

2020

2025

Achieving Together

Corporate Strategy



Creating communities,
empowering lives

2020
2025

We want to
create **great**
communities and
empower lives.

Welcome

from our Group Chief Executive & Chair

This is Achieving Together, our corporate strategy for 2020-2025.

We have had lots of conversations with colleagues, customers and stakeholders to create this strategy. It builds on our proud history and outlines our goals for the next five years.

These honour our purpose as a housing provider and our stewardship responsibility to leave our organisation in a better place than we found it. We are clear on our purpose. We are here to create communities, empower lives and provide equal opportunity for all. Everything we do is part of this goal.

We have taken the time to be clear about where we start from. We understand the world we operate in and are confident that our plan puts us on the right course. We will achieve our objectives by combining our resources and seeking new partnerships so that we can do more for our customers and communities.

The nation's housing crisis has not gone away. We, together with our partners, have a duty to fix it. Here we set out how we will increase our contribution across the breadth of the housing sector. Whether it is home ownership, shared ownership, renting or eliminating homelessness, we will make a positive difference over the next five years.

Our research tells us that a sense of community and of belonging, and opportunities to grow remain crucial for families and individuals. So, we will not only build and maintain great homes, we will also invest in the people and services that support the creation of genuinely thriving communities.

We will use our position as a housing provider and our deep connection to our communities to increase our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. We will create equal opportunity for all, stamp out discrimination and change the way we work. We believe that everyone has the right to the same positive life chances and we will not stop striving for that, ever. With our combined resources and expertise – and working with our partners – we can and will succeed. The first steps to achieving this are outlined in our All In statement of intent, which sets out the actions we will take over the next two years.

The next five years will also see us step up in demonstrating our environmental credentials. You will see us re-evaluating and improving our approach in everything we do, to lower our carbon footprint.

We do not have all the answers today. But we do know that things have to change. Our services will continue to adapt to reflect the changing needs of our customers and the opportunities new ways of working will bring. Our insight will drive innovation and commitment to customer care and partnership working.

We will achieve our strategy through our people, our greatest and most valued asset. Achieving Together recognises the critical role our people will play in ensuring that we all realise our full potential.

On behalf of the Board and Executive, we commend the Achieving Together Strategy to all those that hold us to account.

**Gary Orr, Group Chief Executive
& Wayne Morris, Chair**



Welcome from our colleagues and Customers



Hello from Connexus

It is a very exciting time to be part of Abri. We have come together to identify our priorities and consult on our new corporate strategy. Delivering on these priorities will mean change for colleagues. And we will play an important part in offering a safe and open place for positive conversations between colleagues and the Executive and senior leadership team.

Our job is to champion the colleague voice. And our mission is to make sure everyone is fairly represented, well informed and empowered to raise issues of concern. We will discuss proposals for change and the opportunities to work more creatively and efficiently. And we will strive to promote a culture of belonging and ensure colleagues feel respected at all times. Working in this way, we can provide fantastic customer services and create solutions to today's housing problems. We can also make sure our new organisation is a truly great place to work.

Emma Kirby, Chair of Connexus



A word from our Scrutiny Group

We live in uncertain and challenging times. And so it's natural the security and comfort provided by our homes and our place in safe communities are a priority for many of us right now. We welcome publication of Achieving Together which reflects these and other resident priorities. Bringing together two strong socially focussed organisations as Abri means existing residents will continue to benefit from good services, quality homes and communities to be proud of and holds out the prospect that many more people will be able to access these in the future. As a 'critical friend', the resident scrutiny panel will continue to provide customers with a real influence over how the organisation develops, delivers, learns and improves. We will help Abri be the best it can be, working collaboratively and ensuring resident voices are at the heart of everything it does. And so, when we emerge from the difficulties many of us currently face, we can be more confident that our homes and communities will provide a solid foundation from which residents and our communities - and therefore Abri - will flourish.

Kevin Williamson, Scrutiny Group Chair



We can make a difference by providing housing that is suitable for all, including the homeless and the most vulnerable in society." Colleague

Who we are

We have about 40,000 homes and assets. This makes us one of the South of England’s largest housing providers. We have an annual turnover of circa £220 million. 37 local authorities operate in our area alongside 56 parliamentary constituencies. We are committed to maintaining a strong local presence and a deep understanding of our customers and communities. That way, we can continue to be a great neighbour.

By using our colleagues’ expertise, we are delivering even more for our customers. As one organisation, we are building on our collective achievements and shaping the future for the better. We are proud of our heritage and want to use the combined strengths of our legacy organisations to make positive changes. Changes that help everyone to thrive. We remain as passionate as ever about tackling the housing crisis and building thriving and sustainable communities with equal opportunity for all.

Asset count

40,000

Managing assets worth

£6Bn

2,000

people into sustainable employment

Working with

37

local authorities

Customer count

80,000

1,400

Colleagues working across

10

Locations

Our beliefs

We work in partnership with others to create great homes and thriving communities, supported by outstanding customer services.

Everything we do is powered by three core beliefs:

- Everyone has the right to a safe, warm and sustainable home
- Homes and communities are places to belong, grow and thrive
- Equal opportunity must exist for communities so everyone can have improved life chances

Our shared beliefs help us to work together, in depth and over the long term, with our partners and customers. We support what we do with outstanding customer care and comprehensive, responsive, accessible services.

Above all else, we work with our customers on the basis of equality, trust and respect. Every area of our business is inspired by this ongoing partnership.

We are dedicated to creating communities and empowering lives.

Our geography



What are we trying to do?

The history of affordable housing goes back to at least the early twentieth century, when the Addison Act made provision for returning war veterans at the end of the First World War.

Our story is almost as old, starting in 1925 when our founder Herbert Collins started work on his vision to build self-contained communities. He wanted to balance housing and infrastructure, so everyone had everything they needed to succeed in one place.

Times have changed since then, but our mission hasn't. We are still just as passionate about tackling the housing crisis and we will never stop working to build safe, inclusive and prosperous communities. We see the issues and our priorities clearly. Everything we do is focused on addressing these ideas and our actions will always be informed by our values.

We also recognise that our purpose as a housing provider is to ensure everyone has access to equality of opportunity. Through our community investment and employment activities, we will continue to provide opportunities to help every person to thrive. We will empower communities to make active choices that will benefit everyone. We will also continue to invest in our colleagues by recruiting and developing talented people who reflect the communities we serve.



Be the difference



Achieving together



Always curious



Own it openly



Embrace possibility

We will lead with our values

What problems are we trying to solve?

We believe we can do something ambitious, positive and effective about every single one of these five issues. As an organisation we are committed to doing the things we say we will.

The strategy set out over the following pages explains how we will do this.

1 Housing supply does not meet demand.		Action: Build more (and better).
2 Some communities we serve are disproportionately disadvantaged.		Action: Create opportunity and choice.
3 We have finite resources.		Action: Get more, do more with existing resources.
4 Changing factors in the operating environment present risks.		Action: Manage risk, have a plan B, make things better where we can.
5 All inefficiency is a barrier to success.		Action: Be smarter, be more efficient.

Strategic priorities

We are clear about our priorities but we do not yet have all the answers. Where the way forward is clear, we will act **decisively, with ambition and pace.**

Our approach

We will tackle issues with curiosity. We will ask questions and seek the best advice before we commit. We want to work in a smart way and have a real impact by using our resources in the best way we can.

Our environment is complex so we must stay relevant. We need to be flexible and ready to adjust as conditions change. We remain open to new growth and partnership opportunities if they help us to do more to address the housing crisis.

We will put significant effort into research projects and collaborations that directly address the big questions that face our sector. These include acute homelessness and our ageing population and how our sector should respond to the climate crisis.

During this strategy, we will create and implement an effective response to climate change. We will set a clear date for when our business will become carbon neutral.

And we will continue to work with the government and the wider housing sector to create sustainable change.

We are unapologetically ambitious. We want to create great communities and empower lives.

Our seven strategic priorities

1 Build more homes

To give everyone a safe, warm and sustainable home, something has to change. We must increase the supply of new housing. So, we will **develop differently**, increase the speed of delivery and gain direct control of quality.

Here we promise to deliver a minimum number of new homes and to help a wide range of people to satisfy their personal housing needs. But this is just our starting point. We will be bold with our ambition. Ideally, we will look to double our contribution, or at least work out how we can do so over the next five years.

Actions

We will:

- Build at least 10,000 homes in the next ten years, working with the government and other organisations that share our values to significantly exceed this.
- Create high-quality, well-managed homes that enhance communities.
- Be innovative in our delivery and strive to maximise the number of off-site manufactured homes we deliver to minimise our carbon footprint, while growing our in-house construction team to drive efficiency and quality.

Places where people want to live

2

Invest more in our existing homes

We will create great homes and communities where people want to live. We will do this by setting **higher standards**, investing in new technology and prioritising regeneration.

Actions

We will:

- Invest in and strengthen our data systems and processes to provide intelligence on our portfolio of homes. This will help us to actively manage our assets. We will share information with customers, empowering them to play their part in maintaining their homes.
- Invest and expand our commercial services so we can do most of the work on our properties ourselves. This will enable us to control quality, reduce our carbon footprint and serve our customers efficiently.
- Create a genuine health and safety culture by investing in training and becoming a sector leader.

3

100% customer satisfaction

Our customers deserve **great service**. So we will pursue 100% customer satisfaction. We have set out our commitments clearly in our Customer Charter, which was designed with, and for, our customers. Our Charter is supported with a clear set of performance targets, monitored and owned by our Board.

Actions

We will:

- Introduce a sector-leading proactive housing management system, best-in-class complaints handling and a multi-channel approach to serving our customers. This will give customers new and additional services as well as real choice in how they can talk to us.
- Invest in developing housing professionals of the future, delivering our services through professionally accredited customer-facing and back-office teams with a genuine understanding of the housing sector.
- Work in partnership with our customers, putting their voice at the heart of our organisation and using it to drive innovation and the continuous improvement of our services.

4

Create thriving communities

We know that some of our communities are not getting the chance to thrive, with reduced life chances and not enough support to succeed. We have done lots of detailed research to identify the **areas of greatest need** in the south and south west of England. As a result, we have produced community investment plans to bring about change and build social cohesion.

Actions

We will:

- Transform at least eight community investment zones, with tailored, supported activity, working in close partnership with our customers and stakeholders.
- Create new pathways into training, employment and careers, giving thousands of customers new opportunities to take back financial control of their lives.
- Build an approach that delivers both major employer partnerships and significant additional funding into our community investment fund.
- Seek to break down barriers to equal opportunity and listen to our customers to drive service improvement.

We will
be **bold**
with our
ambition

5 Create a great place to work

To be successful and achieve our ambition, we have to work in an effective way. This starts with creating a **great place to work** for our colleagues. So, we will put lots of energy and resources into improving our ways of working, our environment, the tools we use and in nurturing and developing our talent.

We will invest in our colleagues and instil a sense of belonging and respect. We will support professional and personal development. We will listen to our colleagues so that we can achieve more, together.

This will make us a more attractive partner and collaborator on major projects, help attract great people and increase our ability to exert influence, locally and nationally. We will measure our achievement of this objective by checking what our customers, colleagues and stakeholders think of us.

Actions

We will:

- Lead with our values as a new organisation and focus on developing the right culture.
- Increase diversity and become recognised employer and partner of choice in the sector and beyond.
- Ensure colleagues can deliver their best work and are supported by a strong corporate centre providing the leadership, services and change management capability to improve, innovate and thrive.
- Make sure that our own perceptions match reality by seeking external validation (Times 100 and Platinum Investors in People) and by always asking for our colleagues' views and input.
- Acknowledge the role of the Board in leading on culture under the UK Code of Governance.

In the next five years we will find new ways to increase the extent to which colleagues contribute, feel a sense of ownership and have their voices heard on important matters. We believe we can create a new contract between employee and employer, one that increases collaboration and partnership to achieve our shared aims, making this a really inspiring place to work.

6 Manage our business to the highest standards

We have a responsibility to manage our business to the very highest standards. This will make sure we deliver real value for money for our customers, comply with all relevant laws and regulations and safeguard our future. Our Board understands our treasury portfolio, our financial golden rules and all aspects of good governance. They will hold us to account to ensure **we keep our G1 Governance and V1 Viability ratings and that we achieve an A2 credit rating.**

Our Board, acting under the UK Code of Governance, will define our risk appetite, regularly stress-test our financial plan and ensure that we implement all audit recommendations.

Actions

We will:

- Simplify our structure, manage our money and assets better and be accountable to our customers through highly effective scrutiny and co-regulation. This will help us do more for our customers.
- Improve our management of costs relative to our peers by improving the performance of our supply chain measurably.
- Exceed both the savings and the benefits identified in the final business case for partnership between Radian and Yarlinton as we integrate and become one organisation.
- Enhance the strength and influence of our Board with clear recruitment and development plans, and full implementation of the UK Code of Governance.

We must be a **highly effective** organisation

7 Climate change: the challenge of a generation

Housing associations have a duty to respond to the climate change emergency. We must find a way to minimise our carbon footprint and maximise the positive steps we take to protect the environment. Having consulted extensively with customers and colleagues, we know that they share our desire to make significant progress on environmental issues.

We will adapt our development plans, address inefficiency in our existing stock and make important changes to our operations. Consistent with our stated approach of leading with questions and basing decisions on evidence, we will invest in targeted research to move forward effectively.

We will create a common understanding of the causes and implications of climate change among everyone we work with. **Together, we will make sure our homes are future proofed and sustainable in the long term.** This will benefit the future generations of families who will live in our homes.

By investing in the latest, proven technology, and staying focussed on achieving low carbon results to reduce our corporate footprint, we will deliver meaningful and measurable benefits for colleagues, customers and communities for decades to come.

Actions

We will:

- Undertake an Executive-led research project to accurately baseline current levels, identify options, set targets and agree our five-year carbon strategy.
- Create significant carbon literacy across our organisation, empowering colleagues and customers to minimise our shared footprint.
- Put in place accurate carbon accounting to track our progress, identifying a clear future date by which we expect to become carbon neutral or even better, carbon negative.

Implementing our strategy

The success of our strategy will rely on the quality of our planning, the talent of our people to carry out those plans and our ability to respond to changes in our operating environment. We have the people, the management capability and the passion to ensure that what we have set out here becomes project plans, clear objectives and performance measures that deliver results against each of our commitments.

Our Board is committed to driving and supporting achievement within the context of first class governance. Our Board has approved a comprehensive five-year financial plan that demonstrates we are strong enough to deliver the ambitions set out in this strategy. They are clear on how we link our individual operational strategies to our high-level objectives. We will continue to stress-test this plan as changes occur in our operating environment. All the time, we will ensure that we remain within our clearly defined financial golden rules.

What we do matters. We know we can do more and do it better to create more impact for our customers. Every colleague has a significant part to play, not only in delivering our targets, but in helping us to exceed these and deliver even more than is set out in this strategy.

We want to create **great** communities and **empower** lives



"We need to find more ways to help people come together as a community and be proud of where they live." Colleague

Our commitments

The big three

Sometimes less is more. We have three important objectives that reflect our commitment to stay relevant, customer-focussed and ensure this is a fantastic place to work. By 2025 we want to be a Top 10 Housing Association based on three clear, measurable objectives.

To deliver more homes, we will increase our output and resilience so we can grow successfully and create an organisation that can meet our future as well as current needs.

10

Top 10 Housing Association by scale

Top 10 by scale (no. of units) and development (no. of new homes)

Why? Because scale matters if you want to stay relevant, be efficient and have influence.

10

Top 10 for customer satisfaction

Top 10 annual satisfaction score (Satisfaction Housemark)

Why? Because we want to try and satisfy 100% of our customers.

10

Top 10 place to work

Top 10 in the Sunday Times Best Companies

Why? Because our people are the number one critical success factor.



"We need to ensure that all our existing homes and those we have yet to build are safe places to live." Colleague

Stewardship

Stewards not owners...

We are committed to acting as stewards of an important institution that has been here for longer than most of us have been alive. One that will carry on providing homes and services long after we have moved on. That creates a special kind of responsibility.

The Board, senior leadership team and all our colleagues are absolutely committed to moving the organisation forward, enhancing its ability to respond to customer needs and influence the housing agenda positively. We want to leave the organisation in a better place than we found it, knowing that both past and future generations of colleagues would think exactly the same.

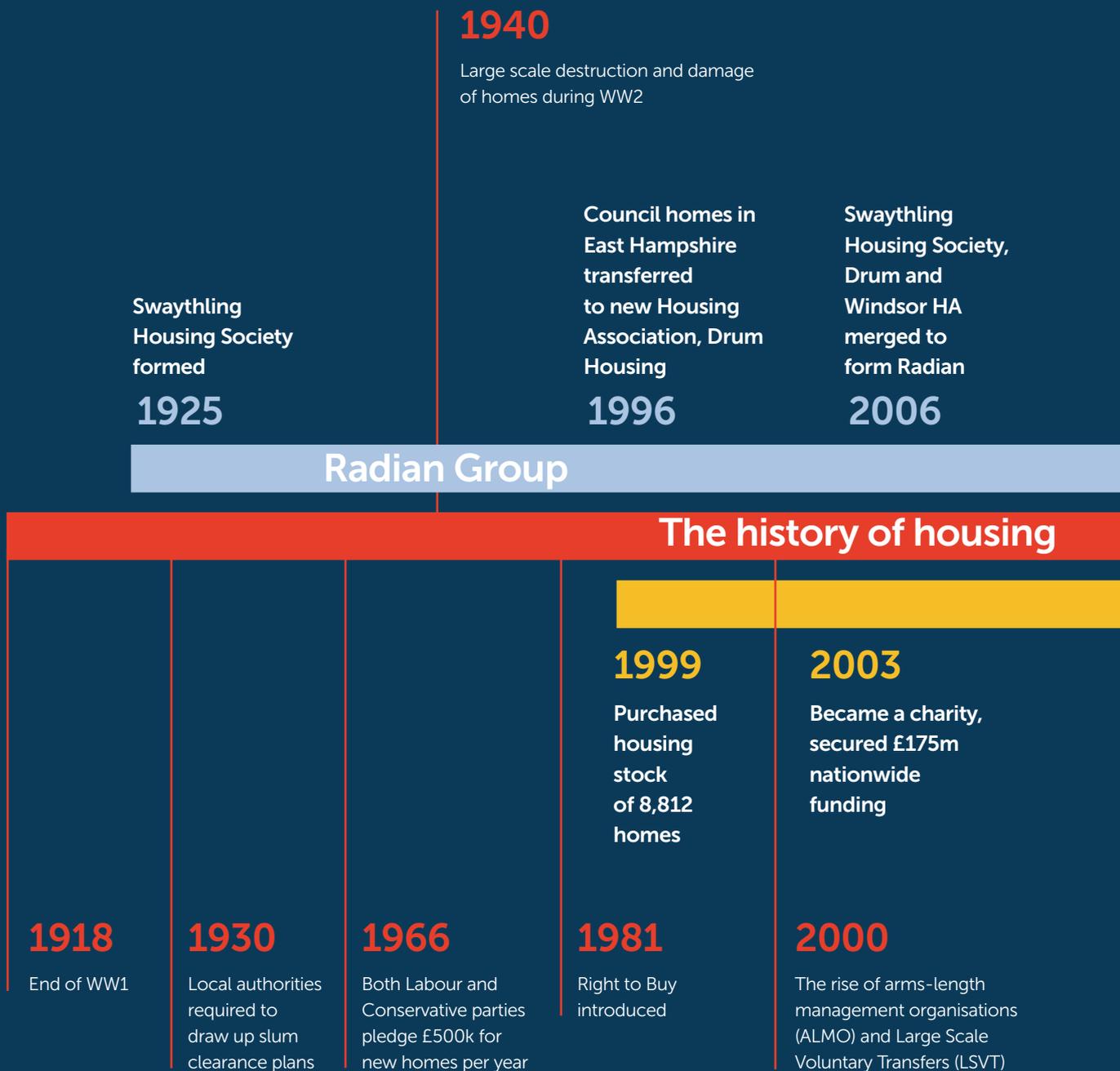
This stewardship philosophy extends to how we will tackle the growing environmental challenges we face. As custodians of the homes we create, own and manage, we have a responsibility to future generations to consider the impact we have on the environment. We will move as quickly as we can towards improving our environmental credentials and better understanding the implications of carbon neutrality.

Part of good stewardship is making sure we are connected to, and working constructively with, the right partners. This includes supporting the government's efforts to increase housing supply and access to suitable homes for all, and working locally with smaller groups to tackle specific issues. We want to be completely embedded in the network of different organisations and agencies that can collaborate to create significant change.

We will keep on developing this organisation, always responding to the changes in the world around us. Staying relevant, creating great communities and empowering lives.

Stewards not owners

We are proud of our history



2009

Government brings forward social housing investment to stimulate economy following 2008 Credit Crunch

'One Radian' officially formed
2010

2017

Grenfell Tower tragedy

Radian launched its new Values and Behaviours and 20/20/20 targets
2019

Officially formed new partnership with Yarlington HG
2019

Yarlington housing group

2009

Changed name from South Somerset Homes to Yarlington HG

2014

Achieved Sunday Times Top 100 Best Companies To Work For

2017

Launch of My Yarlington HG online portal

2019

Officially formed new partnership with Radian

2018

'New Deal for Social Housing' Green Paper published

2019

Shelter warns that three million new social homes need to be built in England alone over the next 20 years to fix the housing crisis



Achieving Together

We believe that we achieve more when we work together. We recognise that we will always need new ideas and that collaborating with others will allow us to do more than we could alone. If you can help us to have more impact we look forward to hearing from you.



Achieving Together





Work with us

#achievingtogether

Get in touch
achievingtogether@abri.co.uk

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