



PlaceShapers

Together we help communities thrive



Shaping Places, Strengthening Communities

PlaceShapers Strategic Plan 2026 - 2029



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We're a national network of place-shaping housing organisations committed to supporting thriving communities and places. We support and enable organisations to fulfil their place-shaping ambitions. Our vision is to put place-shaping at the heart of decision-making.



Foreword

PlaceShapers exists to ensure social housing providers are recognised, supported and enabled as England's leading place-shapers - creating communities where people can thrive.

We are a vibrant national network of place-shaping housing organisations and our long-term vision is to place-shaping at the heart of decision-making.

Over the last three years we have worked towards achieving that vision through the delivery of the three goals in our Strategic Plan (2023 – 2026).

These goals were:

- To communicate the unique role of our members.
- To connect with our members to help them address the challenges they face.
- To collaborate to give residents a stronger voice.

Since 2023 we have made significant strides in delivering these goals - we met senior politicians, including the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, influenced the 2025 Spending Review, launched a new learning programme and learning hub, and continued to showcase and champion the work of our members.

We inspired, challenged, supported, encouraged and enabled our members to deliver place-shaping work that will benefit residents and communities now and into the future.

This has been against a backdrop of significant change and challenge for our members and their residents and communities. We have faced a cost-of-living crisis, an escalating housing and homelessness crisis, a social housing rent cap, a change in government and political upheaval, and increasingly stretched business plans.

With a government focussed on social housing and a decade of national renewal, there is a real opportunity to cement the crucial role of our members as community anchors and place-shapers and secure the support we need to do more. But we know this won't be easy. Many social housing providers face competing priorities and limited capacity and the place-shaping role of our members is still often overlooked and misunderstood.

As the custodians of the place-shaping work of the sector, PlaceShapers is more important than ever. To play our part as successfully as possible will rely on us deepening our reach with members and our impact with stakeholders. We will do this by continuing to bring in new members, working in partnership with others and with our resident allies, and amplifying the voice of our members.

Our new three-year Strategic Plan, which takes us to 2029, isn't a significant change in direction for PlaceShapers, but builds on the successes of the previous Plan.

We will continue to share good practice and inspiration with members, but we will also have more of a focus on supporting place-shaping and decision-making at a strategic level.

We are ambitious for the work of our members and the role of PlaceShapers, which is reflected in the three goals in the Plan, along with our overall ambition to enable our members to develop their approach to place-shaping over the next three years.

We are looking forward to working with our members, our partners, residents and communities over the next three years to do all we can to put place-shaping at the heart of decision-making.

Catherine

Catherine Ryder

Chief Executive, PlaceShapers



Our place-shaping role

Place-shaping is all the actions and interventions that social housing providers take to help communities thrive. Place-shaping means different things to different organisations and there is no one-size-fits-all description that works for all social housing providers. Place-shaping is about responding to the unique challenges and opportunities of places and communities.

However, at PlaceShapers we find it helpful to use three broad themes which reflect the different ways our members deliver their place-shaping ambitions:

Physical

How we build homes that meet the needs of our communities, how we regenerate places for long-term impact, and how we improve the environment for current and future generations.

Economic

How we work to improve economic opportunities for residents and communities.

Social

How we support our communities to be connected and resilient and healthy.



Our Strategic Plan (2026 – 2029) sets out our overall ambition and goals for the next three years, which collectively will help us deliver our long-term vision of putting place-shaping at the heart of decision-making.

By 2029, we will have enabled our members to develop their commitment to place-shaping and be confident that the investments and interventions they make will deliver for their communities.

To do this, we will:

Champion and amplify

We will champion and amplify the place-shaping work our members do so it is better understood and valued by key stakeholders.

Share and strengthen practice

We will share and strengthen practice so members can ensure their place-shaping work is as effective as possible.

Influence and enable change

We will influence politicians and decision-makers to create an environment where members are better placed to deliver their place-shaping ambitions.

We have developed this Plan based on our analysis of the challenges and opportunities social housing providers face in delivering their place-shaping ambitions over the next three years and the unique role that PlaceShapers can play compared to other housing networks and membership bodies.

The feedback and views of our members are reflected in our ambition, our goals, what we will do and what we are seeking to achieve.





Outcome one

Champion and amplify

We will champion and amplify the place-shaping work our members do so it is better understood and valued by key stakeholders.

What we will do:

- Develop the way we, and members, talk about place-shaping so the difference it makes and the impact it has is clear and compelling.
- Showcase the impact of our members have in creating thriving communities, including through the media, social media, events and other platforms.
- Support residents to have a strong voice in the conversation about place-shaping.

What we will achieve:

- Stakeholders, including mayors and local leaders, understand and talk positively about our members' place-shaping activities when given the opportunity.
- Combined authorities and local authorities actively engage with and value the contributions our members make to the success of a place and its communities.
- Place-shaping, and the role of social housing providers, is consistently referenced in national and local policy discussions.



Outcome two

Share and strengthen practice

We will share best practice and ideas so members can learn from each other and ensure their place-shaping work is as effective as possible.

What we will do:

- Provide thought-leadership on what effective place-shaping looks like in different contexts and for different organisations.
- Share learning on social, physical and economic place-shaping through webinars, study visits and resources.
- Support members to measure the impact of their place-shaping work for different audiences and purposes.
- Facilitate networking opportunities, including through Leaders' Events, Networks and our Annual Conference.

What we will achieve:

- Members can articulate the impact of their place-shaping work in a way that resonates with politicians, stakeholders and communities.
- Members report increased confidence in planning and investing in their place-shaping work, including across boundaries and through housing partnerships.
- Members have access to ideas, inspiration and best practice across physical, economic and social place-shaping.





Outcome three

Influence and enable change

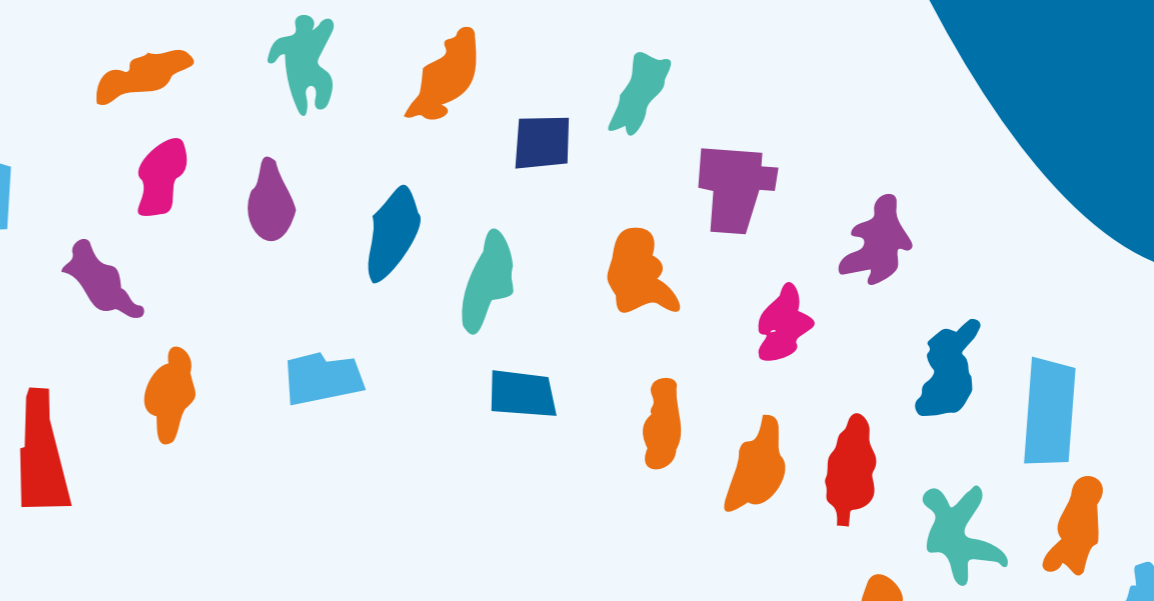
We will influence politicians and decision-makers to create an environment where members are better placed to deliver their place-shaping ambitions.

What we will do:

- Shape national policy and funding frameworks to enable place-shaping at scale, including the delivery of the new Social and Affordable Homes Programme, changes to section 106, and through the new Social Housing Taskforce.
- Lead the national conversation on how to support the place-shaping work of our members with evidence-based solutions, particularly on regeneration.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with politicians, decision-makers and those who can influence the operating environment for our members, including in the run-up to the next General Election.

What we will achieve:

- Housing associations have the support they need to build homes that genuinely meet the needs of their communities.
- Regeneration is at the heart of government's plan for a decade of national renewal.
- Regulation better reflects and acknowledges the place-shaping role of our members.





How we will work

Our role as the custodians of place-shaping will be more important than ever over the next three years as our members face constrained budgets, continue to respond to the housing crisis, deal with political and global uncertainty, and continue to support their communities.

Cross-cutting priorities

In addition to our three outcomes, we have three cross-cutting priorities that will support the delivery of our vision and ambition over the next three years.

These are:

1. To support an increase in resident voice and influence in social housing.
2. To develop our approach to using evidence to demonstrate the impact of place-shaping.
3. To encourage and support partnerships and collaboration on place-shaping in the sector and with other partners.

How we will work

We will deepen our reach and impact over the next three years by:

- Reinforcing the voice of our members, including through our member networks.
- Deepening our relationship with members across a range of different roles.
- Working in partnership with others and our resident allies.
- Ensuring PlaceShapers remains a strong, viable, efficient organisation with an active and supportive network of members.

Together, we will ensure place-shaping is a defining feature of how communities are supported, invested in and sustained.



Reflecting on the 2025/2026 PlaceShapers' year



PlaceShapers
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Dan Gray, Executive Director of Place at Aspire

"The work of PlaceShapers to support members in engaging with government over key sector issues has been invaluable. A particular highlight for Aspire was a visit by Darren Jones MP, then Chief Secretary to the Treasury, to our Cross Street regeneration programme in Newcastle-under-Lyme. I'm confident that opportunities like this, brought together through PlaceShapers and its members, raised awareness about sector asks to support the case for policy decisions subsequently made by the government."



Fay Shanahan, Corporate Director of Operation at whg

"PlaceShapers learning programme delivered clear value for whg and we were delighted to share our Social Justice Strategy and our commitment to tackling inequality as part of the programme. We learnt about community connection, resilience and health through study visits, and member insights have brought practical challenges and opportunities to life."



Alice Gordon, PR Manager at Karbon Homes

"Our partnership with PlaceShapers has been invaluable in supporting us with our place-shaping work, connecting us with like-minded peers in the housing sector that share our passion for shaping strong, sustainable communities and providing us with a plethora of great resources."



Louise Bassett, Chief Executive of Gentoo

"PlaceShapers continues to be an invaluable partner for Gentoo. Over the past year, we've benefitted hugely from the breadth and quality of your events, which consistently bring practical insight and genuine sector collaboration."



Maureen Adams, Chair of ccha

"As a member of PlaceShapers, we've benefitted from the open, practical discussions held across a wide range of events, helping us understand how government policy is affecting communities nationwide."



Get in touch

Email

info@placeshapers.org

LinkedIn

PlaceShapers

X (formerly Twitter)

@placeshapers