



Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations

## Corporate Strategy 2021-24

HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY BY BUILDING GREAT HOMES AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES. Providing social and affordable homes for those most in need is at the heart of all housing associations. In doing so they also make a significant contribution to the economy. Through creating jobs in construction, housing management, stock maintenance and by investing in local communities, housing associations generate wider social and economic benefits than simply providing homes.

As the representative body for Northern Ireland's registered housing associations, NIFHA works for its members to

- SHOWCASE the role of quality social and affordable homes
- CAMPAIGN with policymakers to ensure the sustainability and vibrancy of the housing association sector
- ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION and the SHARING OF BEST PRACTICE across the sector
- ENGAGE with stakeholders to provide thought leadership and horizon scanning on key issues affecting the sector and its members

When “New Decade, New Approach” (NDNA) was published, and the Stormont Executive was restored, NIFHA was pleased to see that our lobbying on our top-level housing priorities had proved successful. We were encouraged to see consideration in New Decade, New Approach of:

- a strong focus on housing
- an increase in the rate at which we add new social and affordable homes
- a stated commitment to protect and maintain social and affordable homes.

New Decade, New Approach was clear on the new housing priorities and was well aligned with NIFHA’s thinking. It recognised that a good home is the foundation of social, physical and mental wellbeing, so we welcomed reference to Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which recognises the right to housing – *everyone has the right to a house adequate for their health and well-being.*

The 2021-24 NIFHA corporate strategy comes at a time of unprecedented activity within social and affordable housing in Northern Ireland. The restoration of the Stormont Executive in January 2020 has brought renewed impetus within the devolved administration to addressing housing need. The Communities Minister’s housing address in November 2020 set out the direction of travel for the social housing sector. Housing associations must be ready for the opportunities and challenges that will come, yet all this must be overlaid with the constraints that our sector faces – due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, the increasing need for adequate housing to meet demand and the necessary move towards greater environmental sustainability in housing.

Throughout the simultaneous challenges of COVID-19 and the Brexit uncertainties, housing associations have shown resilience in their continued delivery of a wide range of crucial services for tenants and communities. From the Minister’s address, in the coming three years, we will witness a focus on rent, an increase in the level of new build social homes, a greater focus on mixed tenure and the emergence of the new delivery model for the NI Housing Executive. In addition, housing as a human right and addressing climate change will become increasingly interlinked in the work the sector does, alongside the continued creation of sustainable communities and the maintaining of viable businesses.

In 2022 NIFHA will celebrate its 45<sup>th</sup> birthday and we shall seek to celebrate the sector by continuing to tell the housing association sector’s story – one that is rich in building good homes, creating communities, supporting tenants, and providing so much more than bricks and mortar.

For the duration of our 2021-24 strategy, annual business plans will be underpinned by four key pillars. These pillars will guide NIFHA’s activity on behalf of our members and represents those key areas that the sector has identified as being critical to success. In terms of how that will translate into our activity, a number of work areas have been identified. The NIFHA business plans will expand on these on an annual basis to ensure that our outputs are relevant and timely.

In delivering against our objectives, we will work with the other UK housing federations, the Irish Council for Social Housing, and a range of other organisations where partnership working will bring mutual benefit.

# NIFHA 2021-24 Strategic Pillars

## SUPPLY

- Ensuring that housing associations have the right conditions to provide new social and affordable homes. This will encompass the SHDP, infrastructure, planning, land, innovative construction and interaction with the wider social housing sector

## SUPPORT

- Ensuring the sector is there for tenants and customers by working to ensure Supporting People and the welfare system are fit for purpose for the sector's needs, and that the sector can provide good tenant engagement and tenancy management

## SUSTAINABILITY

- Ensuring we can play our part in combating climate change through the renovation of existing homes and the building new homes to a high environmental standard in order to reduce the sector's carbon emissions
- Ensuring that that we can create and maintain sustainable tenancies and communities through a Common Selection Scheme that is fit for purpose, advocating on Housing for All and tackling ASB
- Ensuring that our members are sustainable businesses, with accountable boards and that they demonstrate value for money and showcase all that housing associations do

## SERVICES

- Ensuring NIFHA provides a strong voice for its members and delivers on a range of focussed, relevant outputs
- Assisting our members through a range of core services such as benefit data transfers, research and statistics, sector communications and PR. NIFHA will provide training, seminars and conferences, and deal with external queries on behalf of members to provide a service that adds value, is timely and meets our members' needs