

Framework Corporate Plan

April 2022- March 2027

Structure and Systems

Framework exists to establish a set of circumstances that ought to happen, but isn't currently proposed or planned. We argue for joined-up responses to severe and multiple disadvantage, affirming their desirability in a good society. When reporting that these responses don't currently exist, we regard this as a consequence of policy and strategy. The changes we are working to create can't happen unless government and society wills them.

Among the questions this raises are:

- We strive for 'System Change' – is it internal to us, environmental or both?
- Can we live and engage with a partially effective system?
- Would we sacrifice our organisation in pursuit of something better?
- How can we balance stability, sustainability and improvement?
- What are realistic goals for us in the next five years?

Framework's Corporate Plan addresses these questions. It creates a foundation and reference point for the decisions on strategy, policy and resource allocation that need to be taken in the coming months and years. There is continuity with previous plans – especially around the 'Systems Change' agenda. What's new is an explicit recognition that change is needed not only in the external structures and systems that we are helping our service users to navigate, but also in those by which we operate internally. This answers the first of our five questions.

For now, we must live and engage with the existing 'system'. Homeless people don't have ready access to suitable accommodation – especially if they are categorised among those whose rights are restricted by law. Alcohol and substance misusers who can't pay for their own treatment face long waits and pre-conditions. Those mental health issues that are hardest to treat may simply remain undiagnosed. Much of the support that some people need to sustain their independence has been labelled 'non-statutory' and de-commissioned. Even in a 'sellers' labour market there are entry barriers for people with complex needs.

The issue for Framework is how and where to marshal its resources not merely to improve the offer, but also to demonstrate what is possible? And in taking these decisions, what level of risk is acceptable? Ultimately, what matters is not the longevity of our organisation, but the nature and extent of the social change it delivers.

Realistically, the System Change we envisage and advocate won't happen in the next five years – not least because it isn't planned. Given the longer time horizon, we will act responsibly to ensure sustainability in our governance, financial planning, risk management and service delivery. So the enhancement of internal systems and structures to make Framework more resilient are as much a theme of this plan as wider System Change.

Whatever the improvements that can be secured, our work will still be needed in 2027 and beyond. This plan sets realistic, achievable targets for the next five years.

Vision, Mission and Culture

Framework's Vision

People experiencing homelessness and related disadvantage are treated with dignity, respect and compassion and are empowered to reach their full potential.

The Board, Senior Leadership Team and Service User Representatives have articulated and share this Vision. It is a long-term aspiration for society, not an account of what Framework can achieve alone in a limited time. Its eventual realisation will depend on the System Change for which we advocate and strive.

Framework's Mission

Working to tackle homelessness, ill-health, disadvantage and exclusion by:

- Providing holistic, person centred programmes of housing, health, employment and support
- Challenging systems and influencing their design to deliver integrated services with better outcomes
- Preventing homelessness and its causes
- Advocating for service users and embedding their experience in our work.

The Mission drives the Six new Corporate Objectives that have been set for the next five years, and their accompanying targets.

Framework's **Culture** reflects its history, charitable purpose and vision. It is the product of a merger in July 2001 between Macedon and Nottingham Help the Homeless Association. Both antecedents were local charities formed in the early 1970s as responses to street homelessness. The influences on them included both secular and faith-based humanism with a focus on the value of individuals, especially those in the greatest need and regardless of the choices they have made.

This sense of individual worth is expressed in the design of services that reach out to those who need them the most. These people may also be the ones who find them most difficult to navigate and make the greatest demands. Framework's instinct is to respond flexibly, allocating time and resources as required to facilitate progress, rather than equally between recipients or according to pre-set formulae. Inclusivity is valued – in terms of both 'Protected Characteristics' and the diversity of presenting needs.

These cultural attributes shape the services themselves and the profile of those delivering them – initially through the recruitment process and subsequently by influencing who chooses to remain with Framework and progress. The strength of Framework's culture is indicated by the significant number of staff at all levels who work with us over decades, expressing a dedication and commitment that far outweighs the value of their rewards.

Governance and Leadership

The importance of balancing continuity and change is evident nowhere more than in governance and leadership. The Board's adoption of the National Housing Federation Code of Governance (2020) sets a standard appropriate to Framework's status as a Registered Provider of Social Housing. Among the changes are a clear statement of accountability to residents and other service users, a renewed focus on sustainability, assurance and diversity with a six-year limit on the normal term of office for a Member of the Board.

Anticipating these changes, Framework updated its skills matrix to inform the recruitment of five new Board Members in 2020. Their arrival coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic, disrupting their induction. However, the Board has learned how to remain effective and cohesive whilst meeting remotely, and a Governance Review was completed in September 2020. A Succession Plan exists to manage the additional turnover arising from the new NHF Code, whilst providing and retaining the expertise needed to govern a specialist housing association and charity with a wide range of services and funding sources.

The Board has worked closely with the Chief Executive to strengthen the Senior Leadership Team. New Directors of Finance, Operations and Corporate Services were recruited in 2019 and 2020. Alongside re-investment in Framework's housing stock, environmental sustainability (including carbon reduction), the health and safety of service users, the Long-Term Financial Plan makes provision for better staff rewards and further enhancement of leadership and management capacity.

In a context of continuing austerity, the nominal values of service contracts have (at best) been static since 2010. In response, Framework has already delivered a real-terms reduction of more than 30% in unit costs. Part of this is attributable to tight control of staffing costs, with salaries falling below those offered by other employers (such as the NHS and local authorities) in related arenas. The post-Brexit rise in labour costs has further increased the number of competitors who can offer our staff more money for less demanding roles. Altruism, goodwill and volunteering are essential to Framework's offer but they can't of themselves bridge the gap between our aspirations and the available resources. The over-riding priority for Framework's leaders (both Board and Executive) is to find new ways of delivering safe and effective services with fewer, but better paid staff.

Values and Leadership Behaviours

Framework's leaders are expected to promote the organisation's values and model them in their behaviour. In particular they must:

- ❖ Recognise that authority is accompanied by responsibility and accountability
- ❖ Prioritise the interests of service users
- ❖ Be capable of making, articulating and defending tough decisions
- ❖ Respect, engage, encourage and motivate others by recognising their achievements
- ❖ Be committed to learning, development and continuous improvement
- ❖ Support diversity and prevent unfair discrimination.

Our leaders' task is to sustain the organisation and its work whilst guarding these values.

Executive Summary

- ❖ Framework is a specialist charity and registered provider of social housing
- ❖ It advocates for joined-up responses to the needs of people who have experienced severe and multiple disadvantage, providing them directly where necessary
- ❖ The changes it seeks are not part of an existing or proposed national or regional plan, but local examples of good practice are recognised and applauded
- ❖ The need for our services will continue so the organisation must retain the capacity, resilience and expertise to sustain their provision
- ❖ This requires strong governance, leadership, financial planning, risk management, culture and transformational service delivery
- ❖ Framework will adhere to its inclusive, humanistic values and build on them to enable people from all backgrounds to participate at every level including in governance, leadership and service development
- ❖ A priority for leaders is to transform services - finding ways to deliver them safely and effectively with a smaller number of staff who can be trained, developed, empowered and rewarded as professionals
- ❖ Transformation will require investment in leadership and management capacity
- ❖ 18,639 people came to us for help in the year to March 2021, across the four pillars of Housing (2,866), Health (8,641), Support (4,981) and Employment (2,151)
- ❖ The total has doubled in a decade with most of the increase in the non-housing pillars. Slower growth is now expected, primarily in housing and health
- ❖ Whilst continuing to seek and pursue opportunities to 'join-up' or complement existing work, Framework will prioritise investment in its structure, systems and the safety & quality of its services
- ❖ We are committed to meeting our statutory, regulatory and contractual obligations whilst consolidating the configuration & geography of stock, reducing carbon emissions and maintaining our financial viability
- ❖ Our culture is proud and strong but not static – the social changes we promote will inspire and influence our own ideas, values and behaviours.
- ❖ Framework's new Corporate Objectives, agreed by the Board, are:
 1. Growth
 2. Standards
 3. System Change and Joined-Up Services
 4. Organisational Strength and Resilience
 5. Service User Participation and Empowerment
 6. Valuing our People
- ❖ The Board has set five-year targets in relation to each of the above.

Corporate Objective 1: Growth

This means: A further increase in the number of people we reach. Subject to their viability, most existing services will continue. Some will be enlarged and others complemented by new provision. Growth will be tailored to deepen our offer in existing or contiguous geographical areas, and enhance the range of options for service users. It will improve, and not undermine, the quality and standard of our services. In all cases growth will be constrained by the commercial imperatives. A numerical target will be set for the Housing Pillar which requires capital investment, but not for the revenue-dependant Health, Support and Employment Pillars.

We will:

- Develop additional units of high-quality, self-contained supported housing
- Further expand our health, support and employment provision (subject to funding)
- Strengthen our relationships with commissioners and their partners
- Withdraw from localities where a viable operating base can't be established
- Pursue opportunities to join-up services through partnership as well as direct provision
- Utilise new models for asset procurement (including leases where affordable to improve and consolidate our provision)
- Develop a new Fundraising Strategy to secure complementary resources that add value to commissioned services
- Explore the case for merger and seek a suitable partner if it is demonstrably in the interests of our service users.

Key Targets:

- Provision of at least 200 purpose-built housing units over the life of the plan, including core 'hostel' replacements, housing first and move-on flats
- Engagement with at least 19,200 individual service users in the year to March 2023, rising to 21,000 or more by 2026/27
- A more comprehensive offer comprising elements of housing, health, support and employment across the whole of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire by March 2027 (the entirety of which would not necessarily be delivered by Framework)

Related External Strategies and Programmes

Homes England remains committed to part-funding the development of more affordable (including supported) housing to alleviate the national shortage. Having reduced the number of rough sleepers by half between 2017 and 2022, central government retains a target of zero by 2027. So the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) are likely to continue.

The Big Lottery Fund's 'Fulfilling Lives' Programme is winding down but new opportunities are emerging to tackle Severe and Multiple Disadvantage, for instance through Integrated Care Systems and the 'Changing Futures' programme. Anticipating the outcome of the Dame Carol Black Review, additional funds are appearing to extend the accessibility and reach of drug and alcohol treatment programmes. 'Building Better Futures' has been the subject of two winter appeals, raising capital towards the cost of new homes for those who are ready to live with greater independence.

Corporate Objective 2: Standards

This means: Our services and systems will be suitable for their intended purposes - such as emergency or specialist supported housing, harm reduction, recovery and resettlement; and fit for publication as good practice examples. Our standards drive the capacity of services to deliver the best possible outcomes for their users. Systems of assurance to the Board and Senior Leadership Team will draw on the experience of staff, service users and other stakeholders. Standards will be specific to their context and communicated to service users with support to highlight any failure to meet them. Decisions on the initiation, design, amendment and cessation of services will be guided by Framework's ability to deliver them safely, effectively and to the agreed standards. A key principle linked to Corporate Objective 1 is that growth will not be pursued if it compromises standards.

We will:

- Consult with service users and other stakeholders on standards for each type of provision
- Publicise these, inviting and facilitating feedback on our adherence to them
- Utilise fundraising to raise the offer of services beyond their commissioned minimum
- Engage with commissioners to address unnecessary access barriers
- Withdraw from contracts whose specification or circumstances prevent effective delivery
- Avoid involvement in any initiative or service which can't be made safe, demeans our service users or is considered contrary to their best interests
- Maintain compliance with all legislative and regulatory requirements that relate to service provision in each of the four pillars
- Embrace partnerships – and merger should the opportunity arise, to underpin or enhance our offer to service users.

Key Targets:

- Compliance with all four of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards as demonstrated by Annual Self-Assessments
- Compliance with the requirements of the Care Quality Commission, Charity Commission, HSE, ICO, FSB and OfSted as relevant to the service being delivered
- Successful delivery of a Consolidation Strategy to replace 80% of existing shared housing units with self-contained provision over the five-year life of this plan
- Purpose-built replacements for the existing properties at London Road, Fritchley Court and Trent Boulevard subject to the continuing need for them in commissioned services

Related External Strategies and Programmes

The Social Housing White Paper is a Residents' Charter, describing the actions Government will take to ensure they live in safe, good quality homes, are heard and have redress when things go wrong. It will be embodied in legislation, along with the Building Safety Bill and new powers for the Regulator of Social Housing on Consumer Standards.

An Ombudsman has been created to oversee the handling of complaints by landlords. The National Housing Federation is working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on standards for supported housing units to qualify as 'exempt' accommodation for Housing Benefit purposes.

Corporate Objective 3: System Change and Joined-Up Services

This means: Advocating, planning and implementing System Change. Services should be designed and delivered around the needs of individuals not the other way round. Those presenting in need should not be expected to re-define their circumstances to fit the available offer. This joining-up of services requires them to be comprehensive and diverse, with no significant gaps. Framework can't achieve this alone – it will work closely with like-minded statutory and voluntary partners to promote a learning culture, sharing expertise and models of good practice to 'add value' for users. We will provide directly when we have the resources and expertise, otherwise supporting the work of partners if they are better placed to deliver.

We will:

- Participate in strategic planning and provider fora in the localities where we work
- Develop an aspirational model of systemic responses applicable to all geographies
- Publicly commend the localities that use it and seek to educate those who don't
- Build our capacity for data collection, analysis, thought leadership and research
- Use our knowledge, learning and service-based data to influence commissioning decisions
- Enhance offers with our fundraised resources, where experience shows that specified services won't meet the profile of need
- Respond to government and council consultations drawing on evidence from service users
- Contribute to the policy and influencing work of the National Housing Federation, Homeless Link and similar national bodies
- Campaign for and with people who experience Severe and Multiple Disadvantage (SMD)
- Network with Ministers, Civil Servants and other stakeholders and interested parties.

Key Targets:

- Active Participation in the Governance of at least two Integrated Care Systems (targeting those of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire)
- Publication of at least one research piece on the outcomes of System Change and another on the Future of Supported Housing
- Membership of at least one national Working/ Task & Finish Group (eg. NHF, Homeless Link, DLUHC, UKSHA etc.) in each of the five years covered by this Plan
- Evaluation of the Nottingham 'Changing Futures' Programme and dissemination of the learning from it

Related External Strategies and Programmes

System Change has been defined as 'advancing equity by shifting the conditions that hold a problem in place'. To embrace it, we and our partners must recognise the need to change our own ways of thinking alongside others. This culture exists in pockets of central and government, among some commissioners and in certain charitable trusts. Its most significant sponsor is the Big Lottery Fund which has resourced Fulfilling Lives, Building Better Opportunities and is now collaborating with government in the 'Changing Futures' (CF) Programme. CF in Nottingham is led by the Integrated Care Partnership which is drawing on Framework's expertise. Our task is to widen the adoption of System Change as a policy and strategy objective.

Corporate Objective 4: Organisational Strength and Resilience

This means: Consolidating and valuing the organisation not as an end in itself but as a vehicle for effective service delivery. A fairer, more integrated and cohesive society would not need Framework. In its absence the interests of those we serve demand a robust and business-like organisation. Framework must be well governed and led with effective systems, the resources to fund its operations and the capacity to withstand external shocks. The Long-Term Financial Plan, which demonstrates our viability on reasonable assumptions, will be updated and stress-tested each year. It makes provision for re-investment in asset management, carbon reduction measures, better staff rewards, a new Fundraising Strategy and the strengthening of leadership and management.

We will:

- Target a minimum Operating Margin of 3.0%, rising to 4.0% in the fourth and fifth years of the plan whilst keeping services safe and effective
- Maintain a cash balance of at least £4.5 million to ensure liquidity
- Increase the real value of salaries by a minimum of 10% over the life of the plan
- Identify mitigations in the form of discretionary spend (eg. specialist workers, rough sleeper support & skills training) for removal unless funded, to sustain viability
- Consolidate existing partnerships to reduce the number of service delivery partners & sub-contractors with their accompanying financial and reputational risks.
- Design, pilot and implement opportunities to transform the delivery of existing and future services with smaller numbers of (better paid) staff
- Negotiate additional borrowing/ funding capacity to a maximum of £20 million (against a £12.5 limit now) to support further growth primarily in the Housing pillar
- Invest in new technology to facilitate efficient agile working, the devolution of authority & responsibility, innovation and a transformed offer to our service users
- Further diversify our funding sources to include reformed NHS and local authority bodies, and press for existing short-term government programmes to be extended.

Key Targets:

- A 3.0% Operating Margin, rising to 4.0% in 2025/26 & 2026/'27) and covenant compliance
- A further real-terms reduction of at least 5% in the unit cost of services (per user)
- All ongoing services covering their overheads and contributing to the margin
- Investment in housing & asset management, ICT and service user record keeping systems

Related External Strategies and Programmes

The Regulator of Social Housing's 2021 Sector Risk Profile states:

'Providers face increased scrutiny as they respond to the government's [Social Housing White Paper](#) and it looks to the sector to deliver against.....its zero-carbon commitments. Navigating sometimes competing demands for providers' resources will require some difficult trade-offs.....It is crucial that Boards have a strategic approach to these trade-offs; those who fail to achieve this risk being overwhelmed, either financially, operationally, or reputationally'.

The emphasis on Structure, Systems, Strength and Resilience in this Plan shows that Framework's Board is aware of these risks. We expect to grow – but not at any cost.

Corporate Objective 5: Service User Participation and Empowerment

This means: Putting service users at the front and centre of Framework's decision-making. This plan affirms our role as a needs-driven charity. Tenant Participation is a regulatory requirement and we extend the principle to encompass all service users. Beyond this, we must empower them to make and be responsible for their own choices - accepting managed risk and avoiding needless paternalism. These commitments extend to service users with severe and multiple disadvantages, people with protected characteristics and those who endure social exclusion.

We will:

- Make strategic decisions (such as on the provision, expansion, amendment or cessation of services) according to the interests and needs of our current and future service users
- Seek service user feedback on gaps to be bridged across the four Pillars, and be led by this when fundraising, responding to consultations and in driving System Change
- Embed Service User Participation in our governance, management and operations, using these and other channels to consult with them on proposed changes
- Improve service users' access to information, advice, counselling & digital services, promoting and investing in these as a route to service transformation
- Support willing participants to be visible influencers of commissioning decisions, if necessary challenging the underlying assumptions from their experience
- Improve equality of access to services by seeking the removal of barriers caused by unnecessary restrictions defined by political factors rather than individual need
- Report and act on the results of annual Service User Satisfaction Surveys, using the data to inform our own practice and that of partners
- Sustain funding for independent advocacy and empowerment mechanisms to support Framework's Service User Participation Policy and the accompanying Action Plan
- Resource the implementation of Framework's Equality & Diversity Policy and Action Plan, supported by the Anti-Racism Statement and embedded training for managers and staff.

Key Targets:

- An increase from two to four in the number of service user representatives who are trained to participate in governance (Board and Committee meetings)
- Reinvigoration of the Service User Advisory Group through a post-Covid resumption of in-person meetings promoted by 'champions' within staff teams
- Extension in the role of resident/ service user representatives in repairs monitoring to include the recruitment of Board members & senior staff, the design of new services, health & safety assurance and making the case for 'System Change'

Related External Strategies and Programmes

'Opportunity Nottingham', a lottery-funded 'Fulfilling Lives' consortium led by Framework, has demonstrated the power of Service User Participation not just to change individual services but also in the design of systems.

The role of expert citizens with lived experience of the services provided by statutory and voluntary organisations is considered essential to their improvement. This should impact on strategy, commissioning and service delivery.

Corporate Objective 6: Valuing our People

This means: Investing in the organisational capacity brought by effective leadership and management of a skilled, motivated and resilient workforce. The essence of support is an encounter between people, one of whom needs help to navigate an event or situation. Framework staff are known for the commitment, dedication and passion imbued in their work. Financial constraints diminishes the reward for these qualities. We plan a 10% increase in the real value of pay with accompanying, cost-effective non-salary measures. These include training and development programmes to equip Framework's managers and staff with the attributes they need to plan and provide personalised, joined-up and psychologically informed services.

We will:

- Improve pay and non-pay rewards to support the recruitment and retention of high quality staff, relief workers and volunteers
- Offer recognition, career development, supervision and training opportunities in an emerging culture of innovation, devolved authority and accountability
- Develop the business acumen, information technology, data collection, analysis and negotiation skills that will equip our workforce to respond to these changes
- Facilitate remote working, flexible hours, holiday purchase and other work/ life balance initiatives within the constraints of efficient rota management
- Reduce absence through an appropriate combination of challenge, intervention, specialist support and reasonable adjustments
- Sustain, review and regularly update the Organisational Development Plan with an emphasis on empowerment, accountability and agile working to drive efficiency
- Promote an Action Plan of equality, diversity and inclusion events, activities and training overseen by the Diversity Leadership Group
- Maintain the 'Investor in People' Gold Standard and continue to enshrine its ethos in our people management strategies, utilising fully the programmes available through the Leadership Academy, Chartered Management Institute & Apprenticeship Levy.

Key Targets:

- Devolution of budget management, informed by monthly statements at service level
- An 8% reduction in the ratio of staff to service users, concomitant with a continuing shift towards community-based services over the life of the plan
- An increase in the proportion of black and brown staff among (Service, Operations and Senior) Managers to at least 10% over the life of the plan

Related External Strategies and Programmes

Government has embraced the concept of a 'High Wage, High Skills' economy. The transition to it will be challenging for organisations like support & care providers whose offer is labour intensive. The prescribed response investment in technology to increase productivity and reduce the demand for low skilled labour, thus raising real incomes.

Framework needs to work through the application of this in settings where vulnerable service users need support and supervision, to achieve a new balance between remote and on-site presence in a variety of settings, supported by reliable systems of communication.

Key Targets Dashboard

The Key Targets for each Corporate Objective are set out below. This is the format we will use to monitor them and report on progress to the Board.

Corporate Objective	Key Targets
<p>1. Growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provision of at least 200 purpose-built housing units over the life of the plan, including core ‘hostel’ replacements, housing first and move-on flats ➤ Engagement with at least 19,200 individual service users in the year to March 2023, rising to 21,000 or more by 2026/27 ➤ A more comprehensive offer comprising elements of housing, health, support and employment across the whole of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire by March 2027 (the entirety of which would not necessarily be delivered by Framework)
<p>2. Standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Compliance with all four of the Regulator of Social Housing’s Consumer Standards as demonstrated by Annual Self-Assessments ➤ Compliance with the requirements of the Care Quality Commission, the Charity Commission, Health & Safety Executive, Information Commissioner, Fundraising Standards Board and OfSted as relevant to the service being delivered ➤ Successful delivery of a Consolidation Strategy to replace 80% of existing shared housing units with self-contained provision over the five-year life of this plan ➤ Purpose-built replacements for the existing properties at London Road, Fritchley Court and Trent Boulevard subject to the continuing need for them in commissioned services
<p>3. System Change and Joined-Up Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Active Participation in the Governance of at least two Integrated Care Systems (targeting those of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire) ➤ At least one piece of published research on the outcomes of System Change and another on the Future of Supported Housing ➤ Membership of at least one national Working/ Task & Finish Group (eg. NHF, Homeless Link, DLUHC, UKSHA etc.) in each of the five years covered by this Plan ➤ Evaluation of the Nottingham ‘Changing Futures’ Programme and dissemination of the learning from it
<p>4. Organisational Strength and Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A 3.0% Operating Margin, rising to 4.0% in 2025/26 & 2026/’27) and covenant compliance ➤ A further real-terms reduction of at least 5% in the unit cost of services (per user) ➤ All ongoing services covering their overheads and contributing to the margin ➤ Effective housing & asset management, ICT and service user record keeping systems

Corporate Objective	Key Targets
5. Service User Participation and Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An increase from two to four in the number of service user representatives who are trained to participate in governance (Board and Committee meetings) ➤ Reinvigoration of the Service User Advisory Group through a post-Covid resumption of in-person meetings promoted by ‘champions’ within staff teams ➤ Extension in the role of resident/ service user representatives in repairs monitoring to include the recruitment of Board members & senior staff, the design of new services, health & safety assurance and making the case for ‘System Change’
6. Valuing our People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Devolution of budget management, informed by monthly statements at service level ➤ An 8% reduction in the ratio of staff to service users, concomitant with a continuing shift towards community-based services over the life of the plan ➤ An increase in the proportion of black and brown staff among (Service, Operations and Senior) Managers to at least 10% over the life of the plan

Corporate and Annual Plans

This Corporate Plan covers the five years from April 2022 to March 2027. Towards the end of each year the Senior Leadership Team will prepare an Annual Plan for the coming year, informed by a review of the existing one. The review will track progress against the Corporate Objectives, including a report on the Key Targets listed above.

Accompanying Strategies and Plans

The Plan is accompanied by a number of strategies that are driven by it. These include the:

- Long-Term Financial Plan (updated at least annually and stress-tested)
- Asset Management and Development Strategy
- Value for Money Strategy and Treasury Strategy
- Fundraising Strategy
- Organisational Development and Agile Working Plan
- Equality and Diversity Action Plan
- Board and Committees Recruitment and Succession Plan

Role of the Board, Committees and Senior Leadership Team

Framework’s Board comprises up to twelve people (acting as individuals, not representatives) who are recruited to serve for up to six years. The Chair and Vice Chair are appointed by the Board. This Corporate Plan has been approved by the Board, which will monitor its delivery through the above mechanisms over the next five years. Elements of monitoring may be delegated to one of the Board’s Committees (the Audit & Risk Management Committee or the Governance, Remuneration & Appraisal Committee) or to the Senior Leadership Team.

Corporate Strategy

Our Corporate Strategy is to pursue each of the six Corporate Objectives equally. Their numerical listing is not a hierarchy, and all have a key role in the fulfilment of our Mission. The climate of continuing austerity poses a distinctive risk to each of them, but Framework will work with its partners to improve our shared responses to growing needs.

The selection of the six Objectives reflects some hard choices made by the Board. Within (if not between) them, further prioritisation may be necessary over the five-year period. At the heart of this challenge lies a fundamental question: How will we continue to meet the needs of those who come to us for help, whilst remaining viable and rewarding our staff better? There are several answers, not just one. Below are some components of the strategy we will follow to remain both effective and viable:

Housing

We house people who are homeless when other landlords can't or won't.

We will continue to invest in the quantity and quality of core, move-on and housing first stock, consolidating and re-configuring it to improve outcomes and reduce operating costs – in particular by replacing shared with self-contained provision.

Health

We offer specialist clinical services to people with all kinds of health issues, because physical and emotional wellbeing is fundamental to living a stable, independent, fulfilling life.

We will pursue the opportunities arising from NHS reorganisation (and the creation of Integrated Care Systems) to secure 'buy-in' and new funding from the health community.

Employment

Our employment services, including volunteering, build skills and employability, because people need financial stability, a sense of self-worth and control over their future.

Post-Covid we will respond to the growing labour shortage and expanded role of skills training by removing barriers and bringing more of our service users closer to the market.

Support and Care

Our support and care services add to the quality of life, nurturing confidence, building esteem and engaging people as part of a stronger community.

We will collect and present data to challenge the view that community-based support is a non-essential service, technologising the offer and making the case for its preventative role

Cross-Cutting Strategic Imperatives

Our Corporate Strategy has some essential cross-cutting imperatives. These include realistic tenders – bidding only for work that Framework can undertake safely, effectively & without compromising existing services, and making these parameters clear in the narrative.

Another imperative is to resist the waste of resources caused by 'gatekeeping' – barriers to entry imposed by commissioners that cause voids and other forms of under-utilisation.

This emphasis on efficiency will be mirrored by an internal focus on service transformation.

Service Viability and Transformation

For the past ten years, Framework has experienced real-terms reductions in the resourcing of its services. It has sought ways to absorb these whilst maintaining the service infrastructure and building on it if possible. This approach has relied on an environment in which the value of salary and rewards could be held down. The Board and Senior Leadership Team have concluded that this is no longer sustainable so service transformation is needed.

The process of Service Transformation will involve a review of the purpose, role and delivery model for each service. For this purpose a service will be defined either as the work done under a single contract (eg. Brighter Futures, Anvil House or the Nottingham Mental Health Pathway) or a geographical sub-division of a contract (eg. Transitions South, Elizabeth House or Boston Homelessness Pathway). The review will take account of the context in which the service is operating (including the contractual and referral arrangements) and the opportunities to develop it, in particular by reducing its labour-intensiveness.

In each case the question to be asked is how the service might retain its purpose and effectiveness and keeping staff and users safe, whilst becoming more efficient in terms of both staffing levels and overhead costs. The answers won't always be the same – even where two services have a similar delivery model, their contexts imply different service user profiles and outcomes. A key principle is the involvement of Service Managers and their staff teams in reviewing their delivery model and 'owning' a Transformation Plan.

For this reason there is no 'one size fits all' blueprint to be imposed by leaders from the centre. There may common elements – for instance the Transformation Plan could involve changes to shift patterns, to staffing levels on particular days or at certain times, overnight (including back up) arrangements, the span of control, referral processes, the management of voids & bad debts, the protocols for service charge collection and the role of technology.

Given that the scope to create financial 'headroom' will differ from service to service there will be no direct relationship between the scale of the transformational efficiencies achieved in a service and the salaries paid to its staff. We are targeting a standard enhancement of 10% (over and above inflation), ultimately payable to all staff in accommodation-based services. To preserve fairness and comparability between the work being done and the reward for it, this would become payable from the implementation of an agreed Service Transformation Plan, when the responsibilities attached to each role would change. This would happen on a service-by-service basis.

Managers (whose salaries would also rise, albeit to a lesser extent) would be accountable for the delivery of the plan, including its targets for control of expenditure, voids/ bad debts and the collection of service charges. Staff of community (ie. non accommodation-based) services will also be able to participate in the transformation agenda with the potential to earn more, but with different parameters and targets.

This is an ambitious project to be conducted over the next two years and led by the Operations Director with support from the Chief Executive. It addresses the question of sustainability in an environment where costs (of both labour and supplies) are rising faster than income.

Organisational Transformation – A Five Year Overview

The Service Transformation Project described above forms part of a wider plan to transform the systems, structures, efficiency and outcomes of the organisation itself. The key milestones include:

Year One (April 2022 to March 2023)

- ❖ Plan and Pilot new Service Staffing Structures with higher pay and fewer staff
- ❖ Re-procure contracts for staff mobile phone and data services

Year Two (April 2023 to March 2024)

- ❖ Implement systems to increase the collection rate of HB-ineligible Service Charges
- ❖ Complete the roll-out of new Staffing Structures

Year Three (April 2024 to March 2025)

- ❖ Replace 30% of existing spend on re-let provisions with donated goods
- ❖ Expand the social work training offer to include NHS students

Year Four (April 2025 to March 2026)

- ❖ Embed systems and processes to reduce the level of sickness absence
- ❖ Replace 20% of existing spend on food with donations

Year Five (April 2026 to March 2027)

- ❖ Establish 'real-time' video communication and rapid staff transit between services
- ❖ Complete the consolidation of cluster and move-on accommodation units

These transformational changes are the key to connecting the triangle of more effective services, better pay and higher margins. Work on many of these has already begun so the proposed dates are for completion not initiation.

Leadership and Management

Transformation will require determined leadership and careful management. The Board and Senior Leadership Team acknowledge that whilst Framework is a specialist housing association whose purpose is charitable, every key decision has a business dimension.

Increasingly this understanding of 'Framework as business' forms part of the middle management remit. Operations and Service Managers have day to day contact with the commissioners and stakeholders whose priorities affect services at local level. Negotiations around contract values, referral criteria, move-on strategies, service enhancements and partnership arrangements all have an impact on their performance. Managers have shown commitment, flexibility and skill in responding to the challenges brought by Covid-19. A priority now is to enhance their business acumen and with it the capacity to share ownership of Framework's future as a resilient and trusted provider.

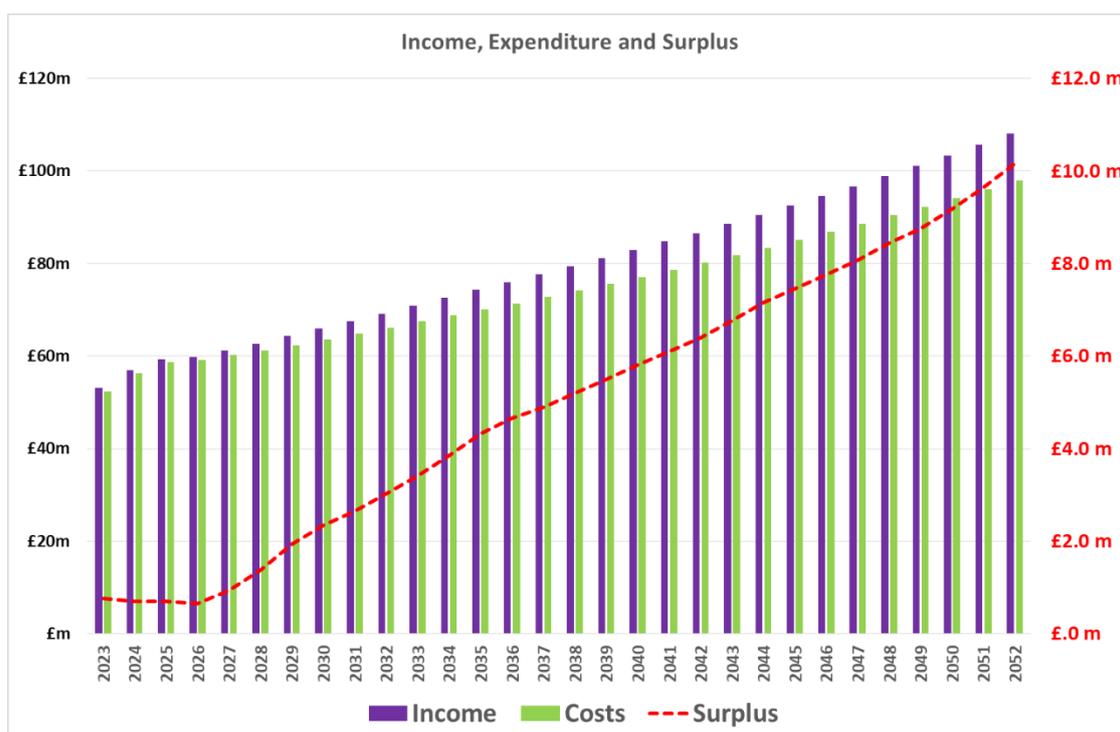
We will continue to invest in the training and development that leaders and managers need to fulfil their changing roles in a complex and demanding business environment.

Financial Projections and Strategy

The figures below are extracted from the Long-Term Financial Plan approved by the Board in March 2022. This has been prepared to accompany the Corporate Plan. Its starting point is a projection of the financial position at the end of the current (2021/'22) financial year. The precise out-turn figures will be substituted in a further update of the LTFP in June 2022.

	Income (£m)	Expenditure (£m)	Surplus (£m)	End-Yr Cash (£m)
2021/'22 (forecast)	50.337	49.200	1.137	7.15
2022/'23 (year 1)	53.153	52.390	0.763	5.85
2023/'24 (year 2)	56.927	56.234	0.693	5.24
2024/'25 (year 3)	59.314	58.614	0.700	4.50
2025/'26 (year 4)	59.768	59.109	0.659	4.50
2026/'27 (year 5)	61.137	60.198	0.939	6.94
Year 10	69.191	66.165	3.026	16.80
Year 20	86.602	80.198	6.404	62.20
Year 30	108.065	97.986	10.169	149.80

A more detailed long-term projection appears in the graph below. The Operating Margin (surplus) does not reach 3% until 2028/'29, followed by the 4% target in 2021/'32.



Analysis of the Projections

This Corporate Plan has detailed Objectives and Targets for the first five years of the Long-Term Financial Plan. The pattern of tight margins in this period is neither unusual, nor markedly different from previous plans. As before the numbers are affected by contract value stagnation, now exacerbated by upward pressure on salary and overheads together with the requirements of asset management, building safety and carbon reduction. Other factors include the London Road and Fritchley Court Replacement Projects (both of which will necessitate borrowing and incur interest costs without generating additional revenue).

The inflation of both income and expenditure overrides these effects in the medium term – hence the healthy surplus and cash balances from 2030 onwards. The balance of outstanding loans peaks at £15.83 million in 2025 and falls to zero by 2043. Net assets rise from £26.8 million to £175.4 million over the life of the plan, and covenant compliance is maintained throughout.

Whilst the LTFP demonstrates Financial Viability over time, the tightness of our Operating Margins in the near term leaves Framework exposed to greater financial risks than the Board would wish to see. The rationale for our target of a 3.0% margin (ideally rising to 4.0% by Years 4 and 5) is scope it would provide to innovate whilst managing the risks. The Senior Leadership Team will work towards financial out-turns that exceed those projected in the LTFP. Organisational transformation will be accompanied by a robust approach to procurement, tender responses and dialogue with commissioners – the purpose of which is to ensure that each services makes an acceptable contribution to central costs and surplus.

Fundraising Strategy

A further plank of the Financial Strategy is an enhanced approach to fundraising. A Feasibility Study carried out in 2020 concluded that scope exists to increase the amount raised from Trusts, Corporate Donors and Individuals – potentially by as much as £1.5 million per annum. The financial plan provides for investment in capacity that will enable the team to explore new avenues (including Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Media, Crowd Funding and Legacies) and the income projections, whilst cautious when set against the ambition of the study, assume a reasonable return on this.

Fundraising has limited potential to meet ongoing resource gaps but it can support investment, fund pilots and sustain services through transition periods. It can also make the difference between inadequate commissioned specifications and what is really needed as part of an integrated system. These roles will be embedded in a new Fundraising Strategy that is in development to implement the findings of the Feasibility Study.

Value for Money Strategy and Metrics

For Framework, Value for Money means that we operate efficiently and effectively, maximising our offer to current and future service users within the available resources. Our VfM strategy, complying with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) 'Value for Money' Standard, will support all of the Corporate Objectives.

To achieve this the Board has adopted a Strategy which sets out our VfM targets, and these will be extended to cover the life of this Plan. The Strategy describes the actions we will take to achieve these targets. It proposes to benchmark our performance in the delivery of housing services against a relevant peer group using the standard RSH VfM metrics.

The Strategy also shows how we will take account of our non-housing activities in monitoring VfM performance. The Board has agreed on the following additional metrics to be reported in the financial statements:

1. The annual Cost per Service User in each of the four pillars (*)
(Housing, Health, Employment, Support & Care)
2. The Cost per Hour of Support delivered in each of the four pillars (*)
3. The Ratio of central costs to total costs across the organisation

(*) the cost figures in these calculations include apportioned central costs.

The Prospect of Merger

Among housing associations, and to a lesser extent in the wider charitable sector, mergers are seen as a route to enhance Value for Money – for instance by spreading central and back office costs. Framework's Board has a settled position on mergers. It will support one *in principle* if (and only if) it is in the best interests of our service users.

This raises the question of how the impact on service users can be assessed in the specific circumstances that may arise. Nonetheless this clear principle is essential to guide and constrain any initial discussions or proposals. It will be used to determine whether these progress further, in which case we would approach them with cautious enthusiasm. If there is good reason to believe that it would be possible to serve more people more effectively and with better outcomes as a consequence of merging, the Board would adopt a positive position whilst seeking assurance regarding any pitfalls and taking appropriate specialist advice.

Governance

Framework's Board comprises up to twelve people (serving as individuals, not representatives) who are recruited to serve for up to six years. The Chair and Vice Chair are appointed by the Board, as are the Chairs of the two Board Committees which are:

- Audit and Risk Management (ARM) Committee
- Governance, Remuneration and Appraisal (GRA) Committee

The Board has adopted the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Governance 2020.

The Federation states that it has:

‘Recently revitalised its Code of Governance to reflect the changing values and pressures facing the housing sector today. The Code.....has a new focus on equality, diversity, environmentalism, sustainability and inclusion in governance to keep it relevant’.

The Board receives assurance on its compliance with the updated Code through an annual self-appraisal. This and other processes (including an Inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing) have catalysed the modernisation of Framework’s governance in the past few years. These culminated in the upgrading to G1 (the highest) grading for Governance by the RSH. A further step is the creation of a Succession Plan to manage the transition to a new six-year limit on the maximum term that a Board Member would ordinarily serve. Exceptions to this, for reasons of good governance, are permitted on a ‘comply or explain’ basis and the plan will clarify how these might be considered and determined.

Framework has a full suite of around 80 policies and procedures which regulate and guide the diverse range of services that it provides. A number of these (designated as ‘Key Control Policies’) can only be approved or updated by the Board. The KCPs are as follows:

- * Anti-Fraud Policy
- * Code of Conduct
- * Data Protection Policy
- * Equality and Diversity Policy
- * Financial Regulations
- * Safety & Health (SHEQ) Policy
- * Safeguarding Adults Policy
- * Whistleblowing Policy
- * Child Safeguarding Policy
- * Complaints Policy
- * Disciplinary Policy
- * Treasury Management Policy
- * Governance in Action (Governance Policy)
- * Risk Management Policy
- * Senior Pay Policy (delegated to the GRA Committee)
- * Service User Participation and Empowerment Policy

All the above will continued to be reviewed and updated at least every three years.

Risk Identification and Management

In January 2021 the Board approved a new Safety, Health, Environment and Quality (SHEQ) Policy. This formalised a number of enhancements in Framework’s approach to the identification and management of risk. These included a stronger linkage between the Risk Appetite Statement and Risk Register, a monthly review of the Risk Register that is reported to the Board, and scrutiny of controls by the Audit and Risk Management Committee with an option to refer to the Board any matters of high or emerging concern. The ARM Committee is considering further enhancements to the process.

Conclusion

Framework remains an organisation whose purpose is to create circumstances in which it would no longer be needed. This is a long-term vision, beyond the time horizon of this Corporate Plan. For this five year period Framework has articulated a clear Mission, driving six new Corporate Objectives with accompanying Actions and Targets. To deliver these in a challenging environment we plan to strengthen the resilience of the organisation and the capacity of its leaders, to transform the offer and its outcomes for those we serve.