

# HYELM – VALUE FOR MONEY

## Value for Money Statement 2020

### Introduction – The Value for Money Standard 2018

The 2018 Value for Money Standard published in April 2018 requires that Registered Providers must:

- Clearly articulate their strategic objectives.
- Have an approach agreed by their board to achieving value for money in meeting these objectives and demonstrate their delivery of value for money to stakeholders.
- Through their strategic objectives, articulate their strategy for delivering homes that meet a range of needs.
- Ensure that optimal benefit is derived from resources and assets and optimise economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of their strategic objectives.

The Standard requires that that Registered Providers must demonstrate:

- A robust approach to achieving value for money – this must include a robust approach to decision making and a rigorous appraisal of potential options for improving performance.
- Regular and appropriate consideration by the board of potential value for money gains – this must include full consideration of costs and benefits of alternative commercial, organisational and delivery structures.
- Consideration of value for money across their whole business and where they invest in non-social housing activity, they should consider whether this generates returns commensurate to the risk involved and justification where this is not the case.
- That they have appropriate targets in place for measuring performance in achieving value for money in delivering their strategic objectives, and that they regularly monitor and report their performance against these targets.

It is also a requirement that Registered Providers must annually publish evidence in the statutory accounts to enable stakeholders to understand the provider's:

- Performance against its own value for money targets and any metrics set out by the Regulator, and how that performance compares to peers.
- Measurable plans to address any areas of underperformance, including clearly stating any areas where improvements would not be appropriate and the rationale for this.

The Hyelm Group is committed to finding ways to provide excellent services whilst at the same time seeking to reduce costs and improve efficiency. To ensure that we can measure efficiency gains and to provide meaningful comparisons with other organisations providing similar services, the Board has adopted the 2018 Value for Money Standard for Registered Providers of Social Housing.

### How We Deliver Value for Money

Although The Hyelm Group does not provide social housing – the Old Street development provides a mix of accommodation for intermediate rent and private rented accommodation for young people on low incomes - the Value for Money standard provides a framework for measuring performance in a consistent manner.

Achieving Value for Money (VfM) is a fundamental element of our objective to become a top quartile performing organisation.

We see VfM as the process of delivering savings and improving quality by simplifying everything that we do and by achieving a balance between costs, quality and results.

This statement outlines our approach to achieving VfM in meeting our objectives with reference to our financial, social and environmental returns, and measures performance using the metrics included within the 2018 Value for Money Standard.

Value for Money is embedded within our business in the following ways:

#### Governance

Board members' duties include reviewing the efficiency of our operations and our Value for Money performance as well as ensuring compliance with the regulatory Value for Money standard.

The Board discusses our Value for Money Policy and Statement at least annually and reviews the operational and financial performance of the business quarterly.

#### Financial Management

We operate a robust budgeting process that sets out the financial parameters within which our organisation is required to work to deliver improvements in the services that we provide to our residents and others who work with us.

The business planning process helps to ensure that our resources and assets are used in the most appropriate ways to deliver our objectives.

Our budget and business plan targets are structured to ensure that effective use is made of our resources each year to strengthen our capacity to develop new homes and enhance our services.

#### Procurement

We continuously seek to obtain Value for Money from our suppliers and look to rationalise contracts and re-tender when necessary to ensure that the services that we receive from them meet and deliver our business objectives.

Where appropriate, we undertake an options appraisal process to ensure that there is a robust business case for investment/divestment decisions and that returns are optimised.

#### Managing Performance

We continually review our performance and benchmark ourselves against our peer groups. A key objective of our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan is to achieve top quartile performance for financial strength and quality of services. The Board reviews performance information on a regular basis.

We have set ourselves the challenge of benchmarking our performance against that of other organisations that provide similar services within the social housing sector and not for profit housing sectors.

Comparative analysis is based on information provided by HouseMark, the BM320 benchmarking group of smaller housing associations in London, Homes England (such as the 2019 Global Accounts of Housing Providers) and other publicly available information.

## Resident Focus

Improving resident engagement and obtaining regular feedback in relation to our services are key objectives for the life of our Strategic Plan 2019-22.

Following the sale of Arthur West House in 2014 the Resident Panel become less engaged. During 2019/20 we have worked with residents at our Old Street scheme with the aim of engaging them in the management of the scheme.

## Our People

Our staff are critical to the organisation for the delivery of services to our residents. Providing training and support to our staff is essential to ensure that we maximise their capability. Salary and benefits packages are reviewed every three years. The review includes a benchmarking exercise to ensure that the salaries and benefits that staff receive are comparable with our peer group. The last review was completed in 2020.

In 2020 as part of our 2019-2022 strategy we reviewed our staffing structure to ensure that the right number of appropriately skilled staff will be in place to manage a growing organisation. The structure will be further reviewed in anticipation of our new housing development opening in 2023.

## Our Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan for 2019-2022 focuses on three key activities:

### 1. Our development programme

- Part funded by the sale proceeds of our Hampstead property, we will further develop and expand our accommodation, services and facilities to help meet increasing demand and changing needs.
- More specifically, we will
  - Develop and provide high standards of affordable rented accommodation, facilities and services for a further 156 young people on a site that we acquired during 2018 in the vibrant and emerging regeneration area of Colindale, North London.
  - Research, adopt and begin to implement strategies for future growth and for the development of additional accommodation during and beyond the delivery of our Colindale scheme.

### 2. Our existing operation

- Throughout the delivery of our development programme we will continue to manage our existing operation in an efficient and effective manner.
- More specifically we will:
  - continue to provide high standards of contemporary affordable rented accommodation facilities and services at our Old Street scheme that reflect the needs and expectation of these whom we set out to house.
  - Continue to be a financially sound organisation with efficient systems providing effective controls that reflect our requirements. Maximising value will continue to underpin our work.
  - Use new technologies, IT and modern methods of communication to the optimum and cost-effective extent in our operation and in the delivery of our offer in a way that best meets the needs of young people.
  - Secure suitable funding as needed to fund our strategic objectives.
  - Offer a great place to work, attracting and retaining the most talented staff and Board members.

### 3. Our communities and people

- We will promote positive stable safe environments in our housing schemes, ensuring that the sense of place and family and the supportive communities that we promote, which are so fundamental to what we do, are kept as we move from old to new.
- More specifically we will:
  - Involve our residents closely in drawing up our plans and managing our affairs
  - Work with local community groups, training providers and employers to provide opportunities to enable young people to grow through further personal training and development
  - Develop strong and productive partnerships with a range of key strategic partners to ensure that we help those who are in greatest need.
  - Deliver a programme of social and learning events and community development activities, making best use of our communal facilities as well as those within the local areas in which we operate, engaging our residents with the wider community.
  - Work with each young person during their stay to help them move on when they are ready.
  - Actively encourage our residents to contribute to our communities and our organisation in a positive way once they have left our accommodation.

During the year we have made substantial progress in achieving the objectives set out in our Strategic plan.

## Progress against the objectives within the Strategic Plan

### Our development programme

Regarding our **development programme**, we adopted a strategy in 2013/14 to dispose of one of our existing properties, Arthur West House, with a view of using its capital receipt to develop and manage a further 250 bed-spaces of modern accommodation within Greater London by 2019. The provision of new accommodation is a key objective of the 2019-22 strategy adopted by the Board.

The property, sold on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014, generated a receipt of £30.05 million, some £6 million above the maximum forecast sale price. The sale proceeds were apportioned between HYELM and The Ames House Trust, which had a leasehold interest in Arthur West House. The amount received by HYELM amounted to £24,115,125, with the balance of £5,934,875 being received by The Ames House Trust.

As we develop our plans for the development programme, a key focus will be ensuring that we deliver a value for money solution and maximise the return on our investment. Whilst the Board recognises that the provision of low cost, but affordable accommodation will not generate a 'market return', a number of financial targets have been agreed, which must be achieved before any scheme proceeds ensuring that the scheme is profitable, and the value of the investment is maintained.

In September 2018, we purchased a development site in north London for the provision of 156 bed spaces – good progress towards our target of 250 bed spaces. The development will be funded from a combination of: HYELM's cash resources; the funds from the sale of a number of affordable homes for rent or for shared ownerships to another Registered Provider; and loan finance.

We have agreed a fixed price contract for the delivery of the scheme with Arthur West House Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary, which will minimise the risk of overspend and which will be VAT efficient through an HMRC approved scheme allowing for the recovery of VAT estimated to be approximately £270,000.

By making use of an existing procurement framework we have been able to procure professional services without a lengthy and expensive EU procurement exercise.

Planning approval for the development was granted on the 4 November 2019. The build contract is expected to commence early in 2021 with practical completion being achieved in Spring 2023.

### Our ongoing operations

Our Old Street scheme is now twelve years old. It was built to comply with, the then, Eco Homes standards and achieved a Very Good rating in this regard.

During the course of the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22, we will be carrying out major works at our Old Street scheme to remedy fire safety issues that were identified following investigations carried out following the Grenfell tragedy in June 2017. In addition to fire safety issues, a number of additional defects were identified dating back to the construction of the building, and these defects will be remedied concurrently with the fire safety issues. We are seeking to recover the costs associated with the works, together with any loss of rent income, from our insurers and the original contractor.

To ensure best value for money, competitive tenders were sought, and value tested. The works will be undertaken over a two-year period to minimise disruption to our residents and the loss of rent income.

Following the completion of the remedial works our forward plans for our Old Street scheme include provision for the regular maintenance and refurbishment of the property to ensure that it continues to provide high standards of affordable accommodation that meet the expectation of our residents.

To ensure that we achieve best value for money from the goods and services that we procure, Standing Orders are in place that require competitive quotations to be sought for low value goods, and for formal tendering procedures to be enacted for more valuable services.

During the year to 30 September 2020 the following goods and services were tendered:

- Gas and electricity supplies;
- IT support;
- Insurance cover;
- Resident satisfaction surveys; and
- Launderette facilities.

Where possible, we make use of procurement exercises that have been undertaken by other organisations to ensure that best value has been obtained.

Old Street provides accommodation for young people at the beginning of their careers ensuring that they are accommodated in low cost, quality accommodation in a secure environment. Of the units available 74 bed-spaces provide intermediate rent accommodation for priority group workers. The remaining 51 bed spaces are provided for non-priority group workers. The Hyelm Group endeavours to provide rented accommodation to tenants which provides value for money when compared with rent charged for comparable properties. To ensure that the rent represents good value for money, the Board has approved a policy of linking all rents to the level deemed affordable for single people in receipt of the London Living Wage.

The Low Cost but Affordable rent included within the London Living Wage calculation is based on the first quartile of rents for accommodation, which for single people includes rooms, shared rooms, bedsits and maisonettes. Rent for non-priority groups is at this level, which is 32% less than equivalent private rented accommodation at the first quartile for the N1 postcode. The intermediate rent for accommodation at Old Street is currently at a discount of 40% to the first quartile. The Board policy will result in all new lets being at the LCA rent, which will result in additional rent income being generated yet maintaining rents for all residents at an affordable level.

Over the last four years we have been examining ways of maximising the ‘return’ from this the Old Street property whilst maintaining rents at levels that are affordable for our client groups. The focus of this has been in relation to our communal spaces, which were underutilised.

As a result of the review, accommodation within the management suite was rented to a third party for a period of four years from June 2017. Planning permission was obtained to create further office space on the ground floor of the Old Street property which has created commercial office accommodation. As part of the development we have also been able provide a more friendly and relaxing communal space for our residents.

The efficient management of staff and improved systems has enabled us to manage the commercial space with no addition staff requirements.

The supply of electricity, gas and insurances are retendered annually to ensure best value is obtained, for both HYELM and our residents . Savings generated as a result of our VfM approach are passed on to our residents through lower service charges.

The Government is currently consulting on the Future Homes Standard. Implementation of the Standard will be designed to improve energy efficiency within buildings to help to reduce energy consumption and therefore provide VfM for our residents by reducing their energy service charges costs. Once it comes into force we will produce and action plan to achieve compliance with the new regulation as well as look into ways in which we can incorporate wider environmental and sustainability initiatives.

### Our communities and people

As part of our strategy in relation to **Our communities and people** the revisions to our staffing structure and job profiles has enabled us to:

- Deliver business as usual;
- Provide support for our two major projects (Development in Colindale and Fire Defect work);
- Effectively manage organisational risks;
- Manage building safety in line with Hackett review recommendations.

The revised staffing structure will also deliver annual savings of over £8,000.

The table below shows resident satisfaction with the services provided during the financial year 2019/20 and the preceding two years.

Resident Satisfaction	Benchmark: Peer group upper quartile	Benchmark: London group upper quartile	Benchmark: HouseMark upper quartile	Hyelm		
				2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
% of residents satisfied or very satisfied with our services	93%	89%	86%	90%	93%	70%
% of residents satisfied or very satisfied with repairs and maintenance	90%	88%	81%	90%	95%	46%
% of residents satisfied or very satisfied on Value For Money for rent	91%	90%	88%	93%	90%	54%

Resident satisfaction has dropped significantly during the year. The main reason for this is the current fire defect safety work that is being completed around the building. It has caused some

disruption and noise nuisance to residents, a number of whom are spending more time at home due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The impact of the pandemic has also delayed a number of non-critical maintenance and refurbishment projects including the replacement of the intercom system.

We expect satisfaction in our maintenance and refurbishment programme to return to normal satisfaction levels by the summer as the impact of Covid-19 eases but we do expect overall satisfaction due to the impact of the fire defect safety work to be impacted until the completion of the work in 2 years. Over this period we will work with residents to try and address any individual concerns.

The need to carry out remedial works to the Old Street scheme has resulted in a number of apartments being closed to undertake the necessary works. There have been challenges in re-letting apartments due to the Covid pandemic. However, we quickly moved to a virtual viewing system and occupancy of those apartments available to rent therefore remains high. Arrears are managed proactively with residents to ensure minimal losses occur. Demand for the accommodation available remains high with short re-let times.

<b>Other Measures</b>	<b>Benchmark: Peer group upper quartile</b>	<b>HYELM 2017/17</b>	<b>HYELM 2018/19</b>	<b>HYELM 2019/20</b>
% of repairs fixed on first visit	94.0%	95%	72%	86%
Average re-let time (days)	17.8	5.4	10.5	42.9
Current rent arrears	2.8%	0.2%	0.0%	1.7%
% of void losses	0.41%	1.18%	4.30%	9.85%

We have taken comfort from historically low levels of void loss and arrears, which compare very favourably with those within the sector. The increase in voids during 2019/20 is a result of the need to provide vacant accommodation for contractors to carry out the fire safety works referred to above and the impact of the Covid pandemic on occupancy levels.

### Finance

The accounts for the year ending 30 September 2020 have been prepared in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (UK GAAP) including Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) and the Housing SORP 2014: Statement of Recommended Practice for Registered Social Housing Providers.

Following the sale of Arthur West House in October 2018, HYELM only provides accommodation at its Old Street property. This is a mix of private rented accommodation and grant supported intermediate rent accommodation that is tenanted by priority group workers.

Following the disposal of the Arthur West House site, management costs per unit increased as central costs previously allocated to the property have been retained but are supporting the development programme, which will provide new accommodation on a number of sites.

## **Reporting against the 2018 Value for Money Standard**

The Hyelm Group has adopted the reporting requirements of the 2018 Value for Money Standard.

### Metric 1 – Reinvestment

	<b>2016/17 (restated)</b>	<b>2017/18 (restated)</b>	<b>2018/19 actual</b>	<b>2019/20 actual</b>
<b>Reinvestment %</b>	1.46%	41.48%	3.48%	0.9%

Following the sale of the Hampstead property, HYELM has only the Old Street scheme in operation. The significant increase in investment in 2017/18 relates to the purchase of the Colindale site as part of our development programme. Delays in gaining planning approval for the scheme resulted in delays to the building programme, thus investment was less than planned for 2018/19 and 2019/20. Now that planning approval has been granted the scheme can now proceed and we will see greater investment in the site in future years.

### Metric 2 – Supply

Unlike many large Registered Providers, HYELM does not have an annual development programme. Our investment in property relates to a specific scheme and therefore the supply metric is not a relevant measure of performance.

### Metric 3 – Gearing

	<b>2017/18 actual</b>	<b>2018/19 actual</b>	<b>2019/20 actual</b>
<b>Gearing</b>	-53.06%	-48.22%	-46.54%

HYELM currently has one loan from Allied Irish Bank. Our investment in the new development in Colindale is funded mainly by HYELM's cash reserves, thus as the value of housing properties increase as the development progresses gearing will decrease. On completion of our new development HYELM will have additional capacity for borrowing to support the development of additional accommodation and complete our strategic objective of providing further accommodation.

### Metric 4 – Earnings before Interest Tax Depreciation and Amortisation – Major Repairs Included

The EBITDA MRI (Earnings before Interest Tax Depreciation and Amortisation – Major Repairs Included) interest cover measure is a key indicator for liquidity and investment capacity. It seeks to measure the level of surplus that a registered provider generates against interest payments (the measure avoids any distortions stemming from the depreciation charge). The need to provide vacant accommodation for the fire safety and remedial works, has led to a reduction in rent income, which coupled with higher management cost and the impact of the Covid pandemic has led to a decrease in the interest cover compared to previous years. Rent income will remain low during the two-year programme of works relating to fire safety, management costs but interest cover will increase when these works are completed and the Colindale project is completed.

	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19 actual</b>	<b>2019/20 actual</b>
<b>EBITDA MRI</b>	134.87%	139.54%	130.88%	112.48%

### EBITDA to Debt Service Cost

Our facility agreement with AIB requires HYELM to achieve a ratio of EBITDA to Debt Service Costs of a minimum of 1:1. The ratio measures our ability to fund the repayment of capital and interest payable on the outstanding loan from current income generated by HYELM.

During the years to 30 September 2020 this ratio has not been achieved as shown in the table below. As with EBITDA MRI above, reduced rent income and the impact of the Covid pandemic in 2019/20 led to reduction in interest cover reducing the indicator marginally below the level required by the facility agreement. The ratio will remain below the required level in 2020/21 and we are in discussion with AIB to determine what action is needed as of consequence of this breach.

	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19 actual</b>	<b>2019/20 actual</b>
<b>EBITDA - AIB</b>	1:1.59	1:1.61	1:1.56	1:0.96

### Metric 5 – Headline residential housing cost per unit

The unit cost metric assesses the headline social housing cost per unit as defined by the Regulator. Although The Group is not a provider of social housing, the social housing cost per unit is the benchmark against which HYELM chooses to measure performance.

	<b>2016/17 (restated)</b>	<b>2017/18 (restated)</b>	<b>2018/19 actual</b>	<b>2019/20 actual</b>
Costs overall	£5,768	£5,966	6,824	7,271
per week	£110.53	£114.33	£130.77	£139.44

The increase in cost from 2018/19 to 2019/20 reflects the increased expenditure associated with the Covid pandemic

### Metric 6 – Operating Margin

The Operating Margin demonstrates the profitability of operating assets before exceptional expenses are taken into account. Increasing margins are one way to improve the financial efficiency of a business. The table below shows the operating margin for HYELM as a whole. In addition to increased costs during the year in relation to the Covid pandemic, the preparatory works for the new development at Colindale have had an impact on the operating margin for the year.

	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19 actual</b>	<b>2019/20 actual</b>
<b>Operating Margin</b>				
Overall	10.84%	16.28%	9.01%	-0.69%

### Metric 7 – Return on Capital Employed (ROCE)

This metric compares operating surplus to total assets less current liabilities and is a measure to assess the efficient investment of capital resources. The results show that historically Hyelm has improved the return on capital, but the impact of higher costs and reduced rent in 2019/20 has seen the rate of return continue to fall.

	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19 actual</b>	<b>2019/20 actual</b>
<b>ROCE</b>				
	0.29%	0.49%	0.30%	-0.02%

### **Value for Money for 2020/21**

HYELM is in a period of transition and the Value for Money metrics will reflect this until the new development at Colindale and the fire safety works at the Old Street building are completed. During this period the Value for money metrics will be measured against budgets and business plans and future reports will reflect this approach. When the Colindale development is complete and the remedial works at Old Street are finished, it is our aim to be in the top quartile for both financial and operational performance, and to see our performance improve each year.

We will be undertaking further work over the next year to support our aim of improving value for money for our existing residents by:

- Re-tender for the supply of electricity, gas, insurances and our cleaning contract.
- Review the elements that make up the service charges that our residents pay to ensure that they remain as affordable as possible for those whom we set out to house.
- Implement a new housing management system.