

Communities Strategy

Irwell Valley Homes
2025-2028

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homes



Executive Summary

Irwell Valley Homes (IVH) is rooted in communities and serves a wide range of neighbourhoods across Greater Manchester. A key part of the role as a landlord is providing good neighbourhood services and making a positive contribution to communities.

The new Communities Strategy sets out the three-year objectives that have been co-designed by customers to ensure IVH fulfils this duty and our mission to support customers to live well in their homes and communities.

These goals will be delivered through a series of objectives via the supporting action plan with key measures to track progress to ensure we deliver on these commitments to customers.

Three goals underpin the strategy, these are:

- Promoting safe and peaceful neighbourhoods.
- Maintaining clean and green spaces.
- Working together to make a difference.



1.0

Social context

1.1 Despite having some of the most desirable places to live, work and visit in the UK, Greater Manchester (GM) still falls behind national averages on many measures, such as employment rates and healthy life expectancy. There are also inequalities between different parts of GM.

1.2 The cost of living continues to place huge pressures households, with social housing tenants some of the hardest hit. Joseph Roundtree Foundation's most recent cost of living tracker (October 2024) highlights persistent high levels of hardship in the bottom 40% of incomes despite some key economic conditions easing. Meanwhile In the latest GM Residents Survey, 57% of residents say their cost of living has increased in the last month. This is higher than the UK average.



1.3 The rising prevalence of mental health problems is a growing public concern with Government data showing that 1 in 6 adults report a common mental health disorder, such as anxiety or depression, and over half a million adults are living with more severe mental illness. Although there has been a general increase across the population, poor mental health disproportionately affects those of lower socio-economic status and people living in poverty. Perceptions of housing quality, service responsiveness, community safety, and benefit changes have also been shown to have a detrimental effect on customers' mental health. In the GM survey, 55% of respondents reported having high or medium levels of anxiety and only 60% reported being happy with their lives. This is having an impact on community relations, and our ability to support people to sustain their tenancies and be good neighbours.

1.4 Community safety is a key factor in how people feel about their community. In recent years GMP have lost more than 2,000 police Officers, whilst at the same time more people than ever are contacting the police for help. Hate crime across GM is on the rise and summer 2024 saw a period of 'civil unrest'. Much of this was racially motivated and affected several IVH communities. Despite this, in the GM survey, 77% of residents felt their local area is a place where people from diverse backgrounds get on well. In relation to residents' sense of community and pride in their neighbourhood:

- 73% of residents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.
- 62% were satisfied with the maintenance of their local area (59% in August – which mirrors IVH related TSM).
- 78% want to have a say in what happens in their local area.
- 69% are proud of their local area.
- Just over 4 in 5 agree that if they needed help, there are people who would be there for them and 77% said that if they wanted company there are people they can call on.

1.5 The Strategy considers these social factors and the ways that IVH can best support residents across communities within the context of our role as a landlord by working closely with partners, and ensuring customers have access to our services and the support of key partners within the communities we operate.

1.6 In doing this, the Strategy will support The Greater Manchester Strategy 2021–2031 ‘good lives for all’ in relation to the following four commitments:

- 1. Guarantee digital inclusion for everyone.
- 2. Tackle food and fuel poverty.
- 3. Reduce health inequalities and improve both physical and mental health.
- 4. Enable resilient, safe, and vibrant communities where everyone has access to essential services, with local centres and high streets which are successful and reflective of their populations, and access to high quality leisure spaces.

Plus the GM Crime and Policing Plan in relation to keeping people safe and strengthening communities and places.



2.0 Regulatory context

2.1 Since the last Communities Strategy there have been several changes to the operating environment. The new Strategy must deliver the following: against the Government's Anti-Social Action Plan, and the Regulators new Consumer Standards, specifically the Neighbourhood and Community Standard. Under the new Neighborhood and Community Standard Irwell Valley Homes must:

- **Safety of shared spaces** - work co-operatively with tenants, other landlords and relevant organizations to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of shared spaces.
- **Local cooperation** - co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental, and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing.
- **Anti-social behaviour and hate incidents** - work in partnership with appropriate local authority departments, the police, and other relevant organisations to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate incidents in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.
- **Domestic abuse** - work co-operatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice.



3.0

Current performance.

3.1 When comparing IVH’s performance against the community measures in the latest published National Tenant Survey, IVH’s score for neighborhood contribution is on a par with the national average. IVH performs slightly better in relation to handling ASB, but there is work to do to ensure customers feel safe in their home and feel communal areas are clean and well maintained.

3.2 Looking into the comments from customers, the drivers for this dissatisfaction are that customers are unhappy with the general upkeep of communal areas (floor coverings, decorating, windows, doors etc.), and concerned about the cleaning and ground maintenance services. within the communities we operate.

Tenant Satisfaction Measure	IVH	NTS	Difference
TP05 - Satisfaction that the home is safe	73	77	-4
TP10 - Satisfaction that communal areas are clean and well maintained	52	68	-16
TP11 - Satisfaction with contribution to neighbourhood	58	58	0
TP12 - Satisfaction with handling of ASB	59	57	2



3.3 Comparing our TSM performance with national RPs the picture is a similar one, however what is clear is that whilst IVH appears to be performing well in relation to ASB, IVH is also dealing with higher numbers of ASB cases and greater numbers of these cases are hate incidents. Therefore, work is now underway to investigate this further to understand what may be driving this.

Tenant Satisfaction Measure	Lower	Medium	Upper	IVH 23/34
TP10 - Satisfaction that communal areas are clean and well maintained	58%	65%	72%	52%
TP11 - Satisfaction with landlords’ contribution to the neighbourhood	55%	63%	70%	58%
TP12 - Satisfaction with handling of ASB	51%	58%	65%	59%
NM01 - Anti Social Behaviour cases per 1,000 properties	20.7	35.5	56.5	39
NM01 - Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord - hate incidents (per 1,000 homes)	0.2	0.6	1.2	7

4.0 Customer engagement

4.1 During 2024 IVH carried out significant customer consultation to understand customers' priorities in relation to their neighbourhood and community, this primarily focused around the 'Big Conversation' roadshow. Insight was also gathered from the TSM feedback, complaint learning, transactional survey feedback, and our involved customer groups.

4.2 Through this engagement, strong themes emerged in relation to how customers feel we can improve services and support in their neighbourhood. Customers told us that they were most concerned about:

- The condition of communal areas including floor coverings, decorating, windows and doors, and door entry systems.
- The consistency and standard of cleaning and grounds maintenance services.
- Anti-social behaviour - especially drug dealing, noise, untidy green spaces, fly-tipping, and rubbish.
- Increasing neighbourly tensions often caused by mental health conditions. This is significantly more of a concern for customers living in blocks of apartments.
- The visibility of IVH teams in communities and customers being able to access services within their community when they need them.
- Being kept informed around issues affecting them in their home and neighbourhood.
- Issues outside IVH control such as crime, highways, rubbish and recycling, and welfare benefits.



5.0 Strategy Goals

5.1 Three goals underpin the Strategy based on the input from customers, the enhanced regulatory requirements, and their aspirations for their communities.

1. Promoting safe and peaceful neighbourhoods - Customers want to feel safe where they live. They want us to tackle ASB and provide good neighbourhood management services. They want us to let homes sensitively and responsibly and provide support to those who need it to help them be a good neighbour.

2. Maintaining clean and green spaces - Customers want us to improve the standard of communal areas. They want us to deal quickly and effectively with waste management issues,

untidy gardens, and pests, and provide consistent, decent quality cleaning and grounds maintenance services.

3. Working together to make a difference - Customers want us to be visible and easily accessible in neighbourhoods and to work with others to tackle issues outside our control. They want us to invest in their neighbourhood and work with them to ensure it is a good place to live and that the needs of the community are met.



6.0

Strategy Objectives.

Our colleagues are working with a detailed action plan to deliver the objectives outlined in this strategy. We'll track our performance against the strategy each quarter, sharing results with customers and our board. We'll also provide an update of our progress each year.



6.1 Promoting safe and peaceful neighbourhoods

Our 2025 – 2028 objectives	Measures of success
<div>1. Enhance the risk management of ASB and improve support for victims.</div> <div>2. Launch a new Good Neighbour Initiative and engage customers in their rights and responsibilities to support community cohesion.</div> <div>3. Work with customers to implement local lettings policies to promote sustainable tenancies.</div> <div>4. Review our approach to Domestic Abuse and improve support for victims.</div> <div>5. Work with customers to co-design solutions to community safety concerns.</div>	<div>Direct measures</div> <div><div>• ASB transactional survey – increasing satisfaction score.</div><div>• TSM- satisfaction with approach to handling anti-social behaviour (<i>improving trend</i>).</div><div>• Reduction in ASB cases.</div><div>• Reduction in complaints relating to communities and % of complaints upheld.</div></div> <div>Proxy measures</div> <div><div>• Reduced avoidable contact.</div><div>• Reduced tenancy turnover.</div><div>• TSM - overall satisfaction (<i>improving trend</i>).</div><div>• TSM - listen to customers views and act on them (<i>improving trend</i>).</div><div>• TSM – keep customer informed (<i>improving trend</i>).</div><div>• TSM – treats customers fairly and with respect (<i>above 75%</i>).</div><div>• TSM - makes a positive contribution to neighbourhood (<i>improving trend</i>).</div></div>



6.2 Maintaining Clean and Green Spaces

Our 2025 – 2028 objectives	Measures of success
<p>1. Improve the standard of cleaning and grounds maintenance services.</p> <p>2. Work with customers and local authorities to tackle waste management issues.</p> <p>3. Enhance estates services and carry out preventative maintenance.</p> <p>4. Work with customers to create improvement plans for their building. Covering asset investment, repairs, and neighbourhood management</p>	<p>Direct measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TSM - makes a positive contribution to neighbourhood <i>(improving trend)</i>• TSM- Communal areas are clean and well maintained <i>(improving trend)</i>• Reduction in complaints relating to communal services• Reduction in tipping costs <i>(from bin skimming and fly tipping)</i>.• Increase in customer reporting of cleaning and grounds maintenance standards. <p>Proxy measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced avoidable contact.• TSM - overall satisfaction <i>(improving trend)</i>.• TSM - listen to customers views and act on them <i>(improving trend)</i>.• TSM – keep customer informed <i>(improving trend)</i>.• TSM – treats customers fairly and with respect <i>(above 75%)</i>.



6.3 Working together to make a difference in communities

Our 2025 – 2028 objectives	Measures of success
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Embed new area-based operating model for communities to improve visibility and customer experience.2. Work with customers in awarding funding from the Irwell Valley Foundation and delivering initiatives based on their aspirations and identified needs.3. Enhance our community hubs to provide improved collaborative spaces for us to work with our partners in supporting customers.	<p>Specific measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ASB transactional survey – increasing satisfaction score.• TSM- satisfaction with approach to handling anti-social behaviour (<i>improving trend</i>).• TSM - makes a positive contribution to neighbourhood (<i>improving trend</i>).• Reduction in complaints relating to communities and % of complaints upheld.• 100% dividends from IVH foundation invested in communities. <p>Proxy measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced avoidable contact.• Reduced tenancy turnover.• Reduced arrears.• TSM - overall satisfaction (<i>improving trend</i>).• TSM - listen to customers views and act on them (<i>improving trend</i>).• TSM – keep customers informed (<i>improving trend</i>).• TSM – treats customers fairly and with respect (<i>above 75%</i>).



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