

Our Corporate Plan 2020-23



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**Passionate about providing affordable
homes and great customer services**

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Paragon Asra Housing Limited is a charitable Community Benefit Society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Registered Office: Third Floor, Pentagon House, 52-54 Southwark Street, London SE1 1UN.

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“In the face of many challenges we will seek out opportunities and deliver great things over the next three years”



Foreword



PA Housing is a passionate organisation made up of amazing people who are committed to providing affordable homes and great services. I am incredibly proud to say we have made great progress in doing this since the merger which created PA in 2017.

Can we continue to build on this momentum in the next three years of this new Corporate Plan 2020-23 – and in the face of the fresh challenges we and our customers face following the COVID-19 pandemic? Absolutely.

As a social landlord, we have supported our communities in London, the South East and the Midlands through thick and thin over the last four decades. We remain unashamedly bold in our ambition to push ourselves to continue doing so.

I can say this because of the hard work of our colleagues. They have been the friendly face of PA Housing. They have made sure our stock is well maintained both now and for the long term and is safe for all our tenants. They have built the financially strong platform from which we can set out our six new corporate objectives. These include commitments to:

- Build on the success of our frontline ‘Team Purple’ and continuously improve our customer offer by co-designing services with residents so they are great
- Double our house building to a total of 6,000 affordable homes by 2030 – these will be social rented homes wherever possible
- Plan to ensure our homes are net zero-carbon before the government’s 2050 target
- Ensure greater representation in senior roles from the 40% of our people from BAME backgrounds

In exploring the objectives to set out in this Corporate Plan, we consulted with customers every step of the way. This is how we shall continue, so that customers are clear their voice is heard and acted on in everything PA Housing does.

We will all face many challenges in the coming months and years as we recover from the pandemic. At PA Housing, we are determined to seek out opportunities and deliver great things over the life of this Corporate Plan and beyond. We have the responsibility and the potential to make a profound positive impact on people’s lives and we will do everything we can to make this a reality.

Hattie Llewelyn-Davies
Chair, PA Housing
September, 2020



How we developed our plan

Our first Corporate Plan 2017-22 was created to ensure we delivered on the objectives of merging Paragon and Asra in April 2017. It aimed to unlock the benefits PA Housing can bring to our customers and colleagues by doing things such as:

- Focusing on customer service to improve customer satisfaction
- Harmonising our culture and our structures, and improving our effectiveness
- Growing to provide more homes

Thanks to the hard work of our teams, we have made excellent progress against these aims and are well ahead of schedule. In light of this and also the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board decided to update the Corporate Plan to extend the challenge and reflect the altered operating context, to ensure we maintain momentum.

To do this the Board was clear that we must consult with and be guided by customers every step of the way. This is why we have involved residents and colleagues through extensive survey work to identify priorities for the renewed Corporate Plan. A great variety of voices have contributed to this process – including through our website and social media – and we are very grateful for their time and input.

PA Housing's heritage is proudly diverse and it is important to us that we continue to create a culture that people want to be part of.

“We have embedded the resident voice within the organisation through our Customer Service Committee and Scrutiny Panel and offer a range of other easy ways to get involved”



PA Housing: our background

PA Housing was formed in April 2017 by the amalgamation of Paragon Community Housing with asra Housing Association and Leicester Housing Association (both part of the asra Housing Group). PA Housing is an ambitious and bold organisation, dedicated to our people (customers and staff) and the diverse communities we serve.

PA Housing provides 23,000 homes in London, Surrey and the Midlands and operates from offices in London, Walton on Thames and Leicester. These office locations reflect our main concentrations of customers and their homes.

We are energised by the heritage of our founding organisations and our office bases reflect the close relationships we have maintained with our key partners since the merger.

Paragon

Paragon was formed in 2007 by Elmbridge Housing Trust and Richmond upon Thames Churches Housing Trust. Working in commuter-belt areas with high property values in the South-East and West London, Paragon's development programme produced award-winning, good-quality, well-designed homes.

Asra

Asra Housing Association began as a Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) housing provider in London in 1984 and its initial purpose was to provide homes and services for Asian older people. Asra Housing Association joined with Leicester Housing Association to form asra Housing Group, which worked in urban areas in the Midlands, as well as in London.

With 14,000 homes, asra was the largest BAME housing association in the UK before joining with Paragon. We have continued the role of being a prominent provider of housing services to multicultural communities and to be at the forefront of equality and diversity within the housing sector.

As part of this, we are delighted that our chief executive, Dilip Kavi, has recently been invited to join the inaugural BAME Editorial Board at leading sector publication Inside Housing.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

PA Housing has a proud heritage of providing services for minority groups in our communities. We have a truly diverse customer and colleague base and are committed to ensuring this is represented throughout our organisation.

PA Housing stands with the Black and other minority communities in its commitment to challenge all forms of racism, discrimination and disadvantage in society. This commitment is promoted by our Board and applies to all customers, employees and other stakeholders such as contractors, volunteers and partners, who are encouraged to do the same.

These values are at the heart of our updated Corporate Plan.

Everybody is unique

At PA Housing, we are continuing with our 'Everybody is unique' approach (celebrating differences and valuing everyone), which is more relevant than ever before. We will continue respecting and supporting colleagues and customers from all backgrounds and will carry on developing the work that has been so important to our organisation's heritage.

PA Housing is encouraging our employees to:

- Be accountable to one another
- Stand up for what is right and challenge racism when we see it
- Make their voices heard
- Partner with people and organisations with similar aims and objectives

Taking action

We take our membership of Housing Diversity Network (HDN) extremely seriously, but we know that simply being involved is not enough. We will speak out against racism and inequality in all its forms and ensure that our colleagues and customers understand this and feel supported. An example of this is that our Chair is a mentor on the HDN Board Members programme.

As an employer we have a diverse workforce, with 40% of staff from BAME groups, which very much reflect our diverse customer base. This is something we continue to be proud of, but we want to make sure we hear and understand issues any of our colleagues may be experiencing, irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, disability, sexuality or any other characteristic.

We are working with our award winning internal Equality & Diversity Advisory Group and ensuring race remains one of the key priorities for their work, along with all other protected characteristics. The Advisory Group is also supporting us to review our Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy, recruitment practices and other policies to ensure they remain robust.

Our Purpose

Passionate about providing affordable
homes and great services



Our Vision

To connect with customers in every community we serve, providing quality homes and services, creating places where people thrive and are proud to live.

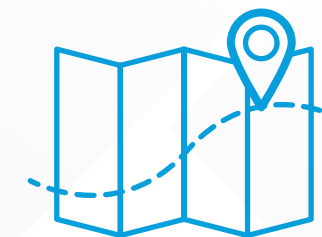
Our values

Our values underpin everything we do and our culture and behaviours define how we do things.



We always do the right thing

- We offer the best quality service that we can.
- We are dedicated to our people.
- We are always honest, open and responsible.
- We challenge ourselves to be the best.
- We always seek best value.



We're there when you need us

- We always offer solutions.
- We listen and take action.
- We deliver on our promises.
- You can count on us.
- We treat people as we would want to be treated.



We never give up

- We are ambitious.
- We are unashamedly bold.
- We work together to make a difference.
- We welcome innovation.
- We are courageous in our pursuit of growth to provide more quality affordable homes.
- We create a culture that people want to be part of.

The road to 2023

We have made excellent progress delivering the aims of our first Corporate Plan 2017-22 and want to build on the momentum we have established. However, we are conscious that our updated Corporate Plan 2020-23 comes at the most challenging of times as the nation continues to fight and build its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. PA Housing has the potential to make a profound positive impact on people's lives and we intend to do all we can to make this a reality.

There are many uncertainties ahead and our first priority at this time continues to be the safety and wellbeing of our customers, colleagues and partners.

The economic impact of the pandemic is hitting our customer base particularly hard. As part of our commitment to provide great customer services, our Tenancy Sustainment and Income Teams have helped more than 2,000 customers with practical help and advice to maximise their incomes during the pandemic. These highly specialised teams are ready to provide further customer support as the government furlough and other support arrangements end, and as the roll-out of Universal Credit continues.

In light of the new post-pandemic working environment, our new People Strategy will play a fundamental role in delivering our new Corporate Plan aims. This includes the introduction of permanent agile and blended ways of home and office-based working. These will ensure the health and wellbeing of staff and improve the effectiveness of the organisation.

The Board is closely overseeing this work with a clear focus on supporting customers through these difficult times and also limiting the financial impacts on PA Housing.

Providing great services to customers

Our top priority is providing great services to customers and driving customer satisfaction to the next level, while continuing to grow.

We have taken a bold approach by looking outwardly at how other industries improve customer service. We are now redesigning services by mapping the customer journey. This involves working closely with customers as they access our services, viewing the experience through their eyes and from their perspective, listening to the customer voice and modifying services accordingly.

We have invested in building positive relationships in our communities, providing a range of services and interactions through our frontline service, Team Purple.

Developing our Sustainability and Asset Strategies

In June 2019, the UK became the first major economy to pass a law requiring net zero-carbon emissions by 2050. A number of local authorities, including the majority of London Boroughs, have since adopted targets for reaching net zero-carbon emissions even earlier, by 2030.

PA Housing fully supports these aims and we are taking steps to ensure we play our part in tackling the climate emergency. Our Board received a report in March 2020 on the initial work we have undertaken on decarbonisation and agreed that a road map would be produced on how we would reach net zero-carbon before 2050.

There is a huge challenge for the sector in how it plans, finances and merges this work with its existing programmes of work. We are determined to meet this challenge head on and deliver more sustainable homes for all our customers.

Maximising our capacity to deliver

Achieving value for money is essential to the organisation and to delivering our Corporate Plan. This encompasses all of our activities and so has been included in the plan as a strategic objective with specific high-level goals.

All of the strategic objectives in this plan will be supported by detailed operational plans setting out what we intend to achieve, how we intend to achieve it and setting specific measures and targets.

Further growth of the business

Since our merger in 2017, we have seen that with the right partners, the new organisation has been able to achieve so much more together. In addition to our significant new build plans, the Board has decided it is open to further growth through merger. A preferred partner would be an organisation with the same values and a similar culture.



Development and Regeneration - building new homes

The housing crisis has not gone away. In response, we have set a target to build 6,000 good-quality, affordable homes over 10 years, to meet the needs of a range of customers. The Board is concerned at how few homes the sector is producing for social rent and is keen that PA Housing helps to reverse this trend. We will increase the proportion of homes we build for rent and where possible build to let on social rents.



Our strategic objectives and goals

Our approach for the next three years is underpinned by six clear objectives, each with measurable goals.

1. Providing great services to customers
2. Positive relationships in our neighbourhoods
3. Sustainability strategy to deliver net zero-carbon before 2050
4. Increase construction of affordable and social homes
5. Maximise our capacity to deliver
6. Our People – delivering the plan

Providing great services to customers

We will work closely with our customers and customer data to ensure we offer and deliver great services however they are accessed.

What we will do by 2023

- Achieve 92% customer satisfaction score by 2023.
- Build on our existing strengths in resident involvement by refreshing and improving our formal involvement and scrutiny structure and engagement. We will champion customer partnerships and create new and flexible ways for residents to work alongside us. We will utilise digital tools, as well as increasing the informal ways to feedback, shape and improve services.
- Implement a new customer satisfaction collection and feedback service to make it easy for residents to tell us how we are doing. This approach will allow us to respond quickly to improve and adapt services.
- Invest in our data management and reporting tools. Use this improved data intelligence to give services and the Board the information we need to prioritise and take decisions to drive service improvements.
- Use customer profile data to ensure our services are inclusive. We will positively engage with residents who are not represented, and make sure services are accessible and easy to use by all.
- Make our services easy to access and, most importantly, what residents want. Using customer journey mapping, we will provide insight and analysis on what it is like to be in our customers' shoes when using our services.
- Use our performance data to agree annual customer journey mapping programmes with our customers, across our service areas.
- Ensure that we learn from complaints and compliments feedback.
- Embed the customer experience team as a critical friend to the organisation, identifying trends and areas of concern. This will challenge the business to be better and drive performance improvements.
- Support customers to gain new skills and access to opportunities through our Job Ready programme. We aim to work with 750 residents over the lifetime of this plan.
- Use our purchasing power and work with contractors to provide a robust work support offer for customers, encompassing volunteering, apprenticeship and training opportunities.
- Work to improve neighbourhoods that are struggling. We will use our data, customer knowledge, and local partnerships to identify community challenges and areas of highest need. PA Housing will work to be part of the solution to enable positive change in our communities.

Our Goals

Work with customers to continuously improve our customer offer and provide great services

Continue to develop our resident involvement and scrutiny arrangements creating flexible new ways for residents to work alongside us

Ensure our services are what customers want, easy to access, and are inclusive and accessible to all

Continue our digital transformation programme to make more services and information directly accessible

Support residents through our job ready programme, working with our partners to provide volunteering, apprenticeship and training opportunities



Positive relationships in our neighbourhoods

Be present in our neighbourhoods; have positive relationships with customers and stakeholders that engender trust and allow us to be proactive in our delivery of housing services.

What we will do by 2023

- Promote the many services that make up our frontline Team Purple so customers, colleagues and stakeholders know who PA Housing is and what we offer.
- Ensure our services reflect our clear belief that 'everybody is unique' and 'everywhere is unique'. This is at the heart of PA Housing's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion approach (page 8). We will be consistent across communities, but also keep an open ear to allow services to be adapted to meet individual or local requirements.
- Use our investment in digital resources to improve customer access to services and to enable diverse resident engagement. Also, we recognise that we must continue to be physically present in our neighbourhoods.
- Evolve our Neighbourhood Approach so we increase resident engagement activity and neighbourhood projects. We will also aim to continue to grow the service as we develop more homes.
- Make sure customers get the right services at the right price, with a transparent and accountable approach. Our new Home Budgets approach to service charge communication and scrutiny is at the heart of this work.
- Further develop our Tenancy Solutions offer through greater understanding of customer needs. We want to sustain tenancies and ensure our neighbourhoods are safe places where people want to live.
- Develop our 'Move in, move on' strategy, making managing tenancy and housing options with PA Housing easy. We want to enable customers to stay by moving with us rather than moving out.
- Support access to affordable homeownership. We will do this by mapping our homeowner customer journey from first contact with PA Housing. Through this we will learn how homeowners want to access services and what we need to do to deliver this.



Our Goals

Listen to our customers, hear them and take action. We will challenge ourselves and be bold in making change

Live our clear belief that 'everybody is unique' and 'everywhere is unique'

Create safe, sustainable neighbourhoods where people choose to live

Use digital investment to improve resident engagement

Support access to affordable homeownership



Sustainability strategy to deliver net zero-carbon before 2050

We will develop a new sustainability strategy to cover all areas of the business to deliver net zero-carbon homes and emissions before the government deadline in 2050. For our residents' homes, we will align this with the stock reinvestment, building safety and development programmes.

The built environment contributes around 40% of UK carbon emissions, so for us as a housing provider, there is a major challenge and cost ahead.

What we will do by 2023

- Develop our sustainability strategy to include a roadmap for how PA Housing will achieve net zero-carbon emissions before the government deadline of 2050.
- Focus the strategy on the three key areas of the business agreed by Board, namely Property: new homes, existing homes, estates and offices. People: colleagues and customers. Partners: contractors and organisational partners (e.g. local authorities, Greater London Authority, Homes England, etc.)
- Continue to improve the environmental performance of our homes. This includes work such as insulation and new windows, which will reduce net carbon emissions.
- Identify any quick sustainability wins across our Property, People and Partner activities that can be delivered in year one within existing budgets.
- Set longer-term objectives for the following 10 years and beyond (which may be dependent on innovation or policy changes).
- Determine which technologies and approaches will be most effective in ensuring we meet our short, medium and long-term sustainability goals. We will embrace innovation where this makes good sense, but our efforts will always be driven by how best to meet our customers' needs e.g. for affordable heating.
- Profile our stock by age and type to inform decisions about current programmes and investment. This will also allow us to effectively consider the best use of existing and also new technology and approaches to support our plans.
- Plan how and when to introduce electric vehicle charging points to new and existing schemes.
- Merge our sustainability programme with the evolving health and safety compliance agenda to ensure cost-effective interventions and minimise resident disruption. This is important as sustainability and decarbonisation, together with fire safety and building new homes, are the big financial challenges for our sector.

Our Goals

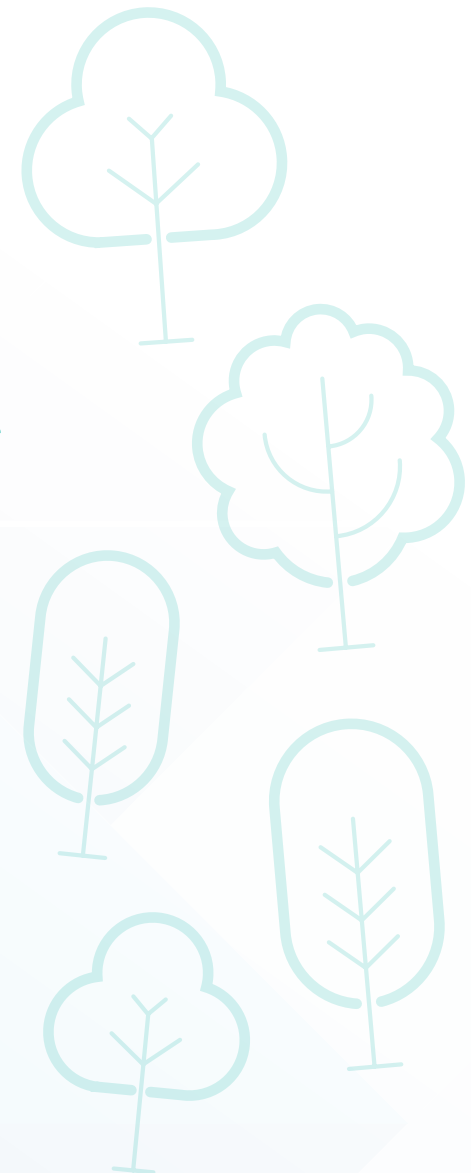
Determine how PA Housing will achieve net zero-carbon emissions before the government deadline of 2050

Improve the environmental performance of our homes

Support customers to be able to make sustainable choices

Embed sustainable practices across all our activities

Work in partnership to achieve strategic goals to address the climate emergency



Increase construction of affordable and social homes

We will aim to grow by building c. 6,000 affordable homes over 10 years via our development and regeneration programmes. We will strive to maintain our strong financial position and ensure our asset strategy supports this.

What we will do by 2023

- Keep PA Housing financially strong. We have worked with our banks and investors to put in place the funding we need to deliver a sizeable programme of growth over the next few years. Our treasury policy is cautious and we will renew our investment needs in line with funding opportunities. The financial 'golden rules' that the Board has signed up to are more stringent than any obligation placed upon us and give us further assurance that we will keep an iron grip on our financial position.
- Manage our exposure. This plan gives us moderate exposure to housing market risks and builds on the ongoing programme we have put in place since PA Housing was formed in 2017. Interest rates are still at a low level and we factor in that it is likely these will rise in the coming years.
- Deliver on our plan to build c.6,000 good-quality homes over 10 years. We have established a strong Development Team and built up our programme so that by June 2020 we had 1,000 homes under construction across 23 sites. Our ability to create land banks is important for the future and we currently have the potential for up to 650 further homes.
- Build a mix of social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership and intermediate rent homes. This will ensure we meet the needs of a range of customers who are unable or have no desire to have full homeownership. The Board wishes for PA Housing to deliver more homes to be let at social rents and staff agreed strongly with this in our staff survey. Wherever possible, we will build homes for social rent.
- Ensure our new homes incorporate new design, technologies and construction methods, including modern methods of construction, electric vehicle charging points and sustainable drainage. This will make our homes affordable to live in and help meet the 2050 net zero-carbon emission target.
- Deliver the One Woolwich regeneration project in partnership with the Royal Borough of Greenwich in London to complete 1,500 homes. Complete the regeneration at Thames View House in Walton-on-Thames to replace 64 energy-inefficient flats with 97 new homes. Continue to explore and deliver further large regeneration projects where possible.
- Evaluate further stock rationalisation options if some homes prove uneconomic to bring up to decent homes standards and meet net zero-carbon targets. A comprehensive and rigorous return-on-assets calculation is used to inform such decisions on a strategic basis. Generally these decisions relate to homes that have become empty.
- Maintain our strong approach to risk management on our development programme to make sure that risks are fully identified and properly controlled.
- Assess government funding opportunities as they arise and ensure we maintain strong links with public investment bodies Homes England and the Greater London Authority.

Our Goals

Keep an iron grip on our financial position so we can complete a programme of c.6,000 homes over 10 years

Increase the proportion of social rent homes we build whenever possible

Continue to work closely with our strategic Local Authority and other key partners in London, the South East and the Midlands

Deliver development and regeneration schemes in London and around our base in Walton-on-Thames.

Work with key partners in the Midlands to establish a development programme.

Maximise our capacity to deliver

We will intensify our focus on the value for money we achieve across the business, to maximise our capacity to serve our customers, invest in existing homes and build new ones, and to meet any targets set by the regulator.

Achieving value for money is essential to delivering our Corporate Plan. It cuts across all of our activities but has been included in the plan as a strategic objective with specific high-level goals.

What we will do by 2023

- Deliver the high-level value for money targets set by the Board. Each is supported by a detailed action plan to measure our progress in achieving these goals over three years.
- Remain agile in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and support our customers to remain living in their homes. PA Housing has performed strongly so far during the pandemic and not used the government furlough scheme. Our Board has overseen a range of scenario-plans as we emerge from lockdown and in preparation for economic recovery over the coming months and years.
- Maintain momentum from the efficiency gains achieved following the 2017 merger. The merger delivered a much stronger organisation which is now focussing on quality rather than widespread direct cash savings.
- Extend our Direct Labour Organisation to cover the core responsive repairs and relet services across our Midlands area of operation. This is based on its sound performance and high levels of customer satisfaction.
- Explore closer collaboration with contractors to support delivering great customer services. These joint ventures would offer better value and would be closely aligned to our values and objectives set out in this plan.
- Ensure all operational and service delivery plans have specific objectives and measures of success for delivering value for money.
- Continue working effectively with a wide range of stakeholders to deliver the most effective and best-value projects and services. This is vital to our joint success.

Our Goals

Provide better value services to customers

Improve our customer experience

Understand our assets and neighbourhoods to direct investment and drive value

Harness the strategic drivers behind our financial metrics, operational performance indicators and benchmarking activities to drive value

Obtain value through robust procurement processes and effective contract management

Deliver our ambition to provide good-quality affordable homes that meet customer needs

Work with our customers to improve our service offer and make them an integral part of decision making

Our People - delivering the plan

Everything we do and have set out to achieve for our customers in our new Corporate Plan is only possible thanks to the brilliant people who work for PA Housing. Our new People Strategy 2020-2023 reflects the fundamental role people management activities play in supporting the delivery of our Corporate Plan.

Post-pandemic, new ways of working will be central to the People Strategy. Our focus is on permanently introducing agile, blended working arrangements enabling a mixture of home and office-based working, together with reconfiguration of our main office bases in Walton-on-Thames, Leicester and London.

The People Strategy action plan's purpose is to create an environment where people can reach their potential and consistently deliver sustainable performance.

What we will do by 2023

Grow our leadership development programme to foster leadership skills at every level of PA Housing. We will:

- Lead and inspire people to deliver
- Develop trust and ownership
- Act in line with our values
- Encourage our people

Introduce agile and blended ways of working that make individual employees and the organisation more effective. We will:

- Promote agile ways of working
- Blend home and office-based working
- Be responsive to individuals' preferences
- Reconfigure our use of office buildings
- Ensure the health and wellbeing of staff

Provide a supportive and inclusive environment where we:

- Help people succeed
- Ensure fair pay and benefits
- Provide specialist support
- Build effective teams
- Reward and recognise exceptional performance

Equip people with the skills and resources they need to thrive. We will:

- Develop our people
- Embrace change
- Use insights to make improvements
- Promote agile thinking

Improve diversity and opportunity as an employer by:

- Working to close the gender pay gap
- Increasing BAME representation in senior roles and levels of pay
- Providing internal development and recruiting internally and externally for talented and committed staff

Maximise the use of social value and giving back to the community. We will do this by:

- Developing strategies to engage in the community
- Attracting more candidates for jobs, particularly people from BAME and other minority groups or disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our Goals

Inspire and support our next generation of leaders

Ensure brilliant performance through an inclusive environment

Become more effective through a blend of home and office-based working

Launch new reward and recognition systems

Improve diversity and opportunity

Maximise social value by giving back to communities



Our homes by county*

5,500 - Leicestershire

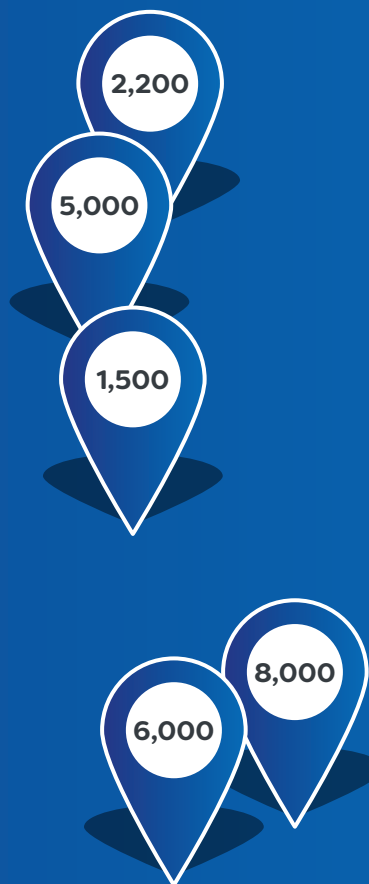
8,000 - London

1,500 - Northamptonshire

2,500 - Nottinghamshire

5,500 - Surrey

Total:
23,300



Figures show units owned and managed by PA Housing.*
Includes 300 units in neighbouring counties.