



**PlaceShapers**

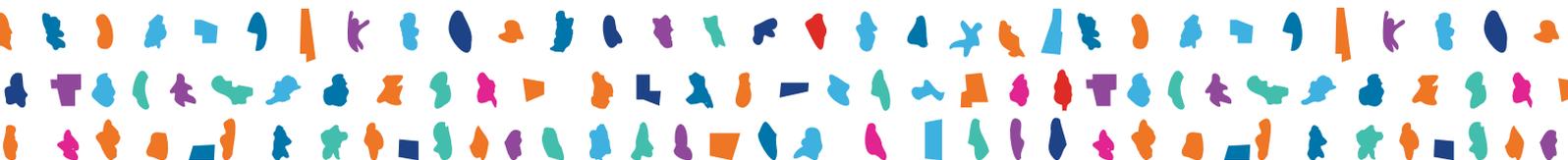
Together we help communities thrive

# Helping Communities Thrive

## Strategic plan 2023-26

Communicate | Connect | Collaborate

Together, we go beyond housing;  
**we help communities thrive.**



# We are PlaceShapers

A national network of place-based, community-focused, housing organisations.

## Our purpose

To support our national network of members to help their communities to thrive.

## Our vision

To put place-shaping at the heart of decision-making.

## Our mission

To connect, communicate and collaborate for greater influence and impact.

We are run by members, for members and are committed to a diverse, values-driven housing association sector. We collaborate with our 100+ members for greater insight, influence, and impact.



## Chair foreword

It's never felt more important to be a PlaceShaper; our communities facing hard challenges as the economy tightens, a deepening housing crisis, political uncertainty and profound sector challenges.

But as the PlaceShapers network, we are **ambitious for our communities**, committed to long-term solutions, **united in our purpose**, and firmly in it for the longer term.

As the Chair, I am delighted to share our new three-year strategic plan with you, which is firmly based on what our members told us they wanted us to focus on. This plan sets out the outcomes we're aiming to achieve and how we will do this.

The **impact of what members do locally is at the heart of PlaceShapers**. I am lucky enough to have been on several member visits this year, seeing first-hand the impact of decades of work and effort that has completely transformed lives and communities.

When you see what members like Poplar HARCA are doing in east London, or Karbon on Newcastle's Byker Estate, it is hard to believe the government isn't putting housing-led regeneration at the heart of their strategy for levelling up. For some reason, the message about the difference we can make, with the right support, still isn't hitting home.

Through the delivery of our new plan, with a new campaign and a robust evidence-base, we hope to start to address that. The continuing commitment

of our members to place-shaping, particularly in the face of so many challenges, is impressive to see. But I know it isn't easy. As organisations with deep roots in the places where we operate, I think we approach these challenges differently. Part of our role is to **connect you with organisations** who share your ethos and commitment, and to **facilitate conversations** that will help you tackle these challenges and **learn from the experience of others**.

Despite how difficult it can feel sometimes, I am optimistic about the future. The interest in the place-based housing association model is growing all the time and there is a real opportunity to harness that interest and turn it in to policies and support that will enable us to do more.

By working together, we can **put place-shaping at the heart of decision-making** and ensure our communities thrive. We are **committed to connecting, communicating, and collaborating for greater influence**, and can't wait to see where the next three years takes us.

**Matthew Walker**  
Chief Executive  
Leeds Federated Housing Association



## Chief Executive foreword

When I joined PlaceShapers in March 2023, I was deeply impressed by what the organisation achieves. Early on it was clear that 'by members, for members' was not just a strapline but a genuine description of how a small organisation delivers impact and value for its members.

However, being small means having to continually evaluate what we do to make sure we are making the most of our resources, not least during a period of significant change for our members, with a general election on the horizon. So, I took the opportunity to ask members what they want from PlaceShapers. These conversations have shaped this new strategic plan and its outcomes.

The most resounding feedback was that the government still does not understand what we do as place-based, community-focused, housing associations and politicians underestimate the impact of our work. This means government policy often hampers our ability to do more of the work that we know would hugely benefit residents, communities, places, and the country longer term. So, our first outcome is:

**Building an understanding of, and support for, the place-shaping ambitions of our members.**

I also heard strongly that delivering place-shaping ambitions is becoming more difficult in the environment we operate in, and members value the opportunity to discuss this with others. The second outcome is:

**Facilitating connections between housing associations and providing support to our members to help them overcome the challenges they face.**

Members identified PlaceShapers' reputation for engaging and involving residents in our work and ensuring our asks of government are genuinely influenced by those living in social housing, as an important aspect of what we do. The third outcome is:

**Collaborating with members and the wider sector to give residents a voice that is heard by housing associations and government.**

I am really looking forward to working with our members to deliver this new plan, so please get in touch to find out how you can get involved.

*Catherine*

Catherine Ryder, Chief Executive

# Overview

Our three-year strategic plan has been shaped by our members and our analysis of the challenges and opportunities ahead for place-based, community-focused, housing associations.

This plan sets out three outcomes we aim to achieve between 2023 and 2026. We will achieve these outcomes by connecting, communicating, and collaborating for greater influence.

### Communicate:

the unique role of place-based housing associations to ensure the sector is understood and valued by politicians and stakeholders.

### Connect:

with our members and facilitate access to support to help them address the challenges they face in delivering their place-shaping role.

### Collaborate:

with members and the wider sector to give residents a voice that is heard by housing associations and government.

Our work will focus on the areas that are most relevant to place-based housing associations and deliver the maximum impact for our members.

Our members value the support they get from connecting with housing associations and learning from experts and the experience of others. Our established networks will remain central to how we work, and we will consider what more we can do to facilitate greater collaboration across our membership.



# Outcomes and planned work

**Communicate:** the unique role of place-based housing associations to ensure the sector is understood and valued by politicians and stakeholders.

**We will deliver this by:**

- Building a quantitative evidence base on the social and economic impact of place-based housing associations on their residents, communities, and places. This will be guided by a new member steering group
- Running an externally-faced campaign that builds understanding and support for the role of place-based housing associations. This will be guided by our communications network and our policy and public affairs network
- Continuing to build our bank of case studies and residents' stories on the impact of place-based housing associations
- Building relationships with politicians and stakeholders and creating opportunities to talk about the role and impact of place-based housing associations. This will include:
  - Developing a general election strategy, guided by a new member steering group
  - Further work to embed our PlaceShapers' political narrative as a resource for members
- Influencing the direction of relevant government policy to ensure our members have access to support and funding that will enable them to deliver their place-shaping role, including on development, regeneration and energy efficiency
- Producing tools and advice to support members to build understanding of their role and impact with local politicians and stakeholders.

**Measuring success:**

- We have a strong narrative and evidence base that quantifies the role and impact of our members, which resonates with members and politicians
- We have effective working relationships with key politicians in the main political parties and are seen as a partner they actively seek to engage with
- We have clear asks of government that would enable our members to do more. These asks are supported by members and used in conversations with decision-makers
- Members actively use the narrative, evidence base and tools we produce to engage their own stakeholders and politicians.



**Connect:** with our members and facilitate access to support to help them address the challenges they face in delivering their place-shaping role.

**We will deliver this by:**

- Building relationships with stakeholders, including the Regulator, the Housing Ombudsman and Homes England, and using these opportunities to ensure member views are represented in the approach these stakeholders take to their work. This will include responding to the consultation on the new consumer standards
- Running development, sustainability, communications, chairs and policy and public affairs networks
- Providing opportunities for members to come together to discuss the challenges they face and learn from the experience of others. This will include new regional networks and regionally-focused work, where appropriate
- Running proactive and reactive events, bringing in experts to offer practical advice on challenges
- Delivering an engaging and relevant annual conference.



**Measuring success:**

- We have effective working relationships with key stakeholders and are seen as a partner they actively seek to engage with
- Our networks and events are well attended and valued by members
- Our regional networks and focus add value to other regional approaches, are well attended by members and result in outputs that are supported and used by members.





## Collaborate:

with members and the wider sector to give residents a voice that is heard by housing associations and government.

### We will deliver this by:

- Producing member tools and resources that support engagement with residents and are shaped by input from residents. This will include resources on damp, mould and condensation, and energy efficiency (produced in partnership with TPAS and Northern Housing Consortium)
- Supporting work that highlights the challenges social housing residents face and advocates for solutions to address these challenges. This will include supporting campaigns on the cost-of-living crisis
- Creating and facilitating opportunity for government and stakeholders to hear directly from residents on social housing issues
- Building our network of resident allies and voices.

### Measuring success:

- Our tools and resources, including those on damp, mould, and condensation (Healthy Homes) and energy efficiency (Heart Warming Homes) are used widely by our members. They are acknowledged as representing good practice by residents and stakeholders, including the Housing Ombudsman
- We have secured speaking platforms and places round the table for residents of social housing in relevant meetings and conferences
- Our work demonstrably amplifies, and is directly influenced by, the voice and views of social housing residents.

# Next steps

We're already working towards delivering a number of the outcomes covered in this plan. In September 2023, we'll share tools and resources for our members that support engagement with residents on damp, mould and condensation and energy efficiency.

For other areas of work, for example on developing an evidence base on our impact and our general election strategy, we'll set up new member steering groups to shape this.

We'll begin building a library of resources for members that support lobbying and engagement with local politicians and stakeholders. This will include the political narrative that sets out the role of place-based, community-focused housing associations and communication resources.

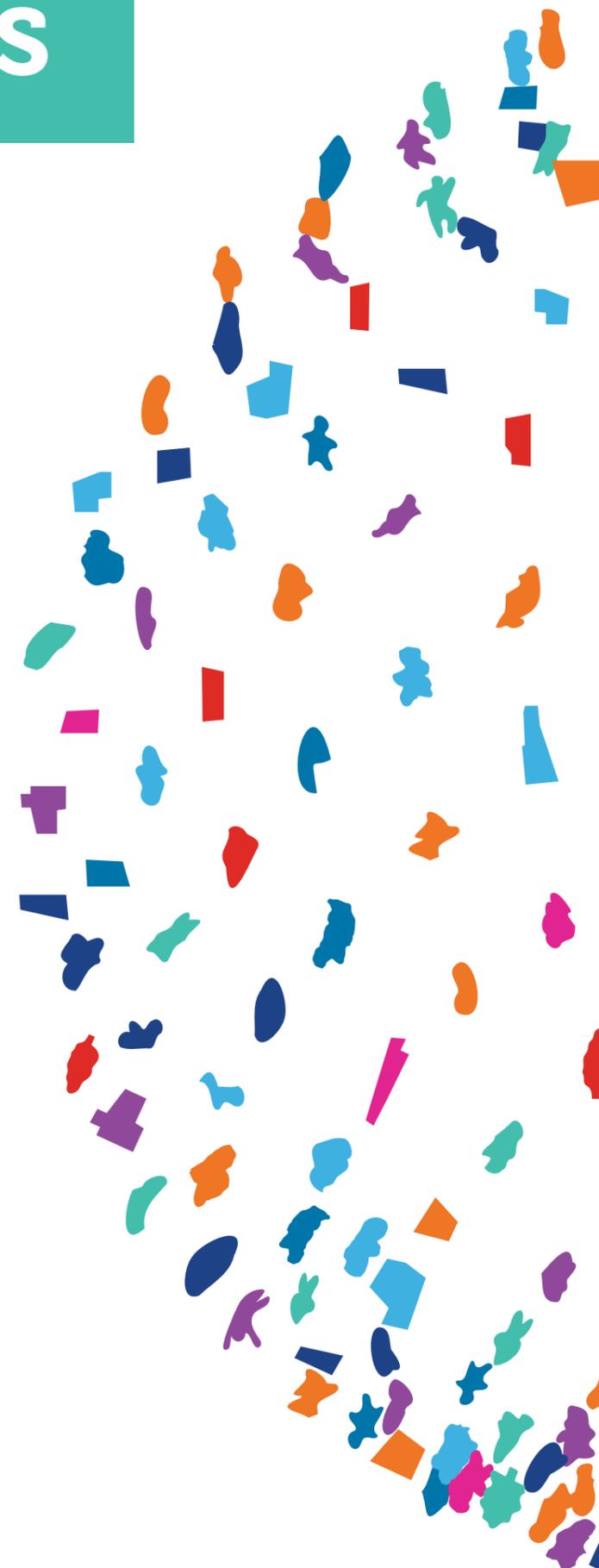
The strategic plan covers the next three years - further work will be planned for later in the cycle and we'll retain flexibility to respond to changing member priorities and the external environment.

Further details on specific work will be shared through our member communication channels and our communications network.

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**Together, we go beyond housing;  
we help communities thrive.**

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# Why members choose PlaceShapers

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Membership of PlaceShapers is an important and vital resource for housing organisations. Working together to discover best practice for delivering services makes a difference to individuals, local communities and nationally.

Clare Jones, Resident, Coastline Housing

“

Being a member of PlaceShapers is hugely important to us and gives us the opportunity to work with other place-based organisations, sharing ideas and learning from other members and ultimately harnessing our local connections to lobby on key issues felt by our residents.

Anna Klimczak, CEO, Brighter Places

“

PlaceShapers gives the sector a voice with senior policymakers and politicians, and we have worked closely with them on lobbying for great government support for regeneration.

Lucy Dixon, Head of External Affairs, Karbon



“

As a vehicle for change, PlaceShapers successfully brings together the collective voices of housing providers across the country and champions causes important to our customers in a much more powerful way than we could as individuals.

Mark Pearson, Managing Director, 54North Homes

“

Being a member of PlaceShapers means you are part of a strong network of like-minded housing associations who debate ideas, share best practice and work together to influence the wider sector and government policy.

Gary Fulford, CEO, whg and PlaceShapers Board Member

“

As a network, collaboration is key and together we have been able to have a national voice through PlaceShapers that is well respected within the sector and helps to push for positive change.

Katie Taylor, Communications and Marketing Manager, Cross Keys Homes

“

I was delighted to work with PlaceShapers. Not only was it great to be involved and have an opportunity to give a resident perspective, it also opened up avenues for further discussions.

Steve, Resident, Worthing Homes





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# Communicate Connect Collaborate

Contact us today...

Find out how you can get involved and benefit from the delivery of our new strategic plan outcomes.

Email: [info@placeshapers.org](mailto:info@placeshapers.org)

