

# Bigger, better, bolder

2016-2019



enabling  
independent  
living



# enabling independent living



## Foreword

**At Colne we very much celebrate our long history. We are proud of all people that have come through our doors to not only create that history and shape who we are today, but critically, the people who remind us why we are here; those that have had their lives changed for the better in the 42 years of Colne's existence**

Throughout 2015 we worked hard to ensure we could build on the strong foundations created in the past to enable us to face a new decade; **bigger, better and bolder.** We are proud to launch a new vision, mission and a set of values - we will stand up and be counted on how we do business more than what business we do.

Achieving our growth target will depend on continuing to grow our reputation and positive relationships now and in the future. Despite the significant economic challenges we are committed to providing a wide range of homes and services that reflect the diverse needs of those living and working in the East of England.

At Colne there's a lot to be confident about. We face the future with optimism, focus and a shared sense of purpose.

*Sara Thakkar* CEO  
*Tim Young* Chair



Our vision

## **We are a vibrant, growing housing association specialising in enabling independent living. We want to meet housing need in East Anglia**

As a major builder, we will provide a range of new homes of all types of tenure to meet the needs of our current and future customers in Essex, Suffolk and beyond.

We will encourage our customers to shape their own solutions offering appropriate support where needed. We provide a range of high-quality services designed in response to customers' needs.

However it is not just what we do, but how we do it, which is integral to us. How we work with our residents, other customers, staff and partners defines who we are as an organisation. Therefore our values are important to us as they reflect our culture, our ethos and are an integral part of the services we deliver.





## Our mission

# We focus on catering for individual needs by:

Influencing solutions with a co-ordinated and efficient approach which enables communities to be self-reliant, healthy and safe.

Providing a range of rental and home ownership options that address the needs of people in East Anglia from cradle to grave.

Providing a clear and honest service offer based on evidenced needs.

Investing in our repairs service so it meets our customers' expectations and is the best it can be.

### To do this we will:

- Work with our customers to assess their individual needs, offering services tailored to them which enable self-reliance and independent living
- Provide all residents with an effective and efficient customer-centred approach and a repairs service which meets their expectations – whilst actively supporting the most vulnerable who may need us to go the extra mile
- Work with a commercial ethos that allows us to deliver more for less
- Build relationships and partnerships that help us to do more, better and bolder but which respect and protect our social heart.



### The values that drive this mission are:

# Pride

In our organisation, in our professionalism and in our work

# Team spirit

In our approach to shaping the best solutions for our customers

# Accountability

We will never pass the buck

**And we will ensure that along the way we have plenty of Fun!**



### Our six driving goals

## Our vision and forward plan is in direct response to the diverse and growing needs of those living and working in East Anglia

Our business strategy 2016-2019 reflects a rapidly changing external environment.

Colne has reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining an absolute grip on value for money so our strategy can enable us to:

1

Increase our influence in the region by building on our status as a trusted partner, locally and regionally

2

Use our strong balance sheet, financial performance and reputation to deliver a range of housing solutions that give rental and affordable home ownership opportunities to people in north Essex and Suffolk and beyond

3

Build homes for sale in areas which provide the best returns to allow Colne to invest in more affordable homes in our local area

4

Continue to provide the best services but in a way which reflects the needs of our customers, based on customer insight and feedback

5

Achieve the capacity to work with local authorities on regeneration, economic development and social care agendas so we can build on our existing provision

6

Support communities through initiatives like Colne Community Builders; ensuring that funding directly contributes to the lives of Colne residents in their local area

We acknowledge that Colne is on a modernisation journey. We are remodelling the business to build on our strengths and to address our areas for improvement because we want to weather the storm of external challenges and drivers.

As a business, we want to become agile and flexible and we want to fulfil our full potential. We want to be bigger, better and bolder. These are the success measures that will take us forward into 2016 and beyond.



## Being a Landlord

Our landlord service offer will not be based on tenure but on the needs of people. We will not operate in silos – our service offer will be responsive and offer great value for all residents. We will be really transparent about how we provide our services and in collaboration with customers we will shape three broad offers:



**Hands On:**  
Those assessed as most vulnerable  
1:1 personal service



**Hands Off:**  
Those assessed as mostly independent  
but with minor needs  
Telephone service

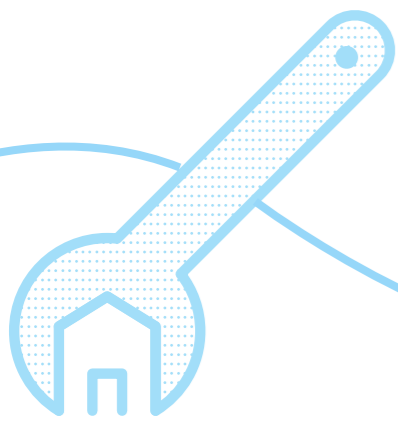


**Arms Length:**  
Those assessed as being independent  
and self-reliant  
Digital service

We know that 84% of contact by telephone with all residents is for repairs and maintenance (in maintenance we include cleaning and gardening). We will invest in these services the most to ensure they are delivered in a way that significantly reduces the need for customers to contact us.

Our communication as a landlord will be paramount. It will be digital by default, simple and on a need to know basis. We will not “do” to our residents but include them through a range of techniques and options to ensure that they own their neighbourhoods and are part of the decisions taken in them.





## Being a builder of homes

The homes we provide will be a response to the needs of current and future Colne communities. We will offer a range of rent and ownership products that are accessible to the markets in which we operate.

We will continue to deliver homes through Icenif if it makes business sense to do so – we believe that our 10 year partnership with others reflects our belief in adding value through relationships.

We will look at other models of delivery to ensure that our commitment to build homes for sale enables us to protect and grow our commitment to social housing. We will build homes for sale anywhere that gives us the best values and the greatest opportunity to re-invest in our social commitments.

## Being an asset investor

Our assets are our strength. We will forward plan to five years the works that will be required to keep a Colne home the best home it can be. We will make business decisions based on sound data and evidence and will actively rationalise our assets to ensure they work hard to keep us financially strong and regionally active.

## Being a community investor

Our approach to Community Investment will focus on life skills, employability and training with outcomes providing evidence of financial self-reliance and wellbeing. We will build on our Community Builders Fund and continue our positive relationship with Foundation East.

## Being a resilient business

Our commitment is to be a resilient business able to be fleet of foot; capable of facing the head winds and knowing when to make the right decisions at the right time for the right reasons.

We aim to keep operating margins at 35% and will always aim to maintain our AA- credit rating.

We will be clear about continuous improvements year on year. We will set stretching key performance indicators and annual value for money targets, which reflect doing the right things in the right way. We will encourage innovation and be open to investigating new business streams, sharing services and working with others differently if there is clear evidence to the “why?” and “what for?”

We will be brave about having difficult conversations to make sure we support our people and our customers through demanding times.

Our people will be recruited for the right behaviours and skills for the job required. We will trust our people to make the right decisions and we will utilise and grow their skills to ensure their personal success and the success of Colne.

We will provide a transparent and safe environment with clear boundaries, systems and processes which ensure we have a fully competent, confident and accountable workforce.

We will build a resilient leadership model across Colne, adopted by both existing managers and the right leaders of the future. Our managers will be progressive in their outlook to life. They will provide consistent leadership in line with our values and expected behaviours and they will be highly skilled (but not always in a technical way). They will understand business and the essential ingredients of great business.





## Our governance

# Our Board is responsible for the strategic direction of Colne

We operate with a Board of up to nine Non-executive Directors and the Chief Executive.

Our Board work to an annual work plan and meet approximately nine times a year (four performance boards, strategy and evaluation sessions, future planning and policy formation).

At Colne we have committed to a culture of compliance and great governance. The Board is supported in its work by the Audit Committee and the Appointments and Remuneration Committee. When required they attend complaint reviews at stage three and set up 'task and finish' groups.

Our aim is to maintain our G1 V1 regulatory assessment and our Board has adopted the National Housing Federation codes of governance and conduct.

Colne is proud to be working with TPAS, the Tenant Engagement Experts, to enhance our approach to scrutiny.



**Tim Young**  
Chair



**Julie Hoy**  
Appointment & Remuneration  
Committee Chair



**Sara Thakker**  
Chief Executive



**Alison Inman**



**Carol Wilkinson**  
Vice Chair



**Malcolm O'Brien**



**Alan Collard**  
Audit committee chair



**Phil Purkiss**

## A shared understanding

This overarching strategy document is and will be supported through clearly defined delivery plans. These are the tactics that we will apply for each business stream to ensure that over the next three years we can evidence measured progression against our business strategy.

We know that many of our delivery plans will need to be refreshed, renewed or recreated in light of our new business objectives to ensure that we have clarity on our golden thread and our sense of a shared and common purpose:

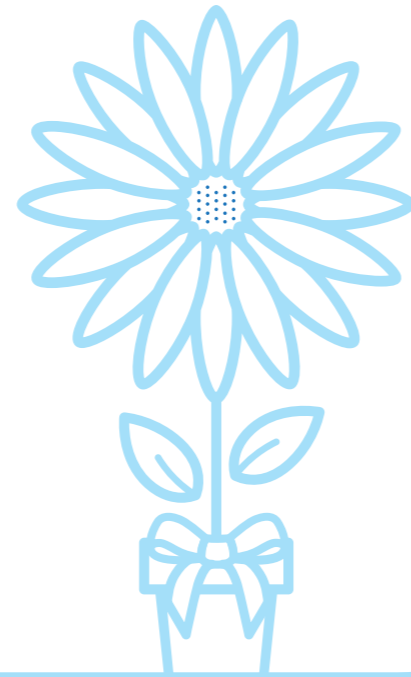
## Delivery plans

- **Asset Investment**
- **Our People**
- **Customer Services and Standards**
- **Communications and Marketing**
- **Community Empowerment and Investment**
- **Financial and Treasury Plans**
- **Value for Money**
- **Procurement**
- **Equalities and Diversity**
- **Information and Technology**
- **Sound Governance, Scrutiny, Regulatory Compliance and Risk Management approaches**





**Our key priorities and targets**



# Year One priorities

To enable the plan to come to life we will focus on some specific objectives in 2016-17.

These our key priorities and targets. They stem from our six key objectives and will ensure our business strategy is progressed.

They are what the Board holds its officers to account against each year.

**1**

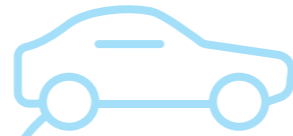
**Increase our influence in the region by building on our status as a trusted partner, locally and regionally**

Objective	Required outcome / Key issues to consider	By
Develop a growth strategy that will see Colne being a business in excess of 6,000 homes by 2018	Develop opportunities and relationships to grow the organisation through strategic partnerships and shared services	March 2017
Build relationships with Local Authorities, key partners and MPs to ensure that the Colne strategy is targeting the issues of relevance in Colne areas of operations	Build partnerships with health service and local authorities to better understand the future strategic drivers for care and support  Assess jointly funded projects through health and social services that enable customers to increase and improve their independent living and quality of life	Dec 2017
A grip on compliance through a highly aware culture of risk and mitigation	Review and improve our Risk Management Framework at all levels within the organisation	Ongoing

# 2

**Use our strong balance sheet, financial performance and reputation to deliver a range of housing solutions that give rental and affordable home ownership opportunities to people in north Essex and Suffolk and beyond**

Objective	Required outcome / Key issues to consider	By
Maintain an absolute grip on value for money	A refreshed value for money plan which delivers sustainable savings, greater efficiency and effectiveness	July 2016
	An Asset Strategy which uses assets to improve our cash position and enables more homes to be delivered	May 2016
	Develop and implement a procurement delivery plan which builds on existing policy and enhances innovation	Dec 2016
Maintain the strength of Colne's business plan to maximise the opportunities available to our organisation	Retain our AA- credit rating	Dec 2016
	A treasury strategy, plan and policy which enables Colne to deliver its development strategy and which reduces the cost of debt.	May 2016
Review and re-launch the Private Sector Leasing Initiative	Secure express support of relevant local authorities in our priority localities	Dec 2016
	Support the local economy by working with private landlords to let their properties	
	Improve the standard of privately rented properties available to those in housing need	
	Support the regulation of the private rented sector	



# 3

**To build homes for sale in areas which provide the best returns to allow Colne to invest in more affordable homes in the local area**

Objective	Required outcome / Key issues to consider	By
To understand the approach and risks to developing properties for open market sale	Delivery vehicle in place	Sept 2017
	Delivery of a pilot scheme to inform detailed Open Market Sale (OMS) product delivery	Mar 2017
	Detailed development plan for OMS building on learnings and outcomes from pilot	Mar 2017

# 4

**Continue to provide the best services but in a way which reflects the needs of our customers, based on customer insight and feedback**

Objective	Required outcome / Key issues to consider	By
Develop and deliver a people strategy which enables Colne to deliver its aspirations	Complete the "Our People" plan and deliver the key priorities committed within year one	Plan by June 2016
	A leadership model which carries Colne forward without the constraints of weak resilience	June 2016
Collaborate, debate and shape a customer service model which reflects our strategic commitments	We will be really transparent about how we provide our services. In collaboration with customers we will shape three broad service offers which will reflect an individual service delivered by individuals	March 2017
	Build on the customer insight work undertaken in 2015 and we will continue to use data and evidence to underpin our service offer decisions	Dec 2016
High quality data maintained and used to enable strong governance and safe decision making	A prioritised plan for delivery of the strategy	Sept 2016
Begin to shape a long term model for our repairs service which achieves quality and value for money and build on our relationships within the Eastern Region	Build on the customer insight work undertaken in 2015 and we will continue to use data and evidence to underpin our service offer decisions	Dec 2016
	Business case for revised model	March 2017



# 5/6

**Achieve the capacity to work with local authorities on regeneration, economic development and social care agendas so we can build on the existing provision**

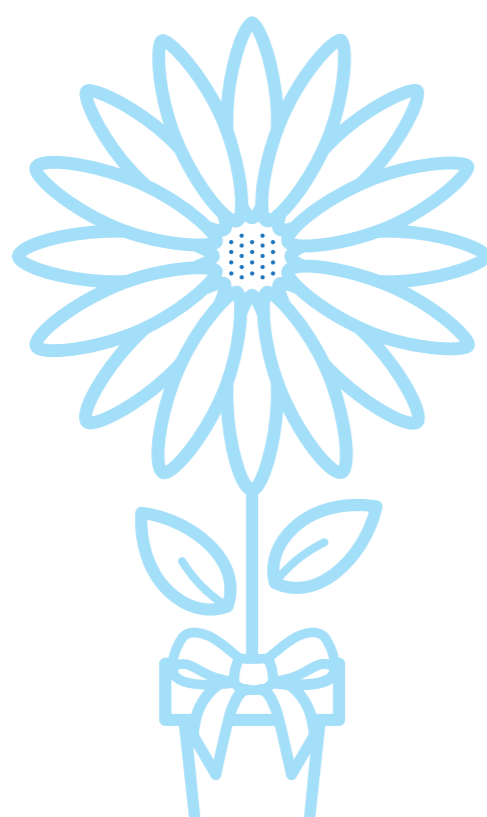
**Support communities through initiatives like Colne Community Builders; ensuring that funding directly contributes to the lives of Colne residents in their local area**

Objective	Required outcome / Key issues to consider	By
Growth of the My Plan service amongst our existing customers in general needs and private payers	Publish an evaluation of the project at the end of three years with specific targeted profiling of the benefits delivered to service-users and the value for money approach	March 2017
	Develop and agree a sustainable model for the service	
To position Colne as the lead local provider promoting aspiration and community self determination. In doing so we demonstrate the broader socio-economic impact of Colne's investment in housing and delivery of individually tailored quality services	Agree and implement a communication and promotional strategy	March 2017
	Establish robust partnerships to enable a broad range of local employability services/life skills/training offers at local level	
Our approach to Community Investment will focus on life skills, employability and training with outcomes providing evidence of financial self reliance and wellbeing	Evidence of a vibrant resident empowerment culture within Colne	
	Develop and deliver a strong model of scrutiny operating at Board level, actively improving services to customers whilst providing project management expertise to residents	
	Promote an intelligent grant making programme which responds to identified local need and builds community capacity and resilience	
	Be a catalyst for community led development and regeneration	



## Key priorities

# Financial plan



Period: 01/04/2016 - 31/03/2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Income from lettings (£000s)					
Rent receivable	16,278.0	17,689.6	18,163.8	18,787.0	19,005.7
Service charge income	941.6	978.2	1,005.2	1,030.8	1,051.7
Charges for support services					
<b>Gross rental income</b>	<b>17,219.5</b>	<b>18,667.8</b>	<b>19,1969.0</b>	<b>19,698.3</b>	<b>20,057.3</b>
Less voids	-109.7	-115.6	-117.2	-119.6	-119.7
Management charge income					
<b>Net rental income</b>	<b>17,109.9</b>	<b>18,552.1</b>	<b>19,051.8</b>	<b>19,698.3</b>	<b>19,937.6</b>
HC grants for major repairs					
Other housing corporation revenue grants					
Other revenue grants	70.2	70.2	70.2	70.2	70.2
Other income	34	34.7	35.4	36.2	36.9
<b>Total turnover from social housing lettings</b>	<b>17,214.1</b>	<b>18,552.1</b>	<b>19,157.5</b>	<b>19,804.7</b>	<b>20,044.8</b>
Management costs	2,817.8	2,893.3	2,973.1	3,061.9	3,154.7
Service costs	920.6	956.8	983.4	1,008.6	1,028.9
Care and support costs	168.8	172.4	176.0	179.7	183.4
Routine maintenance	1,854.3	1,892.6	1,956.3	1,999.6	2,066.4
Planned maintenance	315.3	321.9	328.7	335.6	342.6
Major repairs	751.1	683.0	926.7	743.9	835.6
Bad debts	658.8	803.9	822.2	847.0	853.4
Lease charges	662.9	690.0	704.5	719.3	734.4
depreciation of housing properties	1,865.4	2,076.9	2,226.6	2,369.9	2,524.1
impairment of housing properties					
Other costs	837.1	366.1	366.1	374.3	382.7
<b>Total operating costs</b>	<b>10,852.1</b>	<b>10,849.0</b>	<b>11,463.6</b>	<b>1,639.8</b>	<b>12,096.5</b>
Group charges					
<b>Surplus (deficit) on social housing lettings</b>	<b>6,362.0</b>	<b>7,808.1</b>	<b>7,693.9</b>	<b>8,164.9</b>	<b>7,948.3</b>
Net profit %	37%	42%	40%	41%	40%
Other activities	729.4	474.0	486.3	498.9	511.9
Exceptional items					
Surplus deficit on sale of properties	480.2	490.1	500.1	510.3	520.7t
Gift aid				800	

### Our performance

Our Board will hold us to account by monitoring the progress of our strategy against a core set of Key Performance Indicators.

Our Resident Scrutiny Group will operate at Board level to ensure customer engagement and insight remains at the heart of what we do.



### Our KPIs focus on:

**Financial Viability** **People & Services** **Overall satisfaction with services** **Assets** **Compliance & Business Assurance** **Anti-Social Behaviour** **Estate services** **Complaints** **Property Services** **Resident empowerment** **Letting** **Health & Safety** **Gas safety** **Private Sector Leasing** **Community Investment**

