

Asset Management Strategy 2025 - 2029



Asset Management Strategy 2025 – 2029

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To be completed as part of final design

SUMMARY

Railway Housing Association's Asset Management Strategy for 2025-2029 is a comprehensive plan designed to ensure the effective management, maintenance, and improvement of the association's housing stock. This strategy is rooted in the organisation's rich heritage, dating back to its establishment in 1919, and is driven by a long-term vision to be the best small housing provider in the country.

Over the past century, the Railway Housing Association has grown and evolved, now managing 1,634 homes across 20 local authority areas. This strategy builds on that legacy, focusing on delivering high-quality, affordable housing and services to residents. It addresses the challenges and opportunities within the social housing sector, including regulatory changes, economic pressures, and the need for sustainability.

The strategy outlines key priorities and actions to enhance resident satisfaction, ensure safety and compliance, achieve energy efficiency goals, and make data-driven investment decisions. It emphasises the importance of resident engagement, accurate data management, and a proactive approach to regulatory requirements.

The main goals of the Railway Housing Association's Asset Management Strategy for 2025-2029 are:

1. **Resident Satisfaction:** Improve overall resident satisfaction by ensuring homes are well-maintained, safe, and meet residents' needs and aspirations.
2. **Data-Driven Decisions:** Utilise accurate and up-to-date data to inform strategic planning and investment decisions, ensuring efficient and effective asset management.
3. **Safety and Compliance:** Maintain high standards of safety and compliance, moving beyond regulatory requirements to adopt best practices and innovative solutions.
4. **Energy Efficiency:** Achieve EPC C ratings for all homes by 2030 and develop a roadmap to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, focusing on sustainability and reducing residents' energy costs.
5. **Financial Responsibility:** Make data-driven decisions to maximise the long-term value of assets, ensuring financial viability and effective use of resources.
6. **Technology and Innovation:** Deploy digital tools and innovative technologies to enhance asset management services and data quality, adopting green technology pragmatically.

These goals are designed to ensure the long-term resilience of the housing portfolio, improve the quality of life for residents, and support the association's vision of being the best small housing provider in the country.

OUR HERITAGE

Picture this: it's 1919, the aftermath of the First World War, and railway workers are returning home, seeking shelter and solace. That's when the North Eastern Railway Cottage Homes and Benefit Fund sprang to life with an initial donation of £10,000 and weekly contributions from 7,000 dedicated railway workers.

The North Eastern Railway matched members' contributions and provided invaluable free services like accountancy, architecture and surveying. The first homes for railway heroes were finished in 1921, dotting the landscape of South Gosforth, York and Darlington.

Fast forward through the years and Railway Housing Association has evolved into an organisation that's rightly proud of its history. We now proudly own and manage 1,634 homes across 20 local authority areas.

Our footprint echoes the historic routes of the North Eastern Railway, stretching from Northumberland, through County Durham and Darlington, to York, East and West Yorkshire, to Hereford, touching the lives of countless individuals and families along the way. Today, our heritage remains a vital part of our identity. We take immense pride in our history and the profound impact of providing high quality, affordable housing and services to everyone with a Railway Housing Association home.

We specialise in the provision of rented accommodation for older people, however, we also have general needs homes for families, mainly located in Darlington and York. We employ 41 colleagues, with the majority based at our Maple House office in Darlington and the remainder of our colleagues are based in our communities, delivering local services for our residents.

41

colleagues

1,559

rented homes

73

leasehold homes
for older people

2

shared ownership
homes

1,074

homes for older
people (66%)



OUR LONG-TERM VISION

Railway Housing Association exists for our residents, and we don't take that lightly. We believe that our residents deserve the best, and that's why we've set our long-term vision to be the county's best small housing provider. We will measure that by comparing overall resident satisfaction for registered providers of homes between 1,000 and 2,000.

OUR LONG TERM VISION

To be the country's best small housing provider*

Our Foundations

We know that to deliver on our vision for our residents, we must have firm foundations in place to deliver the priorities that our residents want to see. In 2024, we launched our 12-month On The Right Track delivery plan, setting four clear foundations to improve.

OUR FOUNDATIONS



OUR RESIDENT EXPERIENCE

To provide an outstanding resident experience, reflecting our residents needs and aspirations.



OUR HOMES

To provide safe, affordable and energy efficient properties that residents are proud to call home.



OUR ORGANISATION

To be a well governed, financially strong and digitally enabled organisation.



OUR PEOPLE

To create a high performing, resident focused culture that attracts and retains talented colleagues.

OPERATING CONTEXT

The UK has experienced a series of significant challenges over the past five years, including Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and periods of high inflation. These events continue to present difficulties for registered providers of social housing. The operating environment remains dynamic, with rising costs, a tight labour market, and disruptions to supply chains. At the same time, income streams for landlords face uncertainty, as employment rates have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels and rising energy costs place pressure on household budgets. Although HM Government has provided positive indications for a long-term rent settlement, this is still to be finalised.

The Regulator of Social Housing's 2024 Sector Risk Profile highlights that:

"Homes are a long-term asset, and failing to invest adequately can have serious consequences for tenants, leading to deterioration that ultimately costs more. Social landlords are currently spending record amounts on repairs and maintenance and forecasting further substantial increases. However, skilled labour shortages continue to impact repairs and maintenance programmes, and demand for damp and mould work remains high."

Landlords are also planning substantial investments in existing homes to improve quality, safety, and meet decarbonisation targets, as well as addressing the growing housing crisis by increasing the supply of new homes. At Railway Housing Association, we have made the decision to temporarily pause new home development to prioritise resources to improve our current homes and the services we provide to residents, including achieving EPC C across all our homes.

Additional factors, such as the anticipated revised Decent Homes Standard and the introduction of Awaab's Law, are shaping future approaches to housing maintenance. Railway Housing Association fully support the drive to improve standards and ensure the safety of our residents. Further consultation and guidance from HM Government will be essential to provide clarity on future expectations.

The social rented sector has faced heightened reputational scrutiny regarding the safety and quality of homes, particularly in relation to damp and mould and fire safety. The Board of Railway Housing Association is committed to a proactive approach to health and safety, supporting the strong need to ensure our homes are well-maintained and safe for all residents.

Changing Regulation

The regulatory environment for social housing has changed following the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The Act introduced a fundamental shift in the regulatory regime, moving consumer regulation to proactive, rather than reactive.

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The RSH has set out its new standards for social housing landlords which are designed to protect tenants and improve the service they receive. The changes, which are a result of the landmark Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, came into effect from 1 April 2024.

Under the new standards landlords will need to:

- ensure residents are safe in their homes
- listen to residents' complaints and respond promptly to put things right
- be accountable to residents and treat them with fairness and respect
- know more about the condition of every home and the needs of the people who live in them
- collect and use data effectively across a range of areas, including repairs

The Regulator of Social Housing will hold landlords to account, and it will:

- inspect landlords regularly to check they are meeting the outcomes in the standards
- scrutinise data about resident satisfaction, repairs and other relevant issues
- continue to push landlords to protect residents and put things right when there are problems
- use a range of tools when needed, including new enforcement powers
- continue to focus on the financial viability and governance of housing associations as part of its integrated regulation

The revised consumer standards are:

- **Safety and Quality Standard** – outcomes about the safety and quality of homes
- **Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** – outcomes about how landlords provide information, listen to residents, and act on their views
- **Neighbourhood and Community Standard** – outcomes about how landlords work with other organisations to help ensure tenants live in safe neighbourhoods
- **Tenancy Standard** – outcomes about how landlords allocate and let homes and manage tenancies

The new consumer standards and Tenant Satisfaction Measures cut across Railway Housing Association's service delivery. With the support of external consultants DTP, we have undertaken a detailed external assessment of the new Consumer Standards and our ability to meet them. A significant action plan has been developed from this review and we are delivering those actions to strengthen and exceed compliance with the standards. It is anticipated that Property-related actions will be completed by August 2025.

OUR RESIDENT VOICE

Railway Housing Association exists for our residents, and it is a key strategic priority for Railway to deliver an outstanding experience to residents, which reflects their needs and aspirations. The Board understand that to achieve this goal, the resident voice must shape the strategic priorities and direction of the organisation, right down to a strong grass roots community level of resident engagement.

As a key action within our 2024 On The Right Track delivery plan, we have co-created a new resident engagement strategy with our residents, which sets the direction and ambition for how Railway will listen to residents and maps out how Railway can better understand about the issues that matter, including what's happening in the local neighbourhood and how Railway delivers services. The strategy sets out a refocussing on the foundations of effective engagement and demonstrates how Railway can make the best use of our capacity and resources to amplify the voice, influence and impact of residents living in Railway homes.

At Railway Housing Association, we highly value the perspectives of all residents across our communities, recognising that diverse and representative feedback is essential to improving our services. Every insight shared helps shape our approach and ensures we meet the evolving needs of our residents.

In 2022, the Regulator of Social Housing introduced a requirement for landlords to implement the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)—a framework consisting of 22 key performance indicators, including 12 perception-based measures and 10 operational performance measures.

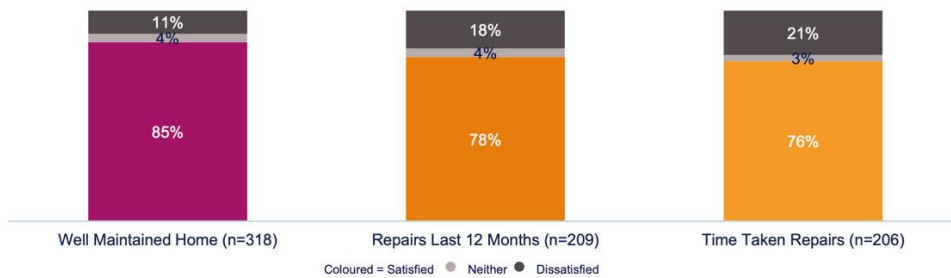
To ensure a robust and independent approach, Railway Housing Association commissioned research firm Acuity in 2023 to conduct the perception-based measures over a three-year period. In 2024, Acuity completed the second annual survey, capturing detailed feedback from 625 residents over the two years on their experiences and satisfaction with our services. This ongoing research provides valuable insights, enabling us to refine our service delivery and strengthen our commitment to resident engagement, transparency, and continuous improvement.

For the property-related measures, resident perception in 2023 and 2024 are set out below.

- Satisfaction that the home is well maintained has increased from 82% in 2023 to 85% in 2024
- In 2024, 68% of residents said that they had a repair completed to their home in the last 12 months and of these, 78% were satisfied, which is an increase of 2 percentage points from 2023
- 76% of residents were happy with the time taken to complete the most recent repair in 2024, which is a slight increase by 1% on 2023

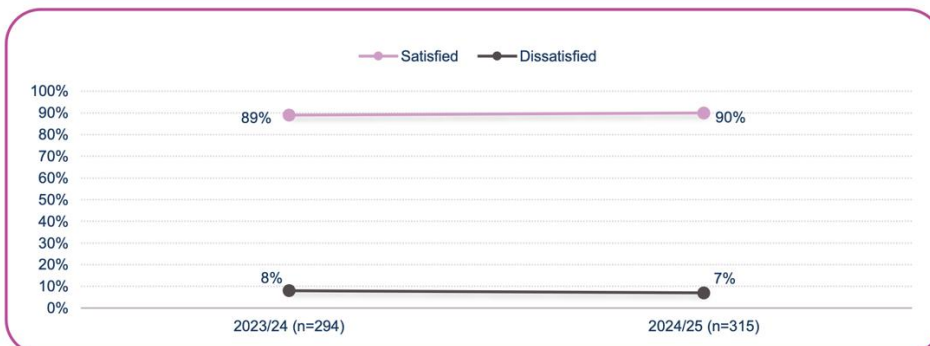
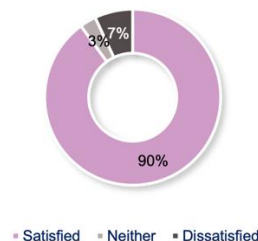
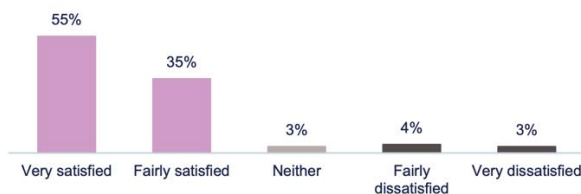
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Keeping Properties in Good Repair



For the building safety perception, 90% of residents surveyed in 2024 felt safe in their home, with 55% of residents feeling very satisfied.

Maintaining Building Safety



When compared with the Regulator of Social Housing benchmarking data for landlords of between 1,000 and 2,000 homes, our perception measures for repairs and the time taken to

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complete a repair are within quartile 2, and well maintained and feeling safe are within quartile 1.

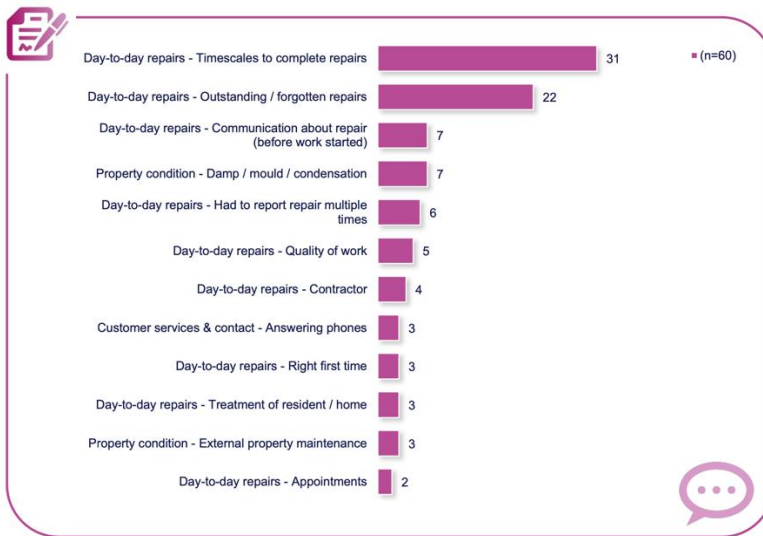


Whilst these results are positive, to achieve our long-term vision of being the best small housing provider in the country we must strive to improve further. The best-in-class results from HouseMark for these measures within our peer group (English Traditional Housing Associations with less than 2,500 homes) are:

Measure	Railway 2024/25 TSM Result	Best In Class Result	% Difference
Overall Satisfaction	82%	94%	+ 12%
Repairs in the last 12 months	78%	96%	+ 18%
Time taken to complete repairs	76%	94%	+ 18%
Well maintained home	85%	96%	+ 11%
Home is safe	90%	97%	+ 7%

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures also give invaluable insight into why residents aren't satisfied, and in relation to homes, the biggest sources of dissatisfaction are with our day-to-day repairs service, as shown below:

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In December 2024, Acuity conducted a comprehensive analysis of two years' worth of resident perception survey data, providing Railway Housing Association with valuable insights into resident priorities and informing our strategic direction.

The findings reinforce that a well-maintained home is a primary driver of overall resident satisfaction. Notably, residents who perceive their home as well maintained are 7.29 times more likely to report being very satisfied with their overall experience.

The key influencer analysis further highlights that residents value a well-maintained home and strongly associate property maintenance with their sense of safety. Additionally, residents expect clear and timely communication regarding repairs and planned maintenance, underscoring the importance of transparency and engagement in service delivery.

These insights will play a pivotal role in shaping our investment priorities, service enhancements, and communication strategies, ensuring we continue to meet resident expectations and improve overall satisfaction.

Our complaints data further reinforces this conclusion. In 2023/24, 83% of all complaints received were related to repairs and maintenance, with recurring themes including poor workmanship, lack of action, missed appointments, and concerns regarding contractor attitude and behaviour.

This trend has persisted into 2024/25, with 64% of complaints recorded by the end of January 2025 still relating to repairs and maintenance. The most prevalent issue identified in 2024/25 is a lack of action or resolution, highlighting the need for improvements in service responsiveness and follow-through on repair requests.

These insights will directly inform our service improvement initiatives, ensuring a stronger focus on quality, accountability, and resident satisfaction in our repairs and maintenance services.

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Service Area	Complaint Reason	Count of Agreement Number
Asset	Lack of communication	2
	Staff Attitude	2
R&M	Damage to property	1
	Decision/diagnosis (property condition)	1
	Decision/Diagnosis (Property)	3
	Decision/Diagnosis (Repairs and Maintenance)	1
	Diagnosis/Decision	3
	Lack of action/resolution	27
	Lack of action/resolution (damp and mould)	1
	Staff Attitude	5
	Timescales (Property)	3
	Workmanship/Quality	5
Grand Total		54

ASSET MANAGEMENT

Asset management is fundamentally about ensuring our homes are well-maintained, cost-effective, and deliver maximum value. Our approach prioritises achieving the optimal balance between time, cost and quality in every investment we make in our homes.

Effective asset management is critical to the success of Railway Housing Association for several key reasons:

- Our residents are central to everything we do, and the quality of our homes underpins our success.
- Our homes are our economic engine as the income generated from rents and service charges directly funds the services and improvements we provide to our residents.
- While maintaining our homes represents our largest expenditure, our homes are also our primary source of income. By managing them efficiently and effectively, we can sustain our long-term objectives and continue to enhance the services we deliver.

Asset management has undergone significant changes in recent years, with several major factors impacting service delivery, including:

- The **Covid-19 pandemic**, which caused delays in works, surveys, and inspections, while also necessitating changes to working practices.
- **Fire and building safety** concerns following the Grenfell Tower tragedy.
- **High levels of inflation**, particularly in building materials, driven by Brexit, the pandemic, and the invasion of Ukraine.
- Increased attention to **damp, mould, and condensation issues** following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak.
- The introduction of **new Consumer Standards** and an updated regulatory framework.
- **Rising demand for repairs** from residents across the sector.
- A sector-wide trend of **declining satisfaction** with repair services.

Our Asset Management History

Railway Housing Association's Asset Management Policy, originally established in 2017, was updated in 2023 to address evolving requirements for managing asbestos within our homes. During the same year, an issue was identified with the quality and robustness of our asset and stock condition data. Committed to transparency and co-regulation, Railway Housing Association self-referred these concerns to the Regulator of Social Housing.

A thorough action plan was agreed with the Regulator of Social Housing as part of a wider review into the organisation's governance and the action plan included some key projects to improve the quality and robustness of our data, which included:

1. A 100% external stock condition survey was commissioned

2. A new asset management IT system, Asprey, was implemented to hold the new data from the new survey programme.

In 2023, we restructured our Executive Team, introducing the new roles of Chief Finance Officer and Chief Operating Officer to replace the former roles of Director of Finance, Director of Policy, and Director of Customer Services. This reorganisation was designed to support the Chief Executive in driving a better future for Railway Housing Association. The new structure establishes clearer responsibility and accountability for both resident experience and asset management by aligning strategy and policy with operational delivery.

In March 2024, we launched On The Right Track, which was our improvement plan to March 2025, which sets out clear actions around four foundation themes.



On The Right Track set some clear aims for the Our Homes foundation, including:

- Have a clear and accurate picture of our homes and communities
- Hearing our residents feedback, set a clear vision for how we will invest and manage our homes and communities
- Improve the energy efficiency of our homes

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- Have a co-ordinated and planned approach to improving existing homes
- Ensure our residents feel safe in their homes

The Our Homes priority set out five key actions to improve our data quality and approach to asset management, and work has progressed at pace as set out below:

Action	Progress
Review all stock condition data across our homes and upload to our new asset management system	In September 2023, we commissioned a 100% stock condition survey of our homes to ensure that we have accurate and up to date information on the condition of our homes. We worked with Pennington's Choices to deliver the survey programme and 85% of homes have had a stock condition survey by November 2024. This information and data is currently being analysed, reviewed and prepared for loading into our new Asset Management IT system.
Undertake a detailed strategic review to set a new asset management strategy	This document is our new Asset Management Strategy.
Rescope and deliver the SHDF programme and identify a clear plan for EPC C by 2030	In 2024, we took the decision to withdraw from the previous funding round to focus our resources on our stock condition survey. We have submitted a new bid as part of the Government's Warm Homes Programme for solar PV for around 150 of our homes through a joint bid facilitated by the Tees Valley Combined Authority. If successful, this bid will help to move 150 properties to EPC C.
Set clear and deliverable 5 and 30 year planned investment programmes	The 5 and 30 year investment programmes are to be set based on the accurate stock condition data.
Produce clear resident communication of our health and safety performance, supported by robust external reviews of Railway Housing Association	Through the new Resident Engagement Strategy, the Resident Committee will lead on the development and publication of health and safety data to further develop our good practice in this important area of transparency with our residents.

2024 marked a pivotal year for Railway Housing Association, shaping the future of how we care for our homes and communities. Our focus was on enhancing the quality and accuracy of our property data, ensuring we can make well-informed, strategic investment decisions. By strengthening our data insights, we are better positioned to plan for the future, meeting the evolving needs and aspirations of our residents with confidence.

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A key aspect of this improvement work has been the comprehensive stock condition survey commissioned by Railway. In collaboration with Pennington's Choices, we developed a strategic survey programme to assess the condition of our homes. This programme evaluates property conditions, component lifespans, Decent Homes compliance, and potential Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards.

By November 2024, Pennington's Choices had completed surveys on 85% of our homes. We are currently reviewing and analysing the data to integrate it into our new asset management IT system, enhancing our ability to make informed investment decisions.

To ensure the successful delivery of On The Right Track, we have aligned our resources and operational model to better serve our residents. As part of this transformation, we have restructured our operational teams and introduced a new community-focused service delivery model. Additionally, we have appointed a Head of Property, a Maintenance Delivery Manager, and an Asset Planning Lead—key roles and skillsets that will drive investment in our homes and deliver on the priorities that matter most to our residents.

Detailed Reports and Reviews

To inform the development of this strategy, a series of comprehensive external reviews and reports have been conducted over the past 18 months, including:

- **Value for Money Review** of responsive and cyclical repairs by the Northern Housing Consortium (March 2023)
- **Compliance Health Check** by Pennington's Choices, assessing all aspects of landlord health and safety (September 2023)
- **HouseMark Tailored Feedback** presentations (November 2023 and January 2025)
- **Responsive Repair and Voids Spend Analysis** by Procurement for Housing (January 2024)
- **Civica Cx Health Check Report** (December 2023)
- **Assessment and Review of the New Consumer Standards** by DTP (March 2024)

The insights and recommendations from these reviews, combined with valuable resident feedback, have been instrumental in shaping the resulting action plan. The reports and a detailed desktop review of the service carried out in 2024 highlight:

- **Rising Costs Across the Sector:** The average cost per unit (CPU) has been increasing across the social housing sector. Railway Housing Association's (RHA) headline social housing CPU for 2023/24 was £4,072, which was lower than forecast as a result of planned maintenance pauses to carry out the stock condition survey.
- **Day-to-Day Repairs:** Railway's reactive repairs contractors operate under a Schedule of Rates, with the average cost of day-to-day repairs rising from £111 in 2021/22 to £164 currently, a 48% increase.

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- **Repairs Per Property:** The overall cost of repairs is influenced by both the average cost per repair and the number of repairs per property. In 2021/22, Railway averaged 2.6 repairs per property, which reduced to 2.1 in 22/23 and rose to 3.6 in 2023/24, which matches the sector median.
- **Work Order Variations:** Analysis has identified that 50% of work orders are varied, leading to a 30% increase in costs. A review of call handling and repair diagnosis processes is required to enhance efficiency.
- **High-Volume Repairs:** As seen across the sector, a small number of properties require disproportionately high levels of reactive repairs. Proactively managing and understanding these exceptions could help control costs.
- **Voids Management:** In line with sector trends, the number of void properties has risen from 246 in 2021/22 to 286 in 2022/23. However, the average cost per void has decreased from £1,259 to £1,127, reflecting improved cost management.
- **Compliance Strength:** Compliance remains a strong area for Railway. The Pennington Choices Compliance Audit provided Reasonable Assurance, with 29 recommendations:
 - o 5 High-priority actions (to be completed within 3 months)
 - o 20 Medium-priority actions (within 6 months)
 - o 4 Low-priority actions (within 9 months)Significant progress has already been made in addressing these recommendations.
- **Complaints Related to Repairs:** 83% of formal complaints in 2023/24 related to responsive repairs. Key areas of dissatisfaction included communication gaps, lack of clarity on appointments and follow-up work, and concerns about workmanship.
- **Planned Maintenance & Data Management:** The planned maintenance programme is currently being reviewed, alongside the new stock condition data. Modern housing services require robust, integrated data systems, covering stock condition, energy efficiency, repairs and compliance. Seamless data integration across these areas will be essential for future service improvements.

Revised Operating Model

Railway Housing Association conducted a thorough review of its operating model in the summer of 2024, resulting in significant structural improvements. A new Head of Property was appointed, and investments in additional resources, including an extra Property Surveyor and a dedicated Maintenance Delivery Manager, to better manage contractors and drive performance improvements.

The updated delivery model adopts a community-based approach by integrating housing management and repair services within common geographical areas. This model assigns two housing Community Housing Coordinators and one Property Surveyor to manage patches of 500 homes.



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This community-focused strategy offers several benefits:

1. **Enhanced Understanding of Residents and Properties:** By working within smaller, defined areas, staff can develop a deeper understanding of the unique needs and characteristics of both residents and properties. This familiarity allows for more personalised and effective service delivery.
2. **Improved Decision-Making:** With a better grasp of local issues and resident needs, housing colleagues and Property Surveyors can make more informed decisions that directly benefit the community.
3. **Stronger Community Relationships:** Regular interaction with residents fosters trust and builds stronger relationships, creating a sense of community and belonging.
4. **Proactive Problem-Solving:** A localised approach allows colleagues to identify and address potential issues before they escalate, leading to a more proactive and preventative maintenance strategy.

Overall, this community-based housing model aims to create a more responsive, efficient, and resident-focused service, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

Asset Management Framework

Below is an indicative asset management framework which diagrammatically shows the key workstreams associated with delivering the asset management strategy.

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VISION

Railway Housing Association's long-term vision is to be the country's best small housing provider, and an effective approach to how we look after our homes and communities is fundamental to achieving this.

Our vision for asset management at Railway is:

To ensure that all homes are safe, well maintained, and energy efficient, while delivering value for money and meeting the evolving needs of our residents.

To support this vision, six guiding principles will inform our approach to asset management:

- **Resident Centred** – we will use resident feedback to model and drive our repairs and asset services, investing in improving services that will have the greatest improvement in resident satisfaction
- **Data Driven** – we will hold high quality, robust and up to date data on our homes, blended with high quality resident and demographic data to make proactive data-led decisions
- **Safety and Compliance** – we will maintain our homes to regulatory and legal standards, moving beyond compliance to good practice and innovation
- **Sustainability** – our homes will achieve EPC C by 2030 to reduce carbon emissions and lower residents' cost
- **Financially Responsible** – we will make data-driven decisions to maximise the long-term value of our assets
- **Technology and Innovation** – we will deploy digital tools and innovation to enhance our asset service and data quality and we will be a 'pragmatic adopter' of green technology, embracing it when it aligns with our strategic goals and has demonstrated value

Our Measures of Success

Resident Centred

To achieve our wider long-term vision and to ensure that our guiding principles drive forward our asset management strategy, it is important to set clear and deliverable measures of success.

From the detailed analysis carried out by Acuity, we know that for Railway residents, a well maintained home is the biggest driver of satisfaction, and therefore improving satisfaction with our repairs and asset services are crucial to achieve the long-term vision. HouseMark suggest that between a 0.5% and 1% improvement in satisfaction a year is realistic in the current operating environment, and therefore the success measures for resident satisfaction are:

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Measure	Railway 2024/25 TSM Result	Best In Class Result	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Overall Satisfaction	82%	94%	83%	84%	85%	86%
Repairs in the last 12 months	78%	96%	79%	80%	81%	82%
Time taken to complete repairs	76%	94%	77%	78%	79%	80%
Well maintained home	85%	96%	86%	87%	88%	89%
Home is safe	90%	97%	91%	92%	93%	94%

Data Driven

We will have:

- 100% of our homes will have a stock condition survey of 5 years or less
- 100% of our homes will have a valid Energy Performance Certificate
- Our stock condition data will be loaded into our asset management system by May 2025 and this data and system will be used to plan investment programmes
- Through our new Data Strategy, we will have a clear data governance framework to collect, maintain and validate resident and asset data by May 2025 to inform investment programmes

Safety and Compliance

We will have:

- 100% of our homes will meet the existing Decent Homes Standard
- At least 99% of our homes will have a valid landlord gas safety certificate at any one time, and any homes that do not are in the legal process before expiry of the previous certificate
- 100% of our homes will have valid certification in place where it is required for the following compliance areas:
 - o 5 yearly electrical safety checks
 - o Water hygiene risk assessments
 - o Non-domestic gas safety certificates for communal boiler systems
 - o Passenger lifts (LOLER)
 - o Asbestos report for communal areas and individual homes
 - o A type 3 fire risk assessment for all buildings that require a risk assessment

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- Less than 1% of homes have a category 1 HHSRS hazard and a plan must be in place to address any issues

The measures of success for safety and compliance will require review once the revised Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's Law requirements are confirmed by HM Government.

Sustainability

We will have:

- 100% of our homes will meet EPC C by 2030, unless there is a valid legal exemption in place
- Modelled the impact of achieving net zero in our homes by 2026/27

Financially Responsible

We will have:

- A clear and up to date position of the Net Present Value of our homes and assets by March 2026
- Procured contractors to deliver long-term planned maintenance programmes by March 2026 to maximise value for money

Technology and Innovation

We will have:

- Maximised the potential of the asset management IT system
- Implemented Voicescape to support our compliance access programmes by June 2025
- Explored the potential for Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support with compliance certification by March 2026

HOW WE WILL GET THERE

To deliver our vision for our asset management service, there are some key priorities and next steps.

Repairs and Maintenance

Performance and satisfaction in our repairs and maintenance service is not where our residents want it to be. The data from our Tenant Satisfaction Measures and our complaints data is clear that residents want to see an improved service. The feedback highlights that residents want a more consistent and clearer approach to appointments, for contractors to arrive when they say they will, carry out a quality repair and treat a residents home with respect and leave it neat and tidy.

The detailed analysis carried out by Acuity confirms that when a resident is satisfied that their home is well maintained, they are 7.29x more likely to be satisfied with the overall service and therefore a fundamental review of our repairs and maintenance service is essential to Railway achieving the long-term vision of being the country's best small housing provider.

In addition to resident satisfaction, the current model of contracting to a number of geographically based contractors leads to inconsistencies in service delivery and the procurement exercise undertaken in the summer of 2024 resulted in only incumbent contractors bidding. This procurement experience supports the Regulator of Social Housing's sector risk profile statement about a shortage of local contractors and labour. The existing model leaves Railway exposed to the risk of contractor failure and requires more intensive management.

The key outcomes are to reduce the number of contractors, improve service delivery and reliability for residents, improve communication, ensure value for money, reduce the number of variations and improve the Tenant Satisfaction Measure scores. As a result, we will carry out a detailed strategic options appraisal to review the models of service delivery for repairs and maintenance by the end of quarter 2 2025/26 and the review will recommend whether optimising our current delivery model or implementing a new model will deliver the biggest improvement in resident satisfaction.

|| Priority Action 1 – Strategic options appraisal for repairs and maintenance delivery model ||
|| Starting Quarter 1 2025/26

Stock Condition Surveys

The most recent stock condition survey was conducted by Pennington's Choices as part of our commitment to maintaining high-quality data to support business planning and the development of planned maintenance programmes. This survey programme was also

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undertaken to meet the requirements of the Quality and Safety Standard and following the agreed improvement plan with the Regulator of Social Housing.

Following the achievement of 85% stock condition data, the Board approved the discontinuation of the external survey programme to enable the integration of this data into business planning. The remaining 15% of homes will be surveyed by our in-house team during the first year of the new strategy.

In addition to stock condition data, we have identified gaps in our energy performance records. To address this, we are undertaking a comprehensive review and quality check of our energy data to determine where additional or updated surveys are required. Specialist external support will be commissioned to complete these assessments where necessary.

Moving forward, stock condition surveys will be conducted on a rolling programme, covering 25% of homes annually. This approach, using a combination of in-house and external surveyors, will allow for a more strategic allocation of resources, particularly for properties where access is more challenging. During the initial three years of this strategy, we will adopt a hybrid model that prioritises filling data gaps while strengthening the capability of our in-house survey team.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of our stock condition data, we will also implement a validation programme. A sample of surveys completed by our in-house team of four surveyors will be reviewed, providing assurance that the core data underpinning our financial planning and maintenance programmes is robust and reliable.

For properties where access is challenging, we will manage the process through an internal compliance framework. This will leverage data from across the organisation, including resident information and local insights from the Community Housing Team. Regular property visits, gas servicing appointments, routine housing management checks, and other servicing programmes will be aligned to maximise survey access rates.

|| Priority Action 2 – Implement the revised approach to stock condition surveys

|| Starting Quarter 1 2025/26

Asset Management Data and System Transition

Our previous asset management data was housed within the Keystone system, which has now reached the end of its operational life. To enhance our data management capabilities, we have procured Asprey as its replacement. Asprey is already live and successfully managing our compliance programmes. Moving forward, all new stock condition data from the Pennington's Choices survey programme, as well as our internal survey programme, will be stored within Asprey.

We are strengthening our approach to the capture, storage, and maintenance of property data; an area that has historically required improvement within Railway. As part of our revised operating model, we have appointed a specialist Asset Planning Lead to oversee

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data management, ensuring accuracy, robustness, and a high level of confidence in our records.

The 85% of stock condition data collected through the Pennington's Choices programme is currently undergoing a thorough review and quality assurance process before being integrated into Asprey.

A comprehensive investment planning and programming framework will be developed based on the condition data stored within Asprey.

|| Priority Action 3 – Data load and management of stock condition data in Asprey **|| Starting Quarter 1 2025/26**

Decent Homes Reporting

Stock condition data is a key driver in our Decent Homes assessments. Based on current estimates, approximately 10% of our housing stock is expected to fall outside the recommended lifespan dates for Decent Homes standards.

To maintain compliance, we have adopted a proactive approach to identifying and addressing properties at risk of becoming non-Decent. These properties will be prioritised within our annual works programmes, ensuring that all necessary improvements are completed within each financial year. Our objective is to ensure that no properties remain non-Decent at year-end, reinforcing our commitment to providing safe, high-quality homes for our residents.

Compliance

Railway Housing Association considers compliance management is a critical area of focus, and the Board maintains an averse approach to health and safety risk. We are utilising the servicing modules within Asprey to efficiently manage our compliance programmes, covering essential areas such as gas safety, electrical testing, asbestos management, legionella prevention, lifts (LOLER) and fire safety.

To ensure the highest standards of safety and service delivery, we hold weekly performance clinics to monitor contractor performance, resident access and the effectiveness of our compliance activities. These clinics track the completion of required tests and checks and provide full visibility of the associated remedial actions and access rates.

Furthermore, we are actively developing our approach to assess and address the broader risks outlined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). We are also enhancing our record-keeping processes to ensure that all compliance activities are properly documented, transparent, and aligned with our commitment to maintaining safe, secure homes for our residents.

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We are working in partnership with Housing H&S Compliance to review and update our policies and procedures for all of our compliance streams to ensure that we're moving beyond compliance to good practice, and this will be completed by March 2025.

Our approach to landlord compliance is due for internal audit in Quarter 4 of 2024/25 and alongside this audit, the auditors will review the high priority actions from the Pennington's Health and Safety Health Check. This audit will give the board assurance of the delivery of health and safety and provide a further opportunity to strengthen our approach.

Railway Housing Association is fully committed to upholding the principles of the Transparency, Influencing, and Accountability Standard. A key priority for the 2025/26 period is the development of a clear approach to the transparent communication of our health and safety performance to residents.

This initiative will be led by the newly established Resident Committee, which will oversee the creation of a strategy to proactively provide residents with accessible information on our performance as a landlord, as well as the performance and safety standards of their individual buildings. This approach reflects our commitment to fostering trust, accountability, and meaningful engagement with our residents.

|| Priority Action 4 – Resident health and safety communications approach **|| Starting Quarter 1 2025/26**

Energy Efficiency, EPC C and Net Zero

Achieving an EPC C rating is a core priority for Railway Housing Association. While this is a regulatory requirement, we also recognise that fuel bills remain a significant concern for our residents, particularly in the context of rising energy prices. Furthermore, ensuring efficient heating and ventilation is crucial in preventing damp and mould, contributing to healthier living environments for our residents.

We have identified some gaps in our current energy data, and we are committed to addressing these by March 2026 through our survey programme. This data will inform our approach to meeting the EPC C target by 2030 and guide our roadmap to achieving net zero by 2050. Given the diversity of our housing stock, ranging from homes over 100 years old to newly built properties in 2024, we anticipate adopting a tailored approach, selecting the most appropriate interventions to achieve EPC C across different property types.

Our current data for EPCs for our homes is shown below, and based on confirmed and expected EPC ratings, we believe there are 738 homes that are below a C.

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EPC	Number of Homes
A	1
B	249
C	530
D	520
E	55
F	3
No EPC - TBC	9
No EPC Above C Assumed	41
No EPC Below C Assumed	151
Grand Total	1559
Below C	738

We will take a cautious approach to using new technology in our homes, learning the lessons from new technology installed in The Laurels development at Bishop Auckland. We recognise that new heating systems and technology are important to achieving carbon reduction and we will become a 'pragmatic adopter' of this technology rather than being an innovator, where it aligns with our priorities and has been proven by others.

Additionally, as part of a joint funding bid through the Tees Valley Combined Authority to HM Government's Warm Homes scheme, Railway has submitted a bid for the installation of solar PV panels on approximately 150 homes. The homes best suited for this intervention are currently being assessed.

|| Priority Action 5 – Complete survey programme to obtain 100% energy data to inform plan for EPC C

|| Starting Quarter 1 2025/26 as part of Stock Condition Survey

Options Appraisal

By March 2026, we will review and update our Net Present Value (NPV) model to rigorously assess the performance of our housing stock. This model will enable us to identify both our highest-performing assets and those properties that underperform financially, providing a clear, data-driven foundation for strategic decision-making.

In parallel, we will establish a robust decision-making framework designed to identify properties that are unviable or inefficient to maintain, particularly when they become vacant. This framework will ensure that our investment resources are allocated wisely, preventing expenditure on assets that do not contribute to our long-term strategic goals.

Key elements of this framework will include:

- **Defining Core vs. Non-Core Stock:** Clearly distinguishing properties and geographical areas that align with our strategic priorities from those considered outliers or non-core, which may be disproportionately costly to manage and maintain.

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- **Financial Viability Assessments:** Implementing systematic evaluations of properties' financial performance, incorporating maintenance costs, demand forecasts, and alignment with organisational objectives.
- **Sustainability Considerations:** Factoring in the environmental impact and energy efficiency potential of each property, supporting our broader commitment to sustainability and achieving EPC C by 2030.
- **Resident Impact Analysis:** Considering the implications for residents, including the quality of living conditions and the availability of alternative housing options, ensuring that our decisions are socially responsible and resident-focused.

This strategic approach will enhance our ability to optimise the housing portfolio, reinforce financial resilience, and support our mission to provide safe, high-quality homes that are sustainable for the future.

|| Priority Action 6 – Develop decision-making framework with the Board for future investment and divestment || Starting Quarter 1 2026/27

Growth and New Development

While the Board maintains an open risk appetite for new development, they have made a strategic decision to pause any further development activity at this time. This approach allows us to prioritise investment in our existing homes, ensuring we meet our regulatory obligations, achieve EPC C compliance, and enhance the quality and sustainability of our housing stock.

Furthermore, this decision aligns with our financial plan, reinforcing compliance with our interest cover covenant and that development and the additional debt that it requires would increase financial risk at a time when there are already some significant financial pressures. By focusing our resources on asset investment and sustainability, we are ensuring the long-term resilience of our housing portfolio and delivering the best possible outcomes for our residents. A revised Development Strategy will be formulated once investment in existing homes is clear and the financial implications of that investment are understood.

GOVERNANCE

The Chief Operating Officer holds overall responsibility for the successful delivery and oversight of the new Asset Management Strategy. As the revised organisational structure is embedded and recruitment is finalised, the Property Team will develop enhanced performance reporting, providing a more comprehensive and data-driven approach to monitoring asset performance.

To strengthen governance and oversight, broader asset management reporting will be introduced for the Executive Team, Resident Committee, and the Board. This will ensure clear visibility of key performance indicators, risks, and strategic progress, enabling informed decision-making and effective monitoring.

The newly appointed Head of Property, who joined in September 2024, will lead the development of a comprehensive Service Improvement Plan (SIP), using the actions from this strategy as a foundation. The SIP will:

- Define short-, medium-, and long-term milestones to drive continuous improvement.
- Establish clear ownership and accountability for key initiatives.
- Assess and quantify the financial implications of strategic actions.
- Clearly define what "good" looks like, providing a benchmark for oversight and success measurement.

To ensure sustained progress and accountability, it is recommended that the Board formally review and monitor the Service Improvement Plan at regular intervals.

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PRIORITY ACTIONS

Action Number	Key Action	Start	Finish
1	Strategic options appraisal for repairs and maintenance delivery model	April 2025	September 2025
2	Implement the revised approach to stock condition surveys	April 2025	March 2029
3	Data load and management of stock condition data in Asprey	April 2025	June 2025
4	Resident health and safety communications approach	April 2025	September 2025
5	Complete survey programme to obtain 100% energy data to inform plan for EPC C	April 2025	March 2026
6	Develop decision-making framework with the Board for future investment and divestment	April 2026	September 2026