire Energy Hub, we have been able to secure additional funding in support of our net zero plans. The strength of our collaboration is shown in our consortium bid success to secure £80.6 million of investment in 5,525 homes for retrofit. Indeed, the North East is leading the way on delivery of key national programmes. Statistics from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero show that as of the end of April 2023, 25% of the measures installed under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund were in the North East. Now it's time to move from collaboration on funding to collaboration on procurement and delivery.

<sup>17</sup>English Housing Survey data

<sup>18</sup>North East LEP domestic retrofit skills needs assessment

<sup>19</sup>Survey of members

## Putting tenants at the heart of net zero

The Social Housing Tenants' Climate Jury – the first initiative of its kind - brought together 30 social housing residents from across the North, including 10 from the North East, to put the tenant voice firmly at the heart of the discussion on climate change and its impact on housing. The jury was commissioned as an independent body to make recommendations to the social housing sector as to how tenants, social housing providers and others can work together to tackle climate change in homes and neighbourhoods.

The Tenants' Climate Jury produced a set of recommendations grounded in a representative, inclusive process. Landlords involved in the project found that the jury was "a valuable opportunity to work together and gain essential insight from customers." The project moved beyond existing engagement structures and brought hard to reach groups into the conversation.

## UK's largest tower block gas replacement



A pioneering project to install lifesaving sprinklers and ground source heat pumps to 364 flats in Sunderland will involve what is thought to be the largest gas replacement in high rise tower blocks in the UK. The project, named 'Core 364', is being delivered by Sunderland-based Gentoo and its regeneration partner, Engie, as part of a £9 million investment.

Residents in Gentoo's seven tower blocks are set to benefit from significant energy bill savings as a result of heating both their homes and water with renewable heat from the earth's core. The modernisation work will also see Gentoo upgrade the fire alarm and smoke detection systems in each of the blocks and, in parallel, install a state-of-the-art sprinkler system to improve safety.

# Our offer

Our business plans will see us committing millions over the next five, 15 and 30 years to the retrofit of our existing homes and the development of new ones, providing warmth, comfort and a financial lift to many thousands of families. But the heart of our offer goes beyond what we can deliver for our own homes and customers, and can be game changing for the region in two ways.

First, what we manage at scale in the social housing sector, supported by public sector investment, will kick-start the market for owner occupied and private rented homes. The scale of our planned investment will provide the supply chain with the confidence it needs to invest in our region, develop more training and employability opportunities and drive innovation in new technology. By leading the way on net zero for the North East, we will create a more efficient market and more cost-effective provision for those who follow.

Second, our strong connections with households and communities mean we can help people along the journey as they adapt to new energy sources and decarbonisation measures. Modern energy efficiency measures can't be done to people, they need to be done with people, and our strong relationships give us a platform from which to make a difference. Our links to our communities and customers make us the perfect partners to enable customer engagement, test ideas and drive uptake of regional sustainability initiatives.

By collaborating across the region, we will:

- Achieve economies of scale that allow us to procure modern energy efficiency improvements cost effectively, on a place-by-place rather than provider-by-provider basis, targeting first those places which have older, leaky homes where we can generate the best social and environmental returns in order to create a model through which to retrofit at scale.
- Leverage more investment into retrofit programmes.
- Bring all social housing in the North East up to the standard of EPC C by 2030.

- Ensure all new social homes are built to at least EPC B.
- Ensure the design and connectivity of all new social homes supports sustainable modes of transport and the use of electric vehicle technology.
- Signal our intent and commitment by delivering a number of flagship net zero developments during the course of the Mayor's first term.
- Bring all social housing up to a net zero standard by 2050, or earlier if we are able to leverage more investment during the course of our programmes.
- Facilitate understanding among residents of the need for energy efficiency measures, building on the strong platform provided by work such as the Heart Warming Homes toolkit.<sup>20</sup>

## Further and faster

Together with the MCA, we can go further and faster, if the new authority can support us by:

- Working in partnership on a strategic plan, supported by long-term finance, to deliver our shared net zero and sustainability goals through collective procurement and joint investment in innovation and green skills.
- Looking to amalgamate funding to support net zero in one mayoral energy efficiency fund that can support place-based rather than tenure-based programmes.



<sup>20</sup><https://heartwarminghomes.org.uk/>



# EMPLOYABILITY



# Employability and social inclusion

## Background

The North East is an attractive place for investment and home to leading global businesses, but there is much more we can do to deliver on our economic ambitions. When investment comes into the region, local people seize the opportunities on offer. But we still have high numbers of workless households, high levels of economic inactivity among those of working age (22.8%) and fewer senior posts than other parts of the country. The high percentage of our workforce with low skills can hold the region back, as can the poor connectivity of some of our left behind places, which prevents people taking on employment and training.

The devolution deal identifies the many opportunities available to our region. Opportunities in green energy, battery technology, and biosciences to name a few. To realise these opportunities, we need a skilled workforce, to meet the demands of a changing jobs market and sustain our growth.

Employability support is crucial. And for some people that support must go further than skills training or access to opportunities. Some people need a wider range of tailored interventions to help them be ready for and maintain employment.

Social housing tenants fall disproportionately into this group. They tend to be poorer, have had fewer opportunities to develop skills, and are more likely to be economically inactive due to poor connectivity with employment areas. Housing providers seek to address these challenges by funding employability programmes from their own resources. But higher costs and rising needs make this increasingly difficult to sustain. To achieve equitable economic development, measures are needed to support those furthest away from the job market, so they can share in the benefits of growth.

## Our record

As anchor institutions, housing providers have a long-term commitment to the diverse population of the North East and a history of delivering employability programmes in the heart of the hardest hit communities. We help individuals overcome underlying barriers to employability and provide in-work support to help people stay in jobs. We work with employers to create new opportunities and maintain that focus in our own organisations, with apprenticeships and training across a range of functions. Social value agreements are embedded in our procurement and supply chains.



## Housing providers support residents into work



HENNE is a partnership of 13 housing providers, many of which are members of the NEHP, who are collectively responsible for more than 190,000 homes. Through collaboration, partnership and developing practical solutions, HENNE helps residents overcome barriers to employment, and develop skills and experience, and provides employment opportunities. HENNE builds on the

collective knowledge and experience of partners to deliver a wide range of employability programmes and specialist provision for those furthest from the employment market.

In 2022/23, HENNE partners supported almost 1,500 local people into employment and supported 5,000 towards work.

## Help for supported housing residents to move on

By aligning its investment with capital and revenue funding from Homes England, Tyne Housing, a HENNE partner, created the Move On programme. Through the scheme, Tyne Housing built and purchased one-bedroom flats across the Tyneside area, and designed a package of employment support to help tenants make the difficult transition from supported housing to general needs housing. The funding package allowed rents to be set at an affordable level, and covered wraparound support including an employment coach, support staff and security. Data from the Move On programme suggests that since it was launched in late 2019, around 60% of residents have entered work, while a further 20% have had structured volunteering placements. A number have moved out of supported housing, including into home ownership and local authority housing.

Dan was homeless and living on the streets in Newcastle before being housed by Tyne Housing. He says:

"I'm dead happy I've been given a chance to move into this new place on my own and out of a shared



house. In the first week I was in here, I just knew I was ready to get out there and get a job and start moving on with my life. This place being actually affordable means I could do it and not be worried about losing my home or keeping up with costs if something went wrong. I woke up one morning and just started applying for loads of jobs online. I got three interviews and was offered two jobs. I took one that I could start straight away and it's been dead good so far."

# Our offer

At the heart of our employability and social inclusion offer is our holistic approach, rooted in our direct, daily engagement with the hardest to reach communities, our close connections with people, and our understanding of the many interrelated forces that shape their lives.

By collaborating across the region, we will:

- Establish multi-agency, employer and sector partnerships that avoid a fragmented approach.
- Develop pathways and strategic partnerships across the region, building on current ones with the HM Prison and Probation Service and the voluntary and community sector to reach marginalised communities, and with the NHS as a major local employer.
- Continue to build robust employer relationships that deliver employability opportunities, such as those created through the New Start programme (providing paid work placements for the over 25s) and our relationship with paint and coatings provider AkzoNobel.
- Deliver skills training to match needs identified through the recent Local Skills Improvement Plan, which highlighted specific sectors that will provide growth opportunities for the region, including the green sector, aviation, retail, hospitality, construction, logistics, care, manufacturing and warehousing.
- Use our investment in regeneration and placemaking to support the vitality of high streets and town and city centres, increasing footfall and creating jobs in retail and hospitality.
- Seek to break down barriers in relation to transport and digital inclusion.
- Work more effectively with specialist groups including NEETs, care leavers, asylum seekers and refugees.
- Develop programmes with schools that raise aspirations and work readiness, and provide access to work experience and mentors.

- Work collaboratively across the housing sector, and with wider stakeholders, to develop innovative employability solutions and infrastructure.
- Continue to invest in social inclusion initiatives that build the skills, confidence and capacity of people to take their first steps into employment.

## Further and faster

Together with the MCA, we can go further and faster, if the new authority can support us by:

- Supporting the strategic delivery of transport and digital infrastructure to overcome the significant barriers experienced by the region's potential workforce, particularly in rural areas.
- Working towards the removal of the functional and system barriers for those trying to access employment, for example prison release procedures that create barriers to accessing housing or family benefit tail offs that result in young people dropping out of college or apprenticeships.
- Working with us to expand the capacity of a Housing Innovation and Construction Skills Academy, linked to the needs of the region and with a particular focus on green jobs.
- Joining forces on workforce development to support key sectors such as hospitality, construction and health, and to consider the delivery of these programmes through existing social landlord structures.
- Creating a culture of collaboration via a commissioning approach that encourages innovation and partnership working.
- Encouraging long-term funding opportunities and contracts to enable more certainty, greater impact and the ability to adapt the provision to ensure the needs of customers are continually met.



 **HEALTH**

# Health, care and homelessness

## Background

A good home is the foundation on which a good life can be built, but for those without a good home, or without a home at all, the consequences for health, wellbeing and life opportunity are severe.

We continue to see high levels of homelessness across the region. During one night alone in autumn 2022, 61 people were recorded as sleeping rough. And in 2021/22 there were 16,000 people owed a homelessness duty, in many cases due to family and friends being unable to accommodate them, the ending of private sector tenancies or domestic abuse. We are also seeing increasing requests for housing assistance for groups from other countries, including Ukraine and Afghanistan, as the North East continues to extend a welcome to people fleeing conflict and crisis.

For those who have a home, health inequalities between the North and the rest of England are worsening, with lower life expectancy and higher infant mortality rates. People in the North East have the lowest life expectancy in the UK, living three years less than the best performing regions, and we also have the highest rates of economic inactivity due to ill health or disability.

Covid 19 will continue to have a lasting impact on health inequalities. Those who were overcrowded, living in poor housing conditions, in unstable accommodation or rough sleeping were some of those most affected by the pandemic and we will see this legacy continue to affect the region for some time ahead.

Poor housing represents a similar risk to the NHS as physical inactivity, smoking or alcohol. But warm, high-quality homes can reduce the risk of cardiovascular, respiratory and rheumatoid conditions, improve dexterity among older people and reduce the risk of falls. Our work can help to stem the annual cost of poor housing to the NHS, which is estimated at £1.4 billion.

## Our record

Nationally there is huge appetite for greater integration between health and care. And with the establishment of new Integrated Care Boards, it's essential that housing is an integral part of the wider health and care system across our region.

Our community-based health initiatives include social prescribing, services for older people, public health partnerships and grant programmes. And by enabling effective hospital discharge, we ensure people are not staying in hospital unnecessarily, which reduces costs for the NHS. We provide reablement provision and have widely delivered activities including falls reduction, stop smoking services and physical activity sessions.

Our members provide adaptations so people can live independently in their own homes, and we develop

new homes to better meet the needs of an ageing population. We have developed, commissioned and provided specialist and supported housing for those with care and support needs. This includes extra care and step-up and step-down schemes, which prevent delays in transfer of care. In addition, we are a key provider of care and support services, including services for those with dementia, older people, and those with mental health issues and learning disabilities.

To prevent the risk of homelessness, we deliver advice and support to people living in their own homes. This includes floating support services and private sector prevention initiatives, as well as family mediation services. And for those who have become homeless, we have developed and commissioned a range of specialist accommodation, with wraparound services for young people, victims of domestic abuse and those with multiple and complex needs.

## Adaptations transform couple's home and lives

Karbon Homes' aids and adaptations service helps customers to live independently and safely in their own homes. After an accident in May 2021, which left him paralysed from the chest down, David Brydon and his partner Ashley Richardson found themselves needing to find a home where David could live comfortably and as independently as possible.

After finding a Karbon Home in Ponteland, David's Occupational Therapist contacted Karbon's aids and adaptations team for support with making the necessary adaptations to the home. Less than six months on and the couple now have a fully adapted home.

With an external ramp and widened door frames for access, to a full wet room with two ceiling hoists and a through floor lift so David could get to the upper floors, the adaptations have transformed the couple's lives.

The couple said: "At the time David had the accident, we were living in a first floor flat, which meant that David could no longer live there as it was completely inaccessible.

"Thanks to Karbon we're now in a home that's completely adapted for David and it's 100% transformed our lives. Without the changes David would have had to remain in a care home until we could find a home suited to his needs, so we're so pleased."



## Help for Durham residents to live independently

Homestay, by Home Group, has been providing support for over 10 years, offering wellbeing and preventative services to help customers live independently in the community. Services include wellbeing and recovery groups, which are aimed at building confidence and independence and reducing social isolation, as well as physical activity groups that provide customers with the knowledge and skills to manage their own physical health.

The service provides befriending and peer support from customers with lived experience who want to support others, and also training and support into volunteering roles, which can often lead to apprenticeships and employment.

On average, according to scoring by customers, Home Group's services in Durham have improved peoples' wellbeing by 31% and quality of life by 41%.

# Our offer

There is recognition across health, social care and housing partners that if we are to improve health outcomes and reduce inequality, we need to take a person-centred approach and work better together as an integrated system. We know we can do more across the region with greater partner collaboration and devolved central powers to better meet local need.

By collaborating across the region, we will:

- Work with the regional Integrated Care Board to drive forward the integration of housing into health and care strategies across the region, and deliver on improving health and care outcomes for the people of the North East.
- Develop a North East Health, Care and Homelessness Work Programme which can feed into our regional Integrated Care Board.
- Establish a new, housing-led 'Health, Care and Homelessness Partnership' to deliver this work programme, and include representation from key partners such as the Police.
- Evidence the region's health, care and homelessness needs to inform strategy, development, joint commissioning and funding opportunities
- Co-produce a Housing First Model that best meets regional needs and delivers a trailblazing response to support the model. We will also develop the same system-wide response to support complex individuals to remain in their homes.
- Strengthen our partnerships with the Police, the Probation Service and the voluntary sector, in order to support more holistic change on health, care and homelessness and on related issues such as anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.
- Aggregate our investment in community activities, aligning our priorities with those of the MCA to maximise the impact of our collective investment, deliver more preventative initiatives and develop more effective pathways.

- Improve the quality of our housing provision to ensure this supports wider health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Deliver region-wide protocols for a consistent approach to rough sleepers, domestic abuse and those released from an institution such as the armed forces, hospital or prison.
- Set up a task group to develop innovative trailblazing approaches to tackling some of our most complex issues, including those that sometimes go beyond service interventions.
- Partner with the Mayoral Combined Authority to explore links to funding, and deliver more specialist and supported housing through the Integrated Care Board.

## Further and faster

Together with the MCA, we can go further and faster, if the new authority can support us by:

- Creating new health partnerships and strengthening those already existing, including the Regional Integrated Care Board, and taking a place-based approach to delivering regional change.
- Supporting our autonomy to prioritise our own work programmes based on an agreed regional approach, including the freedom to make local development and commissioning decisions.
- Promoting better alignment of capital and revenue funding for care, health and homelessness, and working in partnership to co-create joint regional bids for future funding, that will support the health and social care needs of our vulnerable populations and help us end homelessness.





# How we can work best with the Mayoral Combined Authority

The new authority provides a once in a generation opportunity to address the environmental, economic and social issues at the heart of our prospectus and seize the opportunity for regeneration and growth. Maximising our returns will require partnership in the way we work together to achieve common goals and a concerted effort to align our planning and investment, so that our collective approach is coherent and our resources scale up to deliver real change.

To realise these opportunities, we would welcome a number of commitments from the Mayor and Combined Authority.

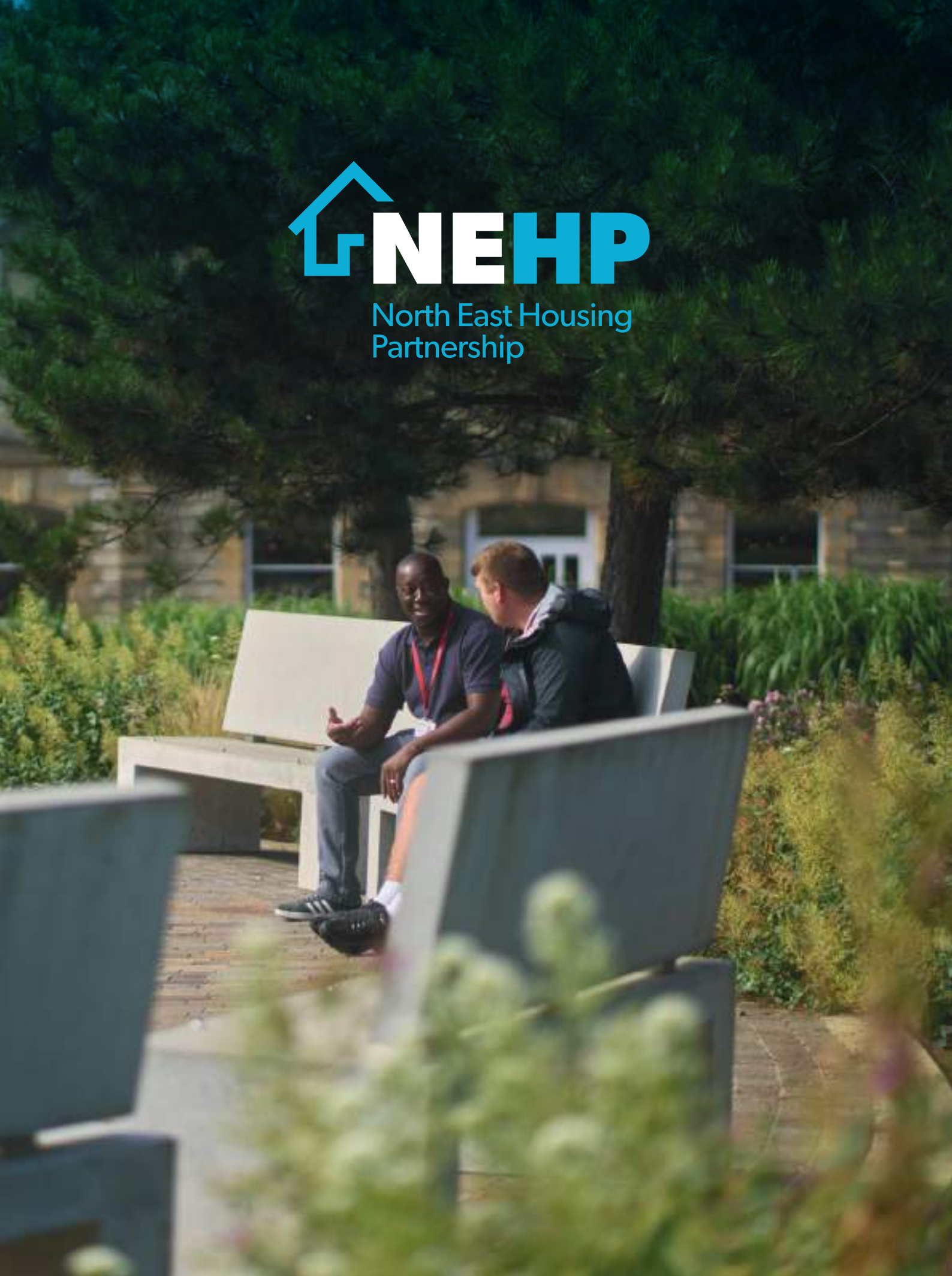
1. To work with NEHP and other likeminded stakeholders to create a strategic plan to deliver our shared placemaking, housing development and regeneration ambitions, with an explicit focus on the region's affordable housing needs.
2. To align the authority's funding pots for regeneration and brownfield land with our own investment and other grant funding, in order to accelerate existing plans and unlock new opportunities for affordable housing development, regeneration and placemaking.
3. To use the land assembly and compulsory purchase powers in the devolution agreement with the intention of assembling sites suitable for affordable housebuilding and regeneration.
4. To work closely with us to engage with national government bodies, such as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Homes England, and involve us in a direct relationship with government advisers and policy makers, so that we can present a collective voice to influence change on behalf of the region.
5. To develop growing influence over the allocation of Homes England, resources, as has been the case for the Greater Manchester Mayoral Combined Authority in the Greater Manchester Trailblazer Devolution Agreement.
6. To establish Mayoral Development Corporations for specific priority areas, including the social housing sector as key partners in the shaping of those corporations, and their governance and decision making.
7. To work in partnership on a strategic plan, supported by long-term finance, to deliver our shared net zero and sustainability goals through collective procurement and joint investment in innovation and green skills.
8. To look to amalgamate funding to support net zero in one mayoral energy efficiency fund that can support place-based rather than tenure-based programmes.
9. To support the strategic delivery of transport and digital infrastructure to overcome the significant barriers experienced by the region's potential workforce, particularly in rural areas.

10. To work towards the removal of the functional and system barriers for those trying to access employment, for example prison release procedures that create barriers to accessing housing or family benefit tail offs that result in young people dropping out of college or apprenticeships.
11. To work with us to expand the capacity of a Housing Innovation and Construction Skills Academy linked to the needs of the region and with a particular focus on green jobs.
12. To join forces on work force development to support key sectors such as hospitality, construction and health, and to consider the delivery of these programmes through existing social landlord structures.
13. To create a culture of collaboration via a commissioning approach that encourages innovation and partnership working.
14. To encourage long-term funding opportunities and contracts to enable more certainty, greater impact, and the ability to adapt the provision, to ensure the needs of customers are continually met.
15. To create new health partnerships and strengthen those already existing, including the Regional Integrated Care Board, taking a place-based approach to delivering regional change.
16. To support our autonomy to prioritise our own work programmes based on an agreed regional approach, including the freedom to make local development and commissioning decisions.
17. To promote better alignment of capital and revenue funding for health, care and homelessness, and work in partnership to co-create joint regional bids for future funding that will support the health and social care needs of our vulnerable populations and help us end homelessness.





North East Housing  
Partnership





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