



Towards 2026
Corporate strategy 2022-2026
April 2023 update

Summary of changes in 2023

As noted in the first version of this strategy (p11), we committed to reviewing progress against the strategy annually.

This document reflects the outcome of our first review and we have agreed the following changes for 2023.

All updated items are marked in this document. You can identify them with this icon: **Updated**. The explanation for each change is listed below.

1. In November 2022, following a stability check by the Regulator of Social Housing, Habinteg's rating was changed to G2/V2.

The Regulator of Social Housing describes V2 as: "Compliant: The provider meets our viability requirements. It has the financial capacity to deal with a reasonable range of adverse scenarios but needs to manage material risks to ensure continued compliance."

V1 retention is often linked to inactivity in development and Habinteg intends to continue developing new accessible homes. Under these economic circumstances, our aim is to secure and sustain a G1 governance rating and accept, in the short-term, that a G1/V1 rating is unlikely to be compatible with our development objectives and continued investment in our tenants' homes.

2. Inflationary pressures are reflected in this updated strategy and will be a key point of review for future updates.
3. The strategic aim to place additional focus on supporting our tenants to sustain themselves and their tenancy in the difficult economic environment, is an addition to the original Corporate Strategy.
4. We are continuing to improve data quality and expanding the use of our data to support our continued focus on asset management and housing services. We will ensure our work on sustainability is also clear and that our progress is visible to our tenants.
5. Due to financial pressures created by the rent cap, high inflation and import challenges, we are reducing the expected total value of our planned investment from £22.2million to £19.8 million by March 2025. This figure will be further reviewed following the Stock Condition Survey in 2023.

6. Over the first three quarters of 2023-24 we will conduct a full stock condition survey. The results of this survey will impact our programme priorities going forward.
7. The project to define an all-inclusive home is now merged with the new Habinteg design guide project.
8. Due to the current economic climate, our original target of building 190 new accessible and adaptable homes is at risk, but we have committed to building 93 new homes by March 2025. This target will be kept under review and should circumstances improve; we will increase it.
9. Our original strategy committed to offering homes in alternative tenures. Habinteg will not pursue alternative tenures at this time as the shared ownership model is not currently financially viable. A further review will be carried out on how to best use Habinteg's current land (e.g. roof spaces, garages) alongside a review of the strategy for scheme offices.
10. CAE's target to induct 60 Pathways trainees to its new national programme has been reduced to 45 over a three-year cycle. This is due to timing of funding and the practical experience of wave one giving rise to an ideal cohort of 15 per year. 30 of the 45 will be trained during the life of this plan.
11. The project to publish five accessibility and adaptability retrofit template guides by 2025 is pushed back by one year due to budget changes.
12. Recruit 30 new disabled people from diverse backgrounds to campaign with us by 2026. We have removed the word 'new' to prevent confusion.
13. Corrected from 'wheelchair accessible standard' to wheelchair user dwelling standard to reflect the wording of building regulations Part M4(3).

Introduction from the Chair and CEO

When Habinteg's founders contemplated their children's futures, housing options for disabled people were minimal.

It was the 1960's and the choice for many was between staying in the family home or living in a residential institution. Neither option offered the freedom or independence they wanted, nor the access to the education, social and work opportunities enjoyed by their non-disabled peers.

Habinteg was set up to offer something different. Since the organisation was founded in 1970, we have provided accessible homes within inclusive communities. A quarter of our homes are fully wheelchair accessible and the rest are built to an accessible and adaptable standard.

Our mission is the same today as it was at the start: to drive equality through our own accessible homes and push for an increase in the number and standard of accessible housing, whoever is providing it.

Our vision is of a society in which disabled people can easily access homes in which to flourish as part of thriving communities.

This has never felt more important than today, as disabled people have been disproportionately affected by the Coronavirus pandemic and have borne the impact of reductions in statutory services and support in recent years.

Fifty years after the first Habinteg homes, disabled people still face barriers when looking for a place to live. In England, 91% of all homes are still unsuitable for disabled people even to visit and most plans for new housing don't make any mention of wheelchair accessible new homes.

With over 3,300 properties, Habinteg makes a small but important contribution to the supply of accessible homes. As well as aspiring to be a great social landlord, we are determined to take the opportunities presented by the National Disability Strategy, the Charter for Social Housing Residents and the Health and Social Care Bill to push constructively for policies that support the delivery of accessible housing.



Eleanor Southwood,
Chair



Nick Apetroaie,
Chief Executive

Our goals towards 2026

The social housing landscape is changing rapidly. Against this backdrop, inequity persists for people looking for an accessible home. We are energised by the opportunity to transform the experience of our tenants and raise our voice across the sector in support of more and better homes for disabled people.

Habinteg is a unique Housing Association operating across England and Wales. We aspire for our services to be as good as the best, and over the coming four years we want to develop new ways, beyond the provision of a home, to support Habinteg tenants to thrive.

As a national housing association with five decades of development and housing management experience, we will focus our energies on being a great social landlord whilst tackling important agendas, including carbon reduction, investment in our existing stock and partnering with others to achieve largescale change.

We know we need to strengthen the ways that we listen to and respond to our tenants and staff. Our customers' experience offers the most valuable insight we have and we are determined to learn from it, placing the needs and expectations of our customers at the heart of every decision we make. We will be working hard to develop new and meaningful ways of engaging and working with our tenants.

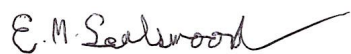
Customers have told us they expect to have more confidence in our day-to-day services. We are committed to offering well-maintained homes where tenants feel safe and know how to get in touch when something isn't going to plan. We aim to transform the reliability and responsiveness of our repairs system and we are reviewing our policies and procedures so that everyone can be confident that Habinteg services are based on best practice. We recognise that we also need to invest in and improve the accessibility of some of our older homes where they no longer offer an up to date standard.



As we deliver this strategy, we will ensure value for money (VFM) in all that we do by evaluating and maximise the effectiveness, economy and efficiency of each initiative.

Core to delivering for our tenants is regaining the highest rating G1 status from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).¹ We will implement the recommendations of our recent governance review, which will strengthen our governance, and our Tenant Engagement Strategy will embed our customers' voices at the heart of our culture. **Updated**

We are in a strong financial position but need to manage our resources carefully. The building safety bill, the drive to Net Zero carbon and the impact of Brexit and the post-pandemic economy each create financial pressure with varying



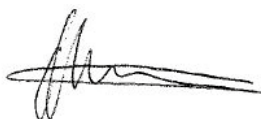
Eleanor Southwood,
Chair

degrees of predictability that we will continually monitor and respond to.

Our new strategy is a chance to re-invigorate our teams by reconnecting with our core purpose.

Our mission is as essential as it has ever been, and this strategy ensures we will work alongside tenants to get it right for Habinteg's current and future customers. Raising our game to ensure that we are the great landlord our tenants deserve will enhance our reputation and strengthen the platform from which we can make the case for more and better accessible homes nationwide.

If, like us, you are driven by the desire to see a more inclusive world, would like to find out more about our projects, or you have an idea you'd like to share, please do get in touch.



Nick Apetroaie,
Chief Executive



“Our new strategy is a chance to re-invigorate our teams by reconnecting with our core purpose.”

Our strategy

To help us structure what we plan to achieve before March 2026, we have defined our plan under three themes:



**CUSTOMER-
FOCUSED**



**LEADING
THE WAY**



**FIT FOR
THE FUTURE**

The following pages describe our goals within each theme, along with how we plan to achieve them.



Habinteg's vision, mission and values



Our vision

We want communities to include disabled people, offering places to live that meet their needs and providing the highest levels of independence, choice and control over daily life.



Our mission

We champion inclusion by providing and promoting accessible homes and neighbourhoods that welcome and include everyone, using our expert knowledge to inspire and influence decision-makers.

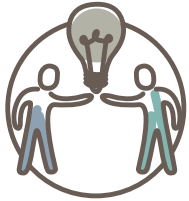


What we stand for

Inclusion drives all that we do. We want to create a more inclusive world by delivering homes and neighbourhoods designed in such a way that everybody can thrive.

We want all our people to feel valued and treated with respect. We promote the inclusive design of homes and environments and our passion for equality drives us to push for change.

Our operational values



Agile

We will continuously improve the way we work, creating an environment that is flexible, enabling, resilient, and transformational.

Accountable

We will work collaboratively to achieve results. All of our staff will take personal, as well as collective responsibility and ownership for achieving our goals.

Ambitious

We aim for excellence and will challenge ourselves to be forward-thinking, positive and progressive. We encourage and invite positive challenge and will work at finding solutions. We will question assumptions, provoke new ideas and think creatively.

Attentive

We will listen to each other, our customers and external partners. When taking difficult actions, we will be caring, compassionate and conscientious.

Operating context

We are launching this four-year strategy at a time of unprecedented events and stretching ambition for social housing providers.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on the sector. It has accelerated digital ways of working, while reminding us of the importance of interpersonal contact to wellbeing and effective communication.

For Habinteg, the pandemic has already transformed how we work and engage with customers, stakeholders and staff. Successive lockdowns meant we accelerated our introduction of agile working practices, and we now offer a wider range of ways for customers to get in touch. In this context, our national and local office footprint needs to evolve. We will be working hard for the duration of this strategy to ensure that our offer continues to respond to customers' needs and preferences at the local level.

Since the launch of the 2020 White Paper on Social Housing, the government's policy priorities have set a clear, new direction of travel for the social housing sector.

The Charter for Social Housing Residents sets out new expectations for the way registered providers communicate with and engage their tenants, looking for greater than ever degrees of transparency and inclusion. It sets the context for us to strengthen our tenant engagement and to consistently put customers' views and experiences at the heart of our plans and improvements.

The 2020 Housing Ombudsman's Code ushered in greater attention on complaints handling, while changes to the building safety regime, the goal of achieving Net Zero carbon in homes by 2050 and a renewed emphasis on shared ownership, will all impact the sector for years to come.

The long-term implications of the UK's departure from the European Union are still largely unknown. However, we have already seen signs of its impact (in combination with the post-pandemic labour and materials market) on the cost of building and planned improvement works.





The post-pandemic financial environment is also expected to be tough for many social housing tenants. With Universal Credit payments reducing to pre-Covid-19 rates, and rising fuel prices driving up the cost of living, we can see difficult times ahead for some. **We will respond with targeted support to help tenants make the most of their resources.²** **Updated**

The need for accessible housing has never been greater and will only increase as our population ages and rates of disability increase. At the same time, the government is setting ambitious goals for the development of new homes. Following the government's response to the public consultation on accessible housing standards, we will seek to work with the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities on the next steps.

As a landlord first and foremost, Habinteg's top priority is the safety of our tenants, staff and contractors. Following the publication of the government's Building Safety Bill, we will ensure we are compliant with any changes which impact Habinteg homes and ensure our systems maintain assurance in all areas.

Having received a G2/V2 rating from the RSH in 2022 we are also prioritising improvements to our governance framework in order to regain and sustain our G1 rating.¹ **Updated**

The strategy that follows in these pages is both purposeful and ambitious. It will take a concerted effort from skilled and motivated colleagues to deliver. The post-Brexit era has seen many sectors – including social housing – finding it harder to secure and retain the right team members. Our People Strategy will aim to ensure that Habinteg offers a stimulating, supportive and satisfying working life with appropriate rewards and recognition so that we can retain the skilled and talented workforce needed to deliver our goals.

We have taken all of this operating context into account in setting out our four-year strategic plan, **Towards 2026**, which is presented in the following pages.

We will review our progress against this strategy annually along with external events and developments that may make it necessary to adjust our approach in order to reach our goals.

Habinteg's 4-year strategy

Our aims by 2026

- We will exceed our tenants' expectations by offering high quality, affordable, inclusive places to live that they are proud to call home
- We will deliver outstanding customer satisfaction by involving our customers meaningfully in designing and delivering services
- We will demonstrate our ambitious standards for accessible homes across all sectors, breaking down societal and physical barriers that disabled people encounter when looking for a home and going about their daily lives
- We will be seen as leaders in delivering truly accessible environments, directly and indirectly, impacting many more people than we do now
- We will be an exemplary employer, with a team of engaged colleagues who are proud of all we achieve
- We will have achieved all the above while delivering great value for money, and ensuring that Habinteg is in good financial health.
- **We will place additional focus on supporting our tenants to sustain themselves and their tenancy in the difficult economic environment.³**

Updated



Eight strategies will support these goals.

- 1  Value for money
- 2  Asset management ⁴ Updated
- 3  Housing management ⁴ Updated
- 4  Customer engagement
- 5  Influencing
- 6  Development
- 7  People
- 8  Information management





Customer focus

By 2026 we will demonstrate we are customer-focused by:

- Providing an excellent service to our customers, delivering what we say we will and dealing with repairs and inquiries effectively, professionally and on time
- Investing in our homes to ensure quality and the best possible levels of accessibility. Our homes will be maintained to an excellent level, and provided in safe, sustainable and inclusive settings that offer value for money
- Signposting national and local organisations to help customers access any advice or support they might need, with Neighbourhood Teams that engage with tenants where they live
- Offering a range of ways to get involved, so that our partnership with tenants helps us continuously improve our services to all

How we will achieve these objectives:

Invest in customers' homes

We will invest £19.8 million ⁵ over the first three years of this plan to **improve the quality and accessibility of our tenants' homes**. We will set out and invest in our sustainability plans and make sure we gather and maintain excellent information about all of our properties. **In 2023, this will be supported by a full stock condition survey of all Habinteg homes.** ⁶ **Updated**

To ensure we get accessibility and quality right, we will **develop a new standard for Habinteg homes** that goes beyond the Decent Homes Standard. The new standard will define the adaptability and accessibility we aim for in every home and neighbourhood. We will use this standard in regular scheme inspections to drive planned improvement works.

As a 50-year-old housing association, some of our properties need extra attention to bring their accessibility up to a more current standard. We will audit our current homes to see where the need is greatest and **make accessibility improvements as part of our planned investment programme.**

Improve our services

We will be working hard with our contractors to **make our day to day repairs services more reliable**. We will develop **new ways for customers to report repairs** and make sure our local staff have what they need to **find solutions quickly** when things don't go to plan.

We know that our customers want clear, more frequent information about repairs to their homes, or work that's due to happen where they live so we will be **making more of our systems to generate automatic updates**. Alongside that, we will **be increasing the amount of local news** that we publish and making sure that **tenants know the different ways that they can tell us what they think**, both locally and nationally.





Engage with, empower and support our customers

We want to work in collaboration with our customers to continually improve. We will **expand the range of ways that we engage with tenants** so that a greater number and variety of people can have their say and get involved. We will make sure that tenants can see clearly how their contribution has made a difference. And we will ensure that our tenant engagement framework allows for **scrutiny and challenge on the delivery of this strategic plan.**

Each Habinteg scheme is unique, and we want all our tenants to live in communities that are healthy, safe and welcoming. So, we will work with tenants to create new **locality plans**, setting out the services and improvements that customers can expect. Each plan will include our **approach to minimising antisocial behaviour** and how we plan to improve the neighbourhood environment. We will make sure that customers know how to contact a local team member in a way that suits them, and will be clear about **how they can influence what happens where they live** by giving feedback through events and surveys.

We know that some customers face particular challenges that can make day to day life harder. To support them, we will continue with **initiatives offering specialist advice and practical resources** that can help tenants to negotiate some of the issues they face. We will build on this approach with a **directory of the national and local organisations** that can help make life easier, whether it's benefits advice, help applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant or just looking for help tidying the garden. We will make sure that the directory is on hand for both Neighbourhood and Customer Services Teams to use when supporting Habinteg tenants.

Customer focus 2026 targets



By 2026, **tenant satisfaction** with Habinteg will reach

90%



More Habinteg homes will be **energy efficient and sustainable**; with our plan set out to bring all our homes up to **EPC level C or above** by 2030



60%

of customer contact will be received through **digital channels**



We will invest **Updated**

£19.8 million

in Habinteg **homes** over the next three years ⁵



One in five

tenants will **engage** regularly to help shape service delivery



80%

of tenants will rate our **communications as good or excellent**



We will upgrade

over 1,200

components (kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, windows and doors) in tenants' homes in the first year



At least

30

newly engaged tenants will join Habinteg's formal involvement groups

Locality plans

will be in place for each Habinteg scheme, devised in partnership with tenants and offering customers a clear choice of ways to get in touch with a local staff member



Did you know?

1.8 million people in the UK have an accessible housing need

Join the campaign

www.habinteg.org.uk/ForAccessibleHomes

[#ForAccessibleHomes](#) [@Habinteg](#)

#For
Accessible
Homes

Leading the way

By 2026 we will demonstrate that we are leading the way by:

- Working with disabled people to develop sector leading accessible design and technology solutions for all-inclusive homes
- Innovating systematic ways to increase the accessibility and adaptability of older homes as part of a sustainable future for social housing
- Nurturing the talent of young disabled people to become the accessibility experts of the future
- Partnering with others to develop accessible and sustainable new Habinteg homes
- Influencing businesses and the public sector to provide inclusive homes, workplaces, communities and neighbourhoods through consultancy, training and research delivered by Habinteg's Centre for Accessible Environments
- Producing and promoting new evidence on the value of accessible homes so that all our people feel confident in advocating the difference that accessible and adaptable housing can make to individuals and communities

How we will achieve these objectives:

Forge new ideas for the design of accessible homes

We want to promote the most inclusive homes possible. **We will work with disabled people to create a new housing design that works for people with a wide range of different impairments** ⁷, whether sensory, physical or neurodiverse. **Updated**

Because most people live in older properties, we will develop innovative **templates for improving the accessibility and adaptability of older homes** to encourage sector leaders to make access improvements alongside carbon-efficient retrofit projects.

Build new Habinteg homes

We will deliver **93 units over the next three years** ⁸ in London and the Midlands, ensuring that at least 25% are designed to meet the needs of wheelchair users and all meet at least energy performance level B.

Updated

We will introduce a new **quality management process** and develop new homes in partnership with the public and private sectors to help **extend the reach of our inclusive housing mission**. **We will continue to generate a pipeline for new development, ensuring that we make the best use of the land that Habinteg already owns** ⁹.

Updated





Make a more inclusive society

As the country builds back after lockdown we will **grow the capacity and reach of Habinteg's Centre for Accessible Environments** so that more places and services can assess and improve their accessibility to all. We will deliver more bespoke training and expand our consultancy client base.

We will lead on nurturing the access professionals of the future by **growing the Pathways academy into a national programme**, training young disabled people in the skills they need to develop a career in access and inclusion.



Create better housing opportunities for disabled people

We will work with an increasing number of disabled people, partner organisations and influential individuals to **push for national and local government policies that mean more accessible and adaptable homes will be built**. We will build on our thought-leading reputation to commission new research to help make the case for accessible homes, sharing the evidence nationally and locally to build support for policy change with decision makers and the public.

We will ensure that the interests of **disabled people are reflected in national housing policy initiatives** and champion the changes that will see greater housing equality for wheelchair users. And to help make it easier for wheelchair users to find suitable places to live, we will work with Habinteg's partners to **roll out our Accessible Now online housing search**.

Leading the way 2026 targets



Habinteg will build

93 Updated

new accessible and adaptable homes by March 2025 ⁹



All new Habinteg homes will be built to EPC rating B or above with

50%

built to **net-zero carbon** requirements



Our campaigning will secure a national policy change requiring **all new homes to be built to the inclusive (accessible and adaptable) standard**



CAE will induct

30 Updated

Pathways trainees to its new national programme ¹⁰



We will build a **fully wheelchair accessible property** to the Passivhaus Standard



Our engagement with Local Planning Authorities will help ensure

60%

of local plans require a specific proportion of all new homes to be built to the wheelchair user dwelling standard ¹³



CAE will reach

200

consultancy clients and train

450

individuals per year by 2026



We will publish five **accessibility and adaptability retrofit template guides** by March 2026 ¹¹

Updated



By 2026 we will recruit

30 Updated

disabled people from diverse backgrounds to campaign with us ¹²



20

housing providers will be signed up to the **Accessible Now** online housing database by 2026



Fit for the future

By 2026 we will demonstrate that we are fit for the future by:

- Developing an engaging, purposeful and positive culture that allows colleagues to be confident, motivated and empowered
- Developing great quality training and performance management systems that support colleagues to be competent, professional and customer-focused
- Defining our business model and cost drivers so we ensure value for money (VFM) and focus our resources on our key priorities
- Being curious and data-driven, with the appropriate tools to support efficient workflows and excellent decision making

How we will achieve these objectives:

Secure the right resources for the task

We will support a culture of excellence by making sure that our customer-facing teams have **the right resources and ease of access to systems** to deliver excellent agile service, wherever they are working. We will also review our core systems to make sure they're the best fit to help us **manage our data and improve efficiency**. And we will invest in more data automation so that we can **monitor performance more accurately and easily** in all areas of the business.

Create a firm foundation in finance

We will **develop the capacity and skills of our finance team** so that they can be more effective in supporting Habinteg's strategic financial decisions. We will conduct a **best practice review** to ensure efficient book-keeping, strong financial controls, accurate accounting and high-quality financial insight and we will support staff with **new mentoring opportunities**.

Get the right people in the right roles

To make sure we can attract and retain the best people to drive our mission we will **review our recruitment and selection process** as well as the pay and benefits we offer. We will **improve induction and personal development** systems and invest in an **apprenticeship partnership** so that we can develop new talent and leaders from within Habinteg.

Transform our customer service culture

We will build up our customer-focused culture with a programme of **tailored training and internal communications**. We will develop our people into effective Habinteg ambassadors with workshops on disability confidence and accessibility basics and we will launch a **new set of standards for all Habinteg staff**, setting out the great customer service we expect.





Support and motivate staff

We will run a **new leadership and management learning programme** to make sure that all colleagues get consistent support and development wherever they are in the business. And we will make sure that our **new agile way of working promotes wellbeing** and provides an environment in which staff can flourish.

Continuous improvement

We will commission external experts to help us develop a **consistent customer-focused culture** across the business and we will develop our managers' **coaching skills** so that we are better equipped to develop colleagues at all levels to drive improved performance. These programmes will be underpinned by a **review of our HR policies** to make sure they fully align with our customer-focused culture, while ensuring an effective approach to safeguarding is embedded across the organisation.

Strengthen governance

We will **develop our governance practice** to meet the requirements of the National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020 and regain and embed the qualities to retain a G1 governance rating. We will develop our **governance approach to environmental impact** and we will ensure that we have the right systems in place to know that **our customers' views and experiences are being sought out and used** to influence strategic decisions.

Fit for the future 2026 targets



Secure and sustain a

G1 **Updated**

rating from the Regulator of Social Housing ¹



85%

of staff would recommend Habinteg as a **great place to work**



Complete **IT Applications Review** and implement the resulting action plan



Implement the National Federation of Housing **2020 Code of Governance**



Digitise or **automate** our top five most common **internal processes**



Deliver robust annual **30-Year Business Plans** which sweat our assets to enable sustained delivery of our strategy



Maintain voluntary **staff turnover** at

<12.5%



Identify our

ESG^{*}

baseline, implement an action plan and provide annual ESG reports from 2022-23 onwards



Conduct a best practice **review of the finance function** in Y1 and implement its recommendations in Y2



Develop and implement Habinteg's **Information Strategy** and action plan

* Environmental, Social and Governance

**We provide and
promote accessible
homes and
neighbourhoods
that welcome and
include everyone.**



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