

Enabling people to live well in their homes and communities

Our Living Well plan is focused on driving up the quality of our homes and services, delivering more affordable homes, making a difference in the communities we serve and supporting our colleagues to enjoy work, learn and grow.

Listening to and acting on customer feedback and experience ensures people remain at the heart of what we do – from the families who moved into our first nine homes more than 50 years ago, to the 20,000 customers across Greater Manchester who now call one of our properties their home.

You can read more about our latest progress against these priorities here in this newsletter.



Driving up the quality of our homes

In autumn 2023, we secured grant funding from Greater Manchester Combined Authority to help us invest further in our homes. Thanks to the support of the Social Housing Quality Fund, we are investing £1m in improving ventilation, insulation and heating systems in 991 of our homes.

In Sale West in Trafford, our largest conurbation of stock, we are targeting 253 homes with an investment of £305,195.

Using data from stock condition and ventilation surveys completed in the last 12-18 months, along with customer feedback, the project is targeting the homes where it can have the most impact.

Our aim is to improve customers' health and wellbeing by addressing the immediate issues, whilst tackling the root cause and improving the condition of our homes for the future.

We made good progress in November and December last year and will continue working through the programme over the coming weeks.



Providing affordable, safe and good quality homes and services



Delivering building safety

We have begun consulting with residents living in our high-rise buildings on their block-specific Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy.

The strategies aim to ensure customers feel safe in their home; are informed of the building safety plans for their block and aware of who is responsible for what; and encourage customers to have a voice in building safety decisions to improve accountability.



New partnerships set to spread our reach further

We're proud to have signed leases with two Greater Manchester charities, giving them a new base in the heart of our neighbourhoods.

We were delighted to continue our legacy of supporting organisations which really make a difference in the communities we serve.

The first premises in Great Lever, Bolton, sees us working with domestic abuse charity Endeavor, while the other premises in Bury will be used by health charity Bury Healthwatch.

The Bolton premises in Calvert Road will become the Endeavor Together Hub which will enable them to expand their counselling service and increase the group work they offer around empowerment, confidence building and coping mechanisms.

Jill Caldwell, Chief Executive of Endeavor, said: *"Bolton is a broad and beautifully diverse community, and we hope to develop the Together Hub to have something to offer for everyone."*

"Having a base within the heart of the community gives us and other agencies the chance to develop new services as we believe collaborative working brings about the best outcomes and opportunities for everyone."



Making a difference in the communities we serve



Foundation grants shared our special birthday with our customers and communities

Throughout 2023 we invited customers and communities to apply for a grant from the Irwell Valley Foundation, our charitable investment fund. We wanted our Foundation to leave a lasting legacy in our communities, particularly during this milestone year.

Those who received grants included the Mature Movers Dance Group in Eccles – who received funds towards their weekly meet-ups and performances at local care homes – the Forever Green community group in Haughton Green - who bought and fitted three life-saving defibrillators in our high-rise buildings - and a youth engagement programme run by Sale Sharks - who used the funding to buy new classroom equipment.

Other successful beneficiaries included warm spaces and food banks providing vital support to customers and communities through the cost-of-living crisis.

The Foundation will continue its valuable work into 2024 and beyond. To find out more about its impact, visit www.irwellvalley.co.uk/our-foundation to watch our film.



Celebrating another milestone in the award-winning regeneration of Sale West

Just ahead of the festive season we celebrated another milestone in our award-winning regeneration of Sale West as we took handover of the first homes completed as part of phase 2.

The first four apartments include two 'accessible-ready' homes complete with level access, wider doorways and corridors and wet rooms.

Toby, who lives with osteoarthritis and mobility problems following an accident at work seven years ago, is one of the first to move in.

He said: *"The space is fantastic – for so long I had no-where to call my own, but this will be my place. I can invite friends over, have my mum to stay.*

"The fact it's already set up for my needs is amazing. I'll be able to fit my perching stools in, get a seat fitted in the shower room and there's space to store my mobility scooter. These things will make such a difference."

The new homes will be let at affordable rent and have other features including triple glazing, electric heating and mechanical ventilation. The first are located on Hamilton Avenue, a new street we're also creating to connect and open up the estate as part of the regeneration.

Meanwhile, we continue to make progress with phase 1 of the regeneration – with 60 of the 79 homes for social rent now completed and handed over.

We're proud that in recent months the regeneration has been recognised in a raft of awards, acknowledging the impact the work is having.



This includes being highly commended in the Inside Housing Development Awards in the Best Regeneration Category; finalist in the Neighbourhood Transformation Category of the Affordable Housing Awards and shortlisted in the North-West Residential Property Awards – the result of which we'll find out in January.



Providing more affordable homes



Armed Forces Covenant Silver Accreditation awarded in official ceremony

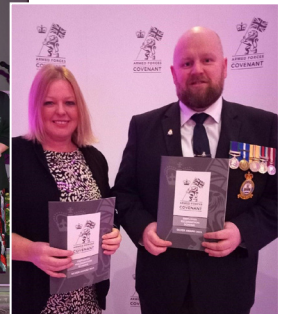
At the end of last year, we were delighted to join other organisations from across the north-west to receive our Silver Accreditation at the Ministry of Defence's presentation evening.

The Employer Recognition Scheme acknowledges organisations who commit to support veteran and reservist colleagues, their families and the wider Armed Forces community and to ensure fair and equitable services and opportunities for them.

We were the only housing provider in the north-west to be awarded the silver accreditation in 2023, building on our bronze award which we received in 2022.



Supporting colleagues to enjoy work, learn and grow



Celebrating our 50th birthday with our partners and stakeholders

In November we were delighted to welcome more than 80 partners and stakeholders to our head office at Soapworks to celebrate half a century of Irwell Valley Homes.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate this milestone together and for those who sent well wishes on our special birthday.

Five decades on from when we formed with a handful of homes across Salford, lots has changed – but our core purpose of enabling people to live well in their home and community remains the same.

We know that by working together with our stakeholders we can achieve more and we're looking forward to another productive year rising to future challenges and opportunities in collaboration with our partners.

