



HOMES STRATEGY

2025-28

FCHO's Homes Strategy 2025-28

Our Vision: Providing quality homes, fostering pride, and enhancing lives in Oldham

Our Mission: Homes we are proud of and improving lives

The Homes Strategy sets out First Choice Homes Oldham's (FCHO) approach to managing and investing in its housing and asset portfolio. This refreshed strategy builds on the foundations of the existing Asset Strategy, and replaces the existing Sustainability and Development strategies incorporating developments in legislation, customer expectations, market conditions, and wider strategic alignment across the organisation. It reflects our continued commitment to delivering high-quality, safe, sustainable homes and neighbourhoods, while improving the lives of our customers.

The strategy is integral to delivering FCHO's Big Plan 2.0, which outlines our priorities:

Great Homes

Great Neighbourhoods

Great Services

Great Company

Together, these pillars underpin our purpose – “to deliver homes we are proud of” – and our vision – “to improve lives.”

Homes Strategic Foundations

The Homes Strategy is shaped by five overarching design principles:

Ambition – We are determined to improve the performance and quality of our homes through bold, forward-thinking decisions and targeted investment.

Opportunity – We will question current practices, seek innovation, and pursue opportunities that add value for our customers and communities.

Responsibility – We will fulfil all legal, regulatory, and financial responsibilities to our customers, stakeholders, and colleagues, while placing value for money at the core of our approach

Dependencies – We will align the Homes Strategy with other corporate strategies to ensure consistency and coherence across FCHO.

Collaboration – We will strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders, including Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC), local partners, and joint ventures to deliver place-based outcomes.

Purpose of the Homes Strategy:

Our intent is to:

Ensure homes are safe, compliant, and meet the standards set out by regulatory and legislative frameworks, including the Building Safety Act, Decent Homes Standard, and Awaab's Law.

Invest in sustainability and energy efficiency to meet current and future net-zero and decarbonisation targets.

Embed a safety-first culture and robust asset management practices to protect customer wellbeing.

Maintain accurate data through ongoing stock condition surveys, enabling intelligence-led decision making.

Strengthen the value of our geographical footprint through our Oldham First approach – focusing on local delivery, local investment, and place-based regeneration.

Ensure our long-term financial stability by embedding data-led business planning, enabling robust financial resilience across our 30-year business plan



Assets Strategy

Property Investment – deliver a sustainable, high-quality investment programme that ensures all homes are safe, energy-efficient and fit for the future

What do we mean?

We're committed to providing safe, good-quality homes that meet all regulations and expectations and go beyond where we can. We want our homes to last for the long term, stay in good condition, and give customers a great experience. To do this, we'll invest in the structure and energy efficiency of our homes and carry out regular, planned maintenance to keep them safe, warm, and ready for the future.

How will we do it?

We'll focus on the important parts of the home like the roof, walls, windows, and heating so they stay strong, energy efficient, and free from problems like damp and mould. We'll make sure our repair and investment teams are well-resourced and ready to respond, so work is carried out on time and to a high standard.

We'll make smart choices with our budgets, aiming to deliver more for less improving homes while keeping costs under control. We'll aim to meet or exceed national standards like the Decent Homes Standard, and we'll always look for ways to improve energy efficiency and comfort.

When will we do it?

By March 2026, we'll build the right systems to plan and manage our homes better. This includes better decision-making tools, updating how we assess empty homes, and working more closely with the council on home adaptations.

By March 2027, we'll focus on being more efficient like making every visit count by completing more work in one go, using better materials, and bringing in digital tools to improve planning and delivery.

By March 2028, we'll focus on long-term planning, managing our budgets better, and making sure we can adjust to changes like new government rules or cost pressures, while still delivering on our promises.

What difference will it make?

We'll make sure our homes meet and go beyond minimum standards, fixing issues like damp and mould, and tackling any structural problems early.

We'll make better decisions about where to invest and which homes to sell or improve, using the right data. We'll cut down on repeat repairs, make the most of every visit from our teams, and reduce waste.

Assessing poor-performing homes and reinvesting in better ones will help reduce repair needs over time and improve the quality of our homes overall. Improved planning and budgeting will also help us stay on track financially, so we can keep investing in your homes for years to come.

Asset Data – improve the quality, accuracy and accessibility of asset data ensuring it drives informed decision making, strategic investment and regulatory compliance

What do we mean?

We want to make sure our customer's homes are safe, good quality, and built to last. To do this, we're taking a smarter, more planned approach to how we look after and invest in our homes.

How will we do it?

We'll use up-to-date information about the condition of our homes, along with feedback from customers, to decide where we need to spend money and make improvements. This includes checking how well homes are performing, spotting any issues early, and making sure we focus on homes that need the most attention incorporating the data we know about our customers too. We'll also consider things like energy efficiency, safety, and customer needs when making decisions.

When will we do it?

Over the next three years, we'll gather more detailed information about our homes, aiming to check the condition of 98.5% of them by 2028. Each year, we'll improve how we collect and use this data to help us plan better and make smarter decisions about where and when to invest.

What difference will it make?

Customers will benefit from homes that are safer, warmer, and in better condition. Repairs will be quicker, and issues will be dealt with before they become bigger problems. For us, it means better planning, lower costs, and making sure money is spent where it makes the biggest difference.

Compliance and Building Safety – achieve full compliance with all current and future building safety regulations with a proactive approach to risk management, governance and assurance

What do we mean?

We want all our homes and buildings to be as safe as possible. That means not just meeting the law, but going further, checking for risks early, following clear safety processes, and regularly reviewing how we do things to keep people safe.

How will we do it?

We are proactively preparing for upcoming regulatory changes, including the introduction of Ofgem regulation for UK heat networks in 2025, as part of the Government's wider drive toward net zero by 2050. This reflects our strategic commitment to regulatory compliance, operational resilience, and decarbonisation.

We'll also make sure our homes meet health and safety standards, especially when it comes to issues like damp and mould. These checks will be built into our wider safety processes.

When will we do it?

By March 2026 we'll carry out an independent safety review, put changes in place, and make sure we meet all current building safety rules. We'll also keep safety records for buildings that need extra attention.

By March 2027 we will have begun the process of obtaining a formal safety accreditation, reviewed how we store and track safety information, and ensure our safety contractors are delivering what we need.

By March 2028 we'll improve our safety data systems so we can make quicker, clearer decisions and communicate better with customers.

What difference will it make?

A robust compliance framework will provide confidence to the Board, regulators, and stakeholders that we are fully meeting our legal and regulatory obligations.

Enhanced data systems and reporting will support evidence-based decision-making and clearer communication with customers and partners.

Our proactive approach ensures we remain ahead of emerging building safety legislation and evolving regulatory expectations.

Responsive Maintenance – provide a high-quality customer focussed responsive repairs service that ensures homes are safe, well-maintained and meet customers' needs

What do we mean?

We've made changes to our repairs service to keep up with growing demand, more complex issues, and changing customer expectations. This includes setting up a new team for major and regular maintenance work and moving towards a more planned and proactive way of working.

How will we do it?

We'll carefully review how we spend money and how well the service is working to make sure we're getting good value and reducing the need for emergency repairs.

We're also getting ready for Awaab's Law by updating our policies to make sure we deal with health and safety issues in homes quickly and properly.

We're investing in our workforce – making sure our teams have the right skills now and for the future and supporting development and training for new and existing staff.

When will we do it?

By March 2026 we'll improve how we prioritise repairs, launch a new scheduling system, set up the new maintenance team, reduce disrepair claims, and get ready for the changes brought in by Awaab's Law.

By March 2027 we'll fully meet the next stage of Awaab's Law. We'll also look into new technology to help predict and prevent problems and invest in apprenticeships to grow our future workforce.

By March 2028 we will fully meet housing safety standards (HHSRS) and deliver a top-performing repairs service, aiming for over 85% of customers satisfied.

What difference will it make?

We will have a faster, more reliable repairs service that puts safety and customer satisfaction first. By doing more planned maintenance and fewer emergency fixes, we'll reduce serious problems in homes, improve their condition, and raise satisfaction levels.

We'll also make sure we're following new safety laws, support our staff with the right training, and use smarter ways of working to make the service more efficient and sustainable for the future.

Sustainability and Environmental Strategy

Carbon Footprint – drive continuous improvement in the sustainability and energy efficiency of the assets and our activities while maximising value

What do we mean?

We are committed to driving continual improvements in the sustainability and energy efficiency of our homes, ensuring that every investment we make delivers optimal long-term value. By integrating sustainability into the core of our operations, we aim to enhance the performance of our homes over time, while significantly reducing our environmental footprint.

How will we do it?

We will design and implement investment programmes that strategically position us for future energy performance requirements. With a fabric-first approach, we are laying the groundwork for future technological upgrades and ensuring our homes are prepared for the adoption of innovative energy solutions.

Improved data quality will allow us to accurately forecast future performance, enabling more informed, data-driven investment decisions.

When will we do it?

By March 2028, 87% of our homes at EPC C or above

By March 2028, 25% of all FCHO colleagues will be carbon literacy certified

What difference will it make?

Homes will be warmer, healthier, and more affordable to run to support reducing fuel poverty and improving comfort, particularly for vulnerable households.

A significant reduction in carbon emissions will help tackle climate change and support Greater Manchester's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2038.

Investing wisely in energy efficiency will reduce lifecycle costs, avoid penalties linked to non-compliance, and unlock access to external funding where available.

Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency – deliver sustainability interventions which improve energy efficiency and creating healthy, warm living environments

What do we mean?

We want to make our homes greener and warmer. To do this, we'll invest in projects that improve energy efficiency and support customers with advice and guidance on their energy bills.

How will we do it?

We'll introduce new technologies to help customers manage their energy consumption more effectively. Through clear guidance and practical solutions, we aim to provide the tools necessary for informed decision-making on energy efficiency.

We will explore and implement innovative renewable energy solutions in collaboration with local authorities and strategic partners.

By improving insulation, ventilation and protection from damp and cold, we'll make homes more comfortable and better prepared for all types of weather.

We'll involve customers so they fully understand how the new technology works and how to get the most from it.

When will we do it?

Between now and 2028, we'll gradually increase the work we do each year. This includes offering more tailored support to customers, collecting useful data, and helping people travel more sustainably. By 2028, we want 60% of our homes to have data on sustainable transport options and all staff to be trained to support customers with energy advice and reducing fuel costs.

What difference will it make?

This approach will empower customers to make informed energy choices, reduce fuel poverty, and actively participate in sustainability efforts. By improving the energy performance of our homes and embedding greener practices, we will lower carbon emissions, enhance quality of life, and support Greater Manchester's goal of carbon neutrality by 2038 delivering long-term environmental, social, and financial value.

Sustainability and Waste – align investment specifications, procurement and supply chain management to deliver value to local communities while reducing embodied carbon and waste

What do we mean?

We're committed to making sustainability a priority in everything we do, from planning investments and buying materials to working with our suppliers. Our goal is to create positive impacts that improve local communities while protecting the environment for everyone.

How will we do it?

We'll focus on making neighbourhoods better places to live by keeping safety and compliance high, making the best use of green spaces, and managing waste and bins more effectively. One of our big goals is to stop sending any waste to landfill by reusing, recycling, or disposing of it in the most eco-friendly way possible.

We'll also work closely with our suppliers to reduce waste right from the start and encourage the use of sustainable materials.

On top of that, we'll improve recycling and waste options for our customers, especially when we update shared spaces in neighbourhoods.

When will we do it?

We'll keep making steady improvements every year. This means better waste management, cutting down the carbon footprint of our big projects, and making sure no waste goes to landfill. Each year, we'll roll out new recycling projects in four more neighbourhoods, improve our own ways of working, and involve our staff more, all while following the latest environmental laws.

What difference will it make?

By making sustainability part of daily life, we aim to reduce waste and protect the environment. Together, these efforts will help build a cleaner, greener future for everyone in our communities.

Green and Open Spaces – enhance green and open spaces to improve biodiversity, absorb carbon and interact beneficially with the surrounding environment

What do we mean?

We want to bring more nature into our neighbourhoods to make them healthier, greener places to live. This also helps us do our part to protect the environment.

How will we do it?

We'll design our neighbourhoods so they feel welcoming and help bring people together. This means creating outdoor spaces that support well-being and a sense of community.

To do this well, we'll collect better information about our green spaces – like how many trees there are or how often the area is used – so we can make smart decisions about where to invest and how to improve things. This might include planting more trees, creating wildflower meadows, or setting up spaces for wildlife.

We'll work closely with experts and other organisations to make sure our approach is based on the latest advice and good practice.

All new developments will be designed to support local wildlife and nature, making sure we leave the environment better than we found it.

When will we do it?

We've made a long-term commitment to improve the environment in our neighbourhoods. By 2028, we want to increase the amount of nature and wildlife in our green spaces by 15%. This supports new government rules that require landowners to help the environment.

What difference will it make?

By working across different parts of our business, we'll create joined-up plans that improve where you live and make a real difference to local green spaces.

These changes will help build stronger, greener communities where people and nature can thrive together.

Growth Strategy

New Build Developments – to deliver high quality homes which meet the needs of the community through mixed tenure, place-based design, varied housing options and sustainability in construction

What do we mean?

We're building new homes that are good quality and affordable. This helps us grow and meet the needs of current and future customers. We'll design a mix of different home types that fit well with the local area and what people need.

How will we do it?

We'll make sure there are different sizes and types of homes to suit many kinds of households. All new homes will be designed to save energy and be easy to look after, so they cost less to maintain in the future.

Before building, we'll carefully check that each project is financially stable and meets the changing needs of our customers throughout their lives.

We'll also manage risks like changes in funding, house prices, and costs, to make sure we deliver homes that meet what customers want. To help us grow, we'll work with partners and use available land, like old garage sites or empty spaces, to build these homes.

When will we do it?

We have the capacity to delivery circa 300 homes within the life span of this strategy.

What difference will it make?

This building programme will give more people access to good quality, affordable, and energy-efficient homes that fit local needs. It will give more choice, support stronger communities, and reduce future maintenance work. By picking the right sites and home types, we'll make sure homes are affordable to manage and meet environmental goals, helping us grow and improve communities for years to come.

Acquisitions and Disposals – to acquire and dispose of homes that compliment or detract from FCHO delivering excellent homes that meet the need of our communities

What do we mean?

Growing our homes isn't just about building new ones. It also means carefully buying or swapping homes with other landlords to improve our housing and neighbourhoods. This helps us provide better services and create stronger, happier communities.

How will we do it?

We'll look for chances to buy back homes that used to belong to us, especially in important areas or when rules say we should. This includes homes sold before through Right to Buy, which we'll bring back as affordable homes or rented properties.

We'll also focus on buying homes in areas that need fixing up, helping to make these places better for everyone.

We'll carefully check different options like homes built specifically for renting, to earn money that can be used to build more affordable homes.

We'll review our current homes and sell or transfer those that don't fit well with our plans or are too costly to manage. We'll always think about how these changes affect customers and the neighbourhood before making decisions.

When will we do it?

We will implement a phased approach to strategic growth and optimisation.

By March 2026, we'll review our neighbourhoods, update our buying and selling rules, and set up the right processes.

By March 2027, we'll look at where homes are located, explore swapping or buying opportunities, and start buying based on what customers need.

By March 2028, we plan to finish any agreed buying, selling, or swapping to make sure our homes match what customers want and our long-term goals.

What difference will it make?

This plan will help us provide more high-quality homes while keeping our finances strong, so we can keep growing and supporting communities over time.

Regeneration – through targeted regeneration, we aim to deliver projects that contribute to viable growth. This will ensure that our housing offer meets the needs of current and future customers while enhancing the long-term sustainability of our neighbourhoods

What do we mean?

Our regeneration strategy will take a targeted, data-driven approach to identifying and addressing underperforming estates.

How will we do it?

We'll use up-to-date information about how homes and areas are doing, including what customers think, the condition of buildings, and costs. We'll make sure to keep customers informed every step of the way.

We'll work closely with partners and manage contracts carefully to bring wider benefits to the community. This includes looking at other local places like garages, shops, and community centres to make the whole neighbourhood better.

We're also starting a project to improve garage sites and empty land to help enhance the area.

When will we do it?

By March 2028, we aim to have a regeneration project underway.

What difference will it make?

This plan will help turn neighbourhoods into thriving, safe, and pleasant places to live. By focusing on what matters most, we'll improve homes and community spaces, making customers happier and reducing differences between areas. It will also help us manage money better by fixing costly problems and planning smart investments for the future.