thirteen

Homes. Communities. Support.



# Development Strategy 2023 - 2028

A strategic framework for how we'll drive housing delivery to create fantastic homes and great places to live



# Introduction

**This strategy sets out how we'll continue to drive housing delivery to create fantastic homes and great places to live.**

We've refreshed our strategy to reflect the progress we've made and what we've learned from customers, board and committee members, colleagues and local authority partners.

Our vision at Thirteen is to be the most trusted housing association, with happy customers. Key to making that happen is providing fantastic homes. That means building homes that are safe, high quality and suitable for the people who live in them.

We remain ambitious about growth, but we're equally clear that growth must be sustainable. This refreshed strategy supports that approach. It will guide the decisions we make, shape the homes and places we deliver, and help us balance new supply with the needs of our existing homes and customers.

It sets out why, where, what and how we'll build. It also reflects what matters most to customers and the opportunities and pressures shaping the housing sector today.

# Targets

**By April 2028, we aim to have:**

- Improved customer satisfaction and used data and insight to strengthen the end-to-end development and delivery process
- Continued the reduction in reported defects in new homes
- Continued to grow our development programme across our operating footprint
- Increased the number of accessible and adaptable homes we deliver
- Increased the number of one-bed, older persons, specialist and supported homes in our programme
- Delivered homes that are fit for the future and built to evolving regulatory standards
- Strengthened our development capability through partnerships, joint ventures and strategic land opportunities
- Delivered at least 95% of new homes to 100% of Nationally Defined Space Standards, with the remaining 5% achieving between 95% and 99%
- Maintained a strong reputation with Homes England, local authority partners and development partners
- Continued to create social value that benefits our customers and communities



# External environment

Since 2023, the environment we operate in has changed significantly. Economic, policy and demographic shifts mean we need to keep reviewing our assumptions and refreshing our approach.

The wider economy remains uncertain. Global instability continues to affect confidence and costs. The cost-of-living crisis is still putting pressure on household incomes, affordability, rent arrears and financial resilience. That directly shapes what homes are needed and what people can afford.

There has also been a shift in the political and policy landscape. A new Government has set out a national ambition to deliver 1.5 million new homes by the end of this Parliament. That points to further planning reform, changing sector expectations and a renewed focus on delivery.





Homes England's new Strategic Plan places stronger emphasis on regeneration, quality, sustainability and place-based partnerships. The new Social and Affordable Housing Programme provides a longer-term funding settlement and clearer delivery expectations.

At the same time, housing need is changing, driven by shifts in household formation, rising demand for supported and specialist housing, increased demand from single-person households, and mounting pressure from an ageing population. Rising construction costs continue to affect scheme viability whilst Section 106 schemes are becoming less predictable and more complex to deliver.

Regulatory change, including the Future Homes Standard and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards, is also shaping how we design and build homes for the future.

# What our customers tell us

We're committed to building homes our customers need and aspire to. Customer insight remains central to this strategy.

Our involved customer group has reaffirmed the importance of the features identified in the original strategy.

**These features all remain important...**



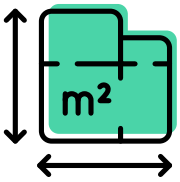
Location



Fuel bills



Gardens




Size



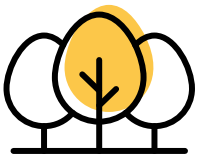
Storage



Environmental sustainability



Proximity to shops



Access to open space

**Customer priorities:**
Below scores out of 10.



Customers have also said we must ensure that homes are fit for the future. They told us that homes should be designed to support modern living and future needs. That includes space for modern appliances, accessible outdoor space, and features such as solar panels, electric vehicle charging points and mobility scooter charging facilities where appropriate.

Customers also told us that proximity to services and community facilities is key, especially for people without access to a car or for those with mobility challenges. They were open to taller buildings than the current three-storey norm, provided schemes are designed sensitively and fit the surrounding area.



This feedback will continue to inform our approach to design, placemaking and our Thirteen Standard. It also reinforces the importance of customer feedback and co-design in shaping the homes and places we deliver.



# Principles for development

**We've considered the changing external environment, what customers have told us, and what we've learned from delivery to date. Together, these have shaped our refreshed principles for development.**



1. We'll deliver the right homes in the right places by working with local partners to respond to changing and evolving housing need.
2. We'll continue to deliver fantastic homes by using customer feedback and co-design to shape new homes and places.
3. We'll diversify our offer by increasing delivery of homes for single people, older people, and specialist and supported housing.
4. We'll increase the supply of accessible and adaptable homes to reflect changing demographics and customer need.
5. We'll futureproof our homes and help reduce energy costs for customers by building to evolving regulatory standards.
6. We'll continue to deliver mixed tenure communities, including social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership.
7. We'll strengthen our development capability and improve value for money through partnerships, joint ventures and strategic land opportunities; allowing us to co design and drive quality for our customers.
8. We'll co-create social value plans with local partners and communities so our developments bring tailored, place-based benefits that meet real local needs.
9. We're committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief.

# Why we are building

**Thirteen is here to provide fantastic homes, build stronger communities and support people to live well. Building new homes is central to that purpose.**



Providing safe, suitable and high-quality homes remains one of the most important ways we can improve customers' lives. It also supports our ambition to be the most trusted housing association, with happy customers.

The need for affordable housing remains high across the areas we serve. As customer needs change, we need to respond with a broader range of homes, including more accessible, adaptable, specialist and supported homes. We also need to ensure new homes are fit for the future so we can avoid unnecessary retrofit disruption and cost later on.

Building new homes also creates wider benefits. It helps us support communities, strengthen local partnerships, create social value and invest in places for the long term. Our refreshed strategy is therefore about both growth and quality: not simply building more homes, but building the right homes, in the right places, in the right way.

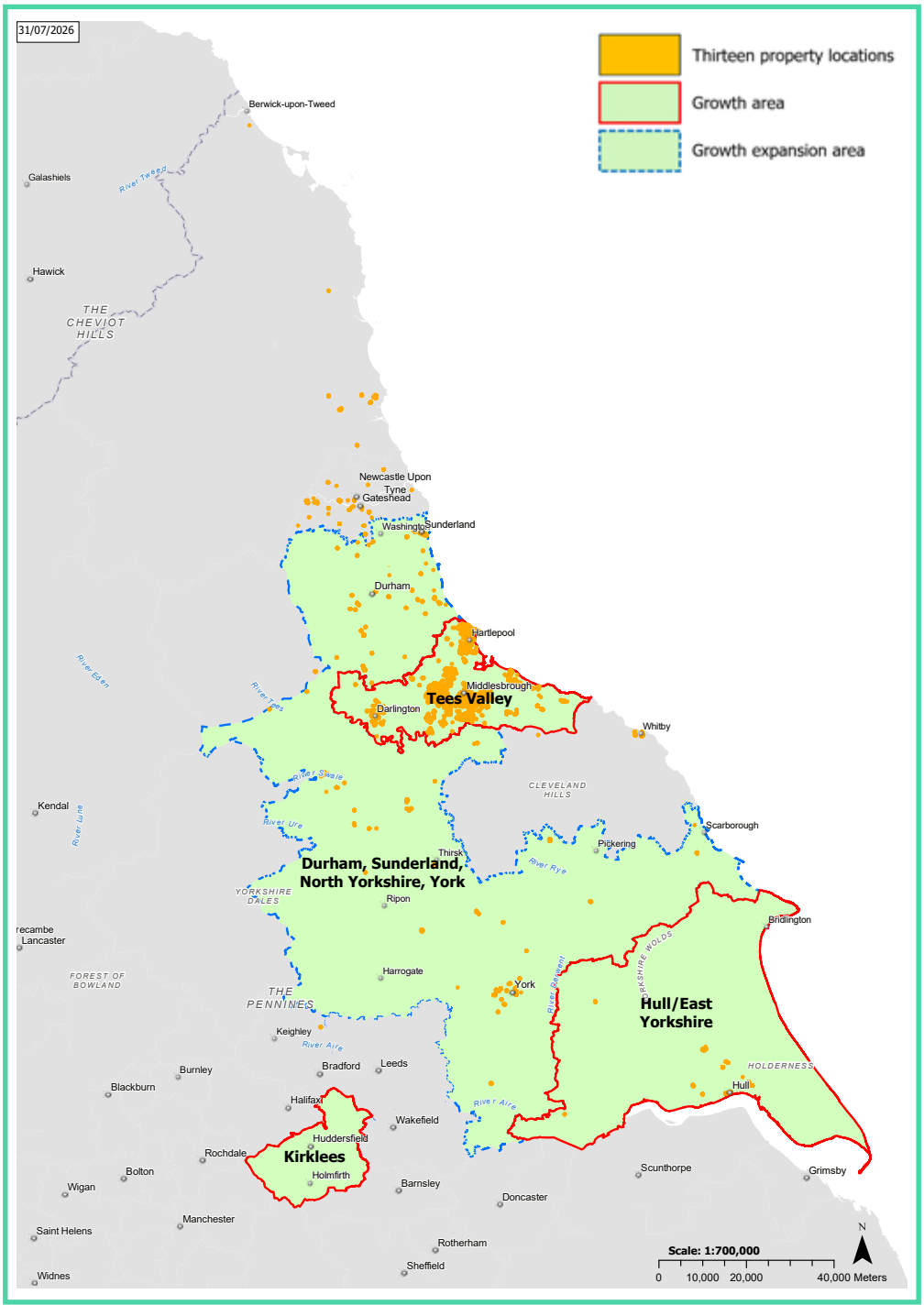


# Where we will build

We'll continue to deliver new homes in the Tees Valley, Sunderland, Durham, North Yorkshire, Hull and East Yorkshire, and Kirklees. This gives us a tight operating footprint that supports efficient, high-quality customer services.

We've already made strong progress in our growth areas. In Hull and East Yorkshire, we have acquired or commenced over 1,200 homes. In Kirklees, we have started on site with 180 homes at Cleckheaton.

Our approach remains focused on sustainable growth in places where we can deliver great customer outcomes, strong partnerships and long-term value. We'll continue to work with local authority partners to identify and help deliver their priorities, ensuring the right homes are built in the right places.



# What we will build

We'll continue to deliver mixed tenure communities, including:



social rent



affordable rent



shared ownership

At the same time, we'll diversify the type of homes we build to reflect local demand and changing customer needs. That means increasing the number of one-bed homes, older persons homes, specialist homes and supported housing in our programme. We'll also increase the supply of accessible and adaptable homes.

We'll continue to focus on quality. All new homes are being delivered to a minimum of EPC B. We'll also deliver at least 95% of new homes to 100% of Nationally Defined Space Standards, with the remaining 5% achieving between 95% and 99%.

We'll build homes that are fit for the future. That means taking account of evolving standards, reducing energy costs for customers and designing homes around how people live now and in the future.

We'll also introduce greater flexibility in building heights. We are removing the previous three-storey restriction, whilst maintaining our commitment not to build high-rise. However, we'll continue to appraise schemes carefully against location, customer demand, design quality and local context, and we will not deliver high-rise.

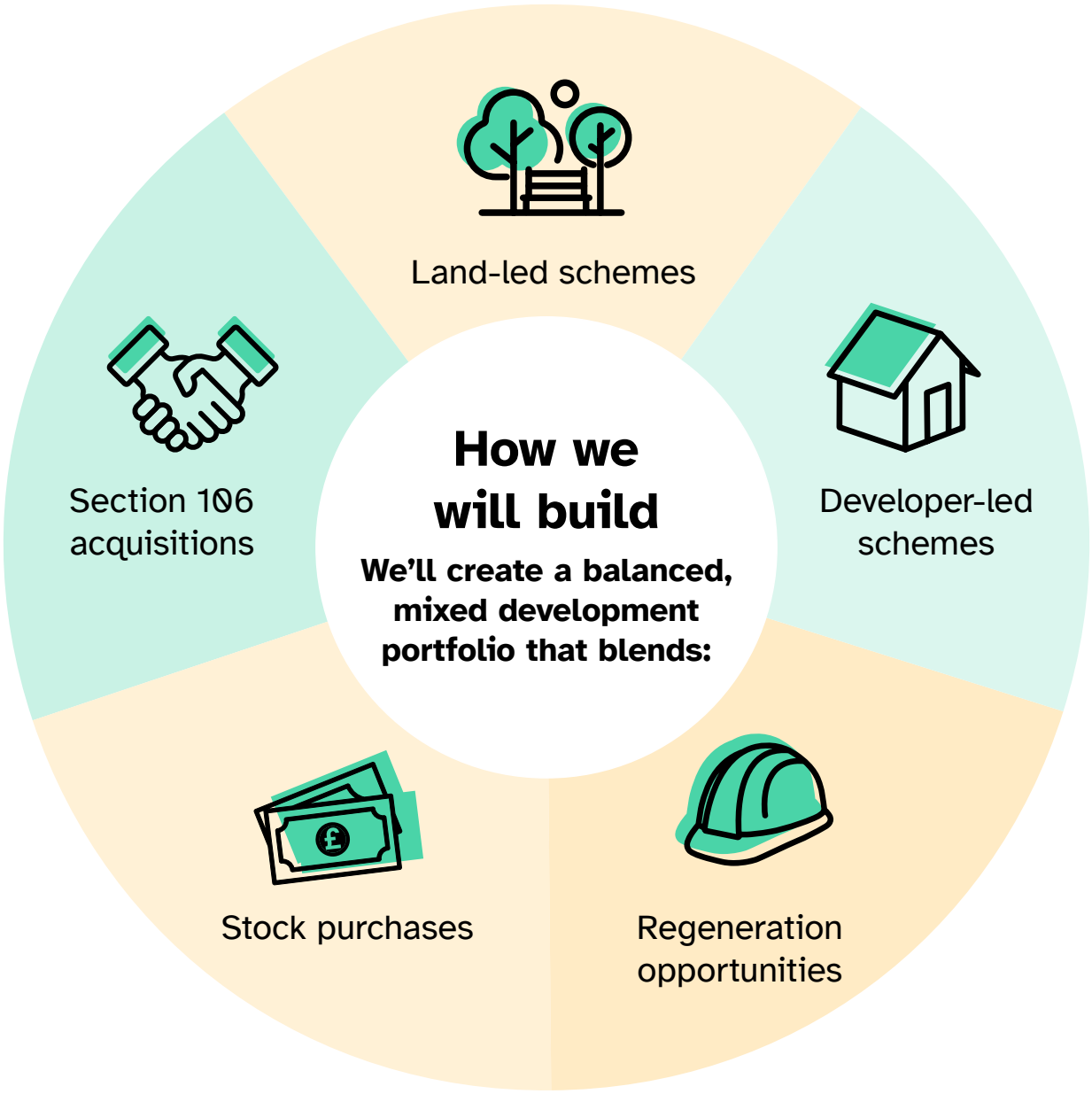


## Thirteen Standard

Our Thirteen Standard remains central to how we define quality in new homes.

It will continue to be shaped by customer feedback, data and insight, regulatory change and what we learn from delivery. That includes learning from customer satisfaction and defects data, which we now use more accurately to improve performance with our construction partners and influence future investment decisions.

As the external environment changes, our standard will continue to evolve so it supports fantastic homes that are safe, spacious, efficient and fit for the future. It will also help us respond to the need for more adaptable homes, lower running costs and better customer experience from the start of the development process through to handover and beyond.




We'll strengthen our development capability, improve value for money and deliver at pace by exploring partnerships and joint ventures, as well as strategic land opportunities. This will give us more influence over quality and design and help us co-design better outcomes for customers.

We'll continue to consider service charges in our appraisals and the affordability impact for customers. We'll also retain flexibility to consider exceptions for high-quality schemes that meet our ambitions on place, viability and quality.

We'll commence exploratory work into establishing a For Profit Registered Provider to help increase the supply of affordable new homes through alternative funding sources.

# Progress so far

**We've already made strong progress against the original strategy.**

In 2025/26, we delivered a record-breaking year with 668 new homes built.  We also delivered 160 shared ownership sales. We're delivering mixed tenure communities, all new homes were delivered to a minimum of EPC B, and we've made strong progress on social value. We've also built a strong reputation with Homes England and development partners.

This progress gives us a strong platform for the next phase of delivery, while also making clear where we need to go further, especially on accessible and adaptable homes, supported and specialist housing, and future-proofing homes to reduce retrofit disruption and cost.

**668**
new homes built

**160**
shared ownership sales





# Moving forward

This refreshed strategy sets out an ambitious and sustainable approach to growth.

We'll continue to build fantastic homes in the places where they are most needed. We'll do that by responding to customer insight, working closely with local partners, and focusing on quality, affordability and long-term value.

We will drive improvements in customer experience by strengthening our use of data and insight across the end to end development and delivery process - reducing reported defects.

We've made strong progress since 2023, but we know there is more to do. By keeping customers at the heart of our decisions and by delivering the right homes in the right places, we'll continue to create fantastic homes and great places to live.

## Get in touch

If you would like to talk to us about anything you've read in this strategy, please contact:

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