

Transforming lives together



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-23

September 2020

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About us

Advance Housing and Support Limited is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and a Registered Housing Provider.

We provide housing and support services, specialising in supporting people with a disability and or mental health condition.

We offer a number of different types of services, including small-scale residential care homes, supported living services, shared ownership homes and community support services.

We operate across the Midlands, London, South East and South West of England.



Our vision

To transform the lives of people with a disability or mental health condition by providing the best quality housing and support services.

We want to enable our customers to live the lives they choose, achieve their personal goals, feel valued and know their voices are heard.



Adam is a member of the Advance Customer Partnership and Co-chair of the Advance Collective.

“Advance has helped build my confidence, regain my sense of purpose and given me hope for the future. It has enabled me to learn new skills and regain my confidence.”

The Customer Partnership is made up of elected customers, Advance Board members and Executive Directors.

It provides a forum to discuss strategic and nationally relevant topics.

The Collective (Co-Chaired by Adam with Tom) is a forum to gather customer views about our services and discuss issues that matter to customers. They report into the Customer Partnership.

Our values

Our PRIDE values are at the heart of everything we do and vital to achieving our Vision. They drive the decisions we make on a daily basis throughout the organisation. Our values are at the heart of our culture.

We use them when recruiting new people and in setting objectives for existing staff. We use them to recognise great performance through our PRIDE Awards.

Embedding and living our values help to create the right culture and drive performance that delivers great outcomes and services for our customers.



Partnership - we work in partnership with our customers and build relationships with others that help us serve our customers better



Respect - we treat our customers, colleagues and others as we would like to be treated



Innovation - we are keen to try new things - especially when we can make things better for our customers



Drive - we do the right thing at the right time and everything we do is driven by our customers' needs



Efficiency - we make best use of our resources, maximising efficiency, so we can deliver the best services for our customers

Welcome from the Chair and Chief Executive



Marie Li Mow Ching, Chair



Julie Layton, Chief Executive

We believe everyone with a disability or mental health condition should have access to high quality housing and support. Our strategy for 2020-23 is ambitious and has a clear focus on making sure we deliver quality services that have a positive and lasting impact on peoples' lives. At the heart of the strategy are the customers we support and our staff. Both groups were consulted about the strategy and have informed the direction and shape of our plans for the next three years.

The strategy focuses on three areas:

- Delivering the highest quality homes and services that make a difference to peoples' lives
- Growing our services so that more people get to benefit from them
- Being the best high-performing organisation we can be

The strategy builds on our progress over the last three years. We are proud of our high levels of staff and customer satisfaction and the energy we put into effectively engaging with both groups. We are proud of our values which shape and drive our decisions and create the 'can-do' culture which has a positive impact on the lives of others.

We are proud to have the highest rating from the Regulator of Social Housing and to have achieved 'Good' ratings for all our Care Quality Commission regulated services.

Our intention was to launch the strategy in April of this year. As this was at the height of the Coronavirus pandemic the Board took the view that it was sensible to delay publication until we had a clearer idea of the impact of the virus on our plans.

While COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the organisation and the operating environment, the Board does not feel it has changed our future strategic focus on Quality, Growth and High-Performance. These key objectives will enable us to achieve our vision.

However, the global pandemic has led to a review of our strategic targets. A large part of our operating plan for 2020/21 has been spent responding to the pandemic and capturing and embedding the learnings from it.

We do not yet know how COVID-19 will impact on our services in the longer term. We see many challenges and risks in the operating environment,

but we also see opportunities for an agile, well-led organisation with a positive reputation to grow and help more people.

As an organisation, over the coming three years we will continue to invest in our strategic leadership and maintain the highest standards of governance. We have strengthened our governance arrangements with the appointment of new Board members with the skills and expertise to ensure an effective Board with the capability to lead us into the future.

The fundamentals of what we do have not changed. Our vision and values remain true to who we are: they are what drive us to deliver high quality

housing and support that transforms lives.

We are incredibly proud to lead an organisation where staff have consistently gone above and beyond to ensure customers continue to be supported during the pandemic. We look forward to the future with optimism and we hope you enjoy reading our new strategy.

Julie Layton
Chief Executive

Marie Li Mow Ching
Chair

Julie with customers Chris (left) and Adam (right)



Executive summary

Our strategy for 2020-23 builds on the progress made over the last three years and the emerging learnings from the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic presented many challenges, but it also provided an opportunity to adapt and take decisive actions while remaining true to our organisational values and our focus on customer needs.

The priority throughout the pandemic was to keep people informed, reassured and safe, to protect customers, staff and business interests and ensure that safe, effective service delivery continued where possible. The Board focused on ensuring good governance and clear priorities throughout the pandemic, protecting the future viability of the organisation and minimising any damage to our core functions or services.

This focus ensured Advance was able to maintain its key services throughout the initial lockdown period, whilst complying with all Government guidance and protecting the safety of staff, customers and the general public. Following a phased approach the organisation then moved gradually from a lockdown state to a two phase service recovery, before achieving a steady state in the context of a new 'normal' operating environment.

This operating environment will continue to respond to the pandemic and is likely to present many challenges for the care and support sector. The long-term impact of the pandemic on Commissioner funding is not yet known. Government policy responses are emerging alongside other challenges such as Brexit. We will keep a close eye on developments impacting our sector, and seek to mitigate any risks as they emerge. We will therefore keep our strategy under review, and adapt it accordingly as we issue annual updates.

Over the next three years we will use the learnings from the pandemic and our skills and expertise to deliver more quality homes and personalised outcome-focused services. We want more people to benefit from our services. We will build on the learnings of lockdown and use technology and insights to deliver value for money, to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and to make best use of our resources. Our long-term value for money plan is reflected in this strategy.

Our past achievements have been made possible by highly committed and engaged staff against the backdrop of uncertain times and operating challenges. During lockdown staff demonstrated their commitment and dedication across the organisation – whether in frontline services or back office functions. We want to provide them with the support and tools to enable us to become a truly high-performing organisation. We will continue to recognise the contribution of staff and support them to realise their full potential. We will empower them to make greater contributions to our strategic objectives, and to continue to make a difference to our customers' lives.

Over the course of this strategy, we will continue to improve the management of our homes through a robust Asset Management Strategy. The safety and quality of our homes remains a key priority. We will implement the recommendations made in the Hackitt Review, and any further changes and learnings from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.

In light of the Government policy to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2050 we will continue to invest in reducing our environmental impact. We will lower carbon emissions and work with our customers to improve energy efficiency and water consumption. We all have a role to play either at work or at home in doing all we can to reduce our environmental impact.

The strategy for 2020-23 is based on three strategic objectives:

Our Vision

To transform the lives of people with a disability or mental health condition by providing the best quality housing, support and employment services - to enable them to live the lives they choose, achieve their personal goals, feel valued and know their voices are heard.

Together, we transform lives.

Quality Homes and Services

Sustainable Growth

High-Performing Organisation

This focus will assist us in improving the quality of our homes and services and in growing the business. The third strategic objective will support our quality and growth ambitions: through improving our financial strength, recruiting, retaining and developing the best people, investing in technology, being efficient and delivering value for money in all we do.

We want to maintain a healthy business in which risks are robustly managed and build strong foundations to underpin the delivery of quality services and growth of the organisation.

We have set ourselves clear targets, adapted to reflect the impact of coronavirus, that allow us to measure our success over the course of the strategy. These are underpinned by key performance indicators which are captured and reported on in our monthly balanced scorecard. The Executive Leadership Team and Board regularly review progress against both and agree any mitigating actions as required.

We will review our targets each year when we publish a Strategic Plan Update. This enables us to reflect changes in the external environment and ensure we continue to set ourselves challenging and ambitious targets which build on performance in the previous year.

Strategic objectives 2020-23

Quality Homes and Services

We will provide high quality homes and services that have a demonstrable and positive impact on customers' lives. We will invest in our properties to ensure they are comfortable homes that people want to live in. We will deliver outcome focused support services and endeavour to address the health inequalities our customers face. We will listen to our customers to understand their experience of our services and to drive improvements that matter to them.

Our primary responsibility is to ensure the safety of our customers. We will continue to invest in robust systems to ensure compliance with Health and Safety and regulatory requirements. We will take action to reduce the environmental impact of our homes and services and positively engage customers and stakeholders in our efforts. We will recruit and develop high-performing people to deliver values led quality services.

Over the next three years we will:

- Take action where we can to address the long-term health inequalities faced by our customers and exacerbated by coronavirus
- Invest in digital technology and platforms for staff and customers to increase digital engagement, as seen during lockdown, to continue to improve the overall customer experience
- Ensure our customers' voices are heard on issues that matter to them and support campaigns which impact on their lives.
- Ensure our homes are safe and compliant with statutory and regulatory obligations
- Ensure our homes are of a high quality through a robust Asset Management Strategy that underpins the delivery of maintenance and property improvements
- Maintain reliable and accurate stock data to ensure we understand our assets and use this data to effectively manage our asset portfolio
- Invest in improving the energy efficiency of new and existing homes and offices
- Deliver outcome focused services that truly improve the quality of customers' lives
- Achieve and exceed Regulator/Commissioner standards while exploring new models of support
- Continue to improve our services based on customer involvement and engagement
- Recruit/develop people with the skills, values and behaviours to deliver high quality services

We will measure our success against these targets:

Targets by 31 March 2023

1. 100% compliance with Landlord Health & Safety requirements
2. 90% of customers satisfied with the quality of their housing
3. 90% of property repairs completed 'right first time'
4. Repeat property repairs <3%
5. Achieve a reinvestment percentage >6% per annum
6. Achieve an average SAP rating of 69 or above for our homes
7. 90% of customers satisfied with the quality of support they receive
8. Minimum 'Good' rating in all Care Quality Commission inspections
9. 80% of Support customers with a Learning Disability access their Annual Health Check
10. 80% of staff feel supported to deliver the best quality service

Strategic objectives 2020-23

Sustainable Growth

We are an ambitious organisation and want to increase the number of people who benefit from our housing and support services. We will work with Commissioners to identify ways of developing and delivering new models of housing and support.

We are committed to increasing the number of people with disabilities that can access home ownership through our shared ownership scheme Home Ownership for People with Long-term Disabilities (HOLD). We recognise that social rented housing requires significant levels of subsidy and will continue to find ways to increase the number of homes we provide.

We will continue to increase our services for people with complex needs or challenging behaviour. We will seek opportunities to collaborate, partner or merge with others where it enables us to grow, and realise broader organisational benefit. We will focus on building expertise, investing in the skills and training required to deliver long-term growth.

Over the next three years we will:

- Grow our housing and support services in target areas across the country
- Grow the number of Shared Ownership properties made possible through HOLD, and explore ways of further expanding home ownership for our customer base
- Grow our Support business with a focus on areas where we already provide housing
- Proactively seek partnerships and possible merger, acquisition and collaboration opportunities to drive growth
- Work with other housing providers to deliver new services
- Increase the number of people who receive our complex needs services and expertise
- Work with Commissioners to understand their needs, and deliver organic and new business growth
- Ensure new property developments reduce our environmental impact and improve the overall energy efficiency of our homes
- Partner with the wider health and social care sector to research and develop new and innovative services

We will measure our success against these targets:

Targets by 31 March 2023

1. Deliver 204 new homes
2. Reduce the number of homes with a financial contribution <5% from 89 to 70
3. Increase Support income by 25%
4. Support contracts achieve a minimum 12% financial contribution to central overheads
5. Increase by 25% the number of people who receive both our housing and support
6. Increase by 25% the number of customers with high support needs

Strategic objectives 2020-23

High-Performing Organisation

We will maintain the long-term financial viability of the organisation, ensuring we continue to generate sufficient income to invest in our housing stock. We will maintain the highest level of regulatory and governance standards and meet our value for money commitments to secure efficient and effective services. We will benchmark our performance against the Regulators' metrics and our peers.

We will develop a high performance/high commitment culture by investing in our people and developing our leadership and management skills. We want to attract new talent at all levels of the organisation and meet the growing aspirations of a new generation in the workforce. We will promote flexible working and provide our workforce with systems and technology that deliver high quality services. We will innovate and invest in technology to drive change. We will capture high quality data and management information to inform decision making and drive sustainable growth.

Over the next three years we will:

- Invest in improving the long-term wellbeing of staff driven by the learnings from and the challenges presented by the coronavirus lockdown
- Review office accommodation in light of lockdown learnings and improve agile working systems to deliver further operational efficiencies and reduce our environmental impact
- Develop a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that makes diversity and inclusion a core theme of our talent management strategy
- Develop a pool of future talent and resourcing capabilities through robust and proactive workforce planning and recruitment
- Generate sufficient cash flow to meet the forecast needs and aspirations of the business
- Strengthen our financial viability and access funding to support growth
- Embed a value for money culture throughout the organisation
- Continue to improve our organisational governance and comply with all regulatory standards
- Develop robust technology and systems with high levels of security to focus on value added activity and remove inefficiencies
- Invest in business intelligence, and improve data quality and integrity to support decision making.

We will measure our success against these targets:

Targets by 31 March 2023

1. Achieve Operating Surplus targets
2. Achieve our annual Value for Money savings targets
3. Central overheads not to exceed 12% of income
4. Reduce void rent loss to <5%
5. Rent arrears <5%
6. 90% overall staff satisfaction
7. Voluntary staff turnover <15%
8. 80% of Support Workers qualified to NVQ level 2 or above
9. 90% of staff have access to the development and training they need to do their jobs effectively
10. 90% of system improvement projects are delivered to plan and achieve stated objectives

Objectives for Year 1 (2020/21)

In 20/21 we will:

Quality Homes and Services

1. Meet our Landlord Health & Safety commitments and further enhance home safety for our tenants in light of the coronavirus lockdown experience
2. Ensure our homes are high quality through a robust Asset Management Strategy
3. Invest in digital technology and platforms for staff and customers to increase digital engagement, as seen during lockdown, to continue to improve the overall customer experience
4. Deliver on our commitment to reduce the environmental impact of our homes and services
5. Build on our learnings from lockdown and improve digital engagement and communications with customers ensuring we meet their needs and preferences
6. Gather customer feedback about our services and ensure the customer experience feeds into decision making at all levels and we apply the learnings gathered from lockdown
7. Focus on quality improvement with the ambition of achieving an Outstanding rating through Care Quality Commission inspection
8. Roll out iPlanit as the IT platform for support planning and review support planning to better capture outcomes
9. Increase the number of customers accessing health services to address longer-term underlying health inequalities which may be exacerbated by lockdown
10. Increase use of personalised technology – completing our pilots and raising awareness of the benefits with staff and customers
11. Ensure our customers' voices are heard on issues that matter to them, particularly from a COVID-19 perspective, and support campaigns which impact their lives.

In 2020/21 we will measure our success against these targets:

Targets by 31 March 2023	Target for 2020/21
1. 100% compliance with Landlord Health & Safety requirements	100%
2. 90% of customers satisfied with the quality of their housing	85%
3. 90% of property repairs completed 'right first time'	85%
4. Repeat property repairs <3%	<4%
5. Achieve a reinvestment percentage >6% per annum	>3%
6. Achieve an average SAP rating of 69 or above for our homes	69
7. 90% of customers satisfied with the quality of support they receive	85%
8. Minimum 'Good' rating in all Care Quality Commission inspections	100% Good or above
9. 80% of Support customers with a Learning Disability access their Annual Health Check	60%
10. 80% of staff feel supported to deliver the best quality service	80%

Objectives for Year 1 (2020/21)

Sustainable Growth

1. Deliver at least 34 new homes
2. Develop our partnerships with local authorities, funders and larger developing housing associations to deliver more supported housing
3. Explore opportunities to acquire or merge with a provider who has values consistent with ours
4. Ensure new property developments reduce the environmental impact and improve overall energy efficiency of our homes
5. Promote our HOLD product and explore new models of shared ownership to scale up delivery
6. Deliver new support packages for people with complex needs, enabled by the provision of housing
7. Raise our profile in our key geographies to promote organic growth driven by a strong reputation
8. Maximise organic growth and growth from contract and framework opportunities in current and target geographies
9. Continue our programme of proactive engagement with new and existing Commissioners to develop new services and maximise growth opportunities
10. Continue to raise brand awareness through proactive promotion and engagement with our stakeholders.

In 2020/21 we will measure our success against these targets:

Targets by 31 March 2023	Target for 2020/21
1. Deliver 204 new homes	34
2. Reduce the number of homes with a financial contribution <5% from 89 to 70	80
3. Increase Support income by 25%	>10%
4. Support contracts achieve a minimum 12% financial contribution to central overheads	12%
5. Increase by 25% the number of people who receive both our housing and support	8%
6. Increase by 25% the number of customers with high support needs	10%

Objectives for Year 1 (2020/21)

High-Performing Organisation

1. Embed a value for money culture and deliver the savings identified in our Value for Money Strategy and Plan
2. Adopt new ways of working to reflect the learnings from the lockdown period
3. Monitor and stress test the risks associated with UK departure from the EU
4. Actively manage the lettings process to reduce void properties and loss of income
5. Develop the organisational structure, leadership and management skills to ensure high performing central services
6. Embed the learnings from the Leadership and Development Programme to enhance our leadership culture, ensure clear accountability and improve performance
7. Ensure resource plans are in place across the organisation to enable us to deliver against our strategy
8. Develop our long-term wellbeing support for our staff – driven by the learnings from lockdown
9. Develop an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that makes diversity and inclusion a core element of our culture
10. Work with the Voice (our staff representative group) to improve engagement and motivation of the workforce
11. Develop our People Strategy with a focus on engaging, equipping and developing our staff
12. Carry out a full review of office accommodation to determine future requirements and support more agile working
13. Improve data quality and integration of systems through a programme of efficiency improvements
14. Drive improvements through the use of business intelligence tools to gain greater insights from our data.

In 2020/21 we will measure our success against these targets:

Targets by 31 March 2023	Target for 2020/21
1. Achieve Operating Surplus targets	4.4%
2. Achieve our annual Value for Money savings targets	Cumulative saving of >£500k
3. Central overheads not to exceed 12% of income	<12%
4. Reduce void rent loss to <5%	<6%
5. Rent arrears <5%	<6%
6. 90% overall staff satisfaction	85%
7. Voluntary staff turnover <15%	<15.5%
8. 80% of Support Workers qualified to NVQ level 2 or above	60%
9. 90% of staff have access to the development and training they need to do their jobs effectively	85%
10. 90% of system improvement projects are delivered to plan and achieve stated objectives	85%

Value for Money

Value for money is at the heart of the services we deliver and our strategy for 2020-23. We want to offer the highest quality services we can in the most efficient and effective way that have a lasting impact on our customers' lives.

Our current Value for Money Savings Plan runs to 2022. The savings and efficiencies we make will be used to invest in more new homes for people who need them, and to support people to achieve their ambitions and increase independence. In particular, the Savings Plan focusses on:

- Reducing unit cost – through various initiatives including: better procurement and pro-active contract management; targeted action to reduce the costs of specific components; and reduction of void losses
- Overhead – opportunities to reduce our overhead costs and ultimately the percentage of income spent on overheads
- Improving the financial performance of support contracts through proactive engagement with Commissioners

We will continue to publish our Financial Statements and Review of our performance against our long-term plans on an annual basis. We will benchmark our performance against the metrics set by the Regulator of Social Housing and against our peer group and the Global Accounts.

In addition to the financial Value for Money initiatives, we will focus on a range of other initiatives already set out in our strategy, including the:

- Deployment of innovative technology in services to improve customers' lives and make it easier for customers to engage with us online
- Procurement of more energy efficient goods and materials to reduce our overall environmental impact
- Investment in better integrated systems and processes to deliver efficiencies, improve data quality and support good decision making

Value for Money

The table below lists the strategic targets for 2020-23 which we will use to evidence the value for money of our activity.

Strategic Objective	Targets by 31 March 2023
Quality Homes and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of customers satisfied with the quality of their housing • Repeat property repairs <3% • Achieve a reinvestment percentage >6% per annum* • 90% of customers satisfied with the quality of support they receive • Minimum 'Good' rating in all Care Quality Commission inspections
Sustainable Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 204 new homes • New supply delivered - social housing units >3%* per annum • Reduce the number of homes with a financial contribution <5% from 89 to 70 • Support contracts achieve a minimum 12% financial contribution to central overheads
High-Performing Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve our annual Value for Money savings targets (cumulative savings of £0.5m included in the 2020/21 plan) • Central overheads not to exceed 12% of income • Reduce void rent loss to <5% (including any adverse impacts from COVID-19) • Rent arrears <5% • Gearing <9%* • EBITDA MRI Interest cover >430%* • Headline social housing cost per unit <£11,341* • Operating margin (social lettings only) 20%* • Operating margin (overall) >7.4%* • Return on capital employed 1.9%* • Voluntary staff turnover <15% • 90% of system improvement projects are delivered to plan and achieve stated objectives

* Regulator of Social Housing Value for Money metrics

Appendix I: Strategic Targets 2023

Our targets for 2023 are summarised below.

Strategic Objective	Ambition	Targets by 31 March 2023
Quality Homes and Services	<i>We will deliver high quality homes and services that have a demonstrable and positive impact on customers' lives.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 100% compliance with Landlord Health & Safety requirements 90% of customers satisfied with the quality of their housing 90% of property repairs completed 'right first time' Repeat property repairs <3% Achieve a reinvestment percentage >6% per annum Achieve an average SAP rating of 69 or above for our homes 90% of customers satisfied with the quality of support they receive Minimum 'Good' rating in all Care Quality Commission inspections 80% of support customers with a Learning Disability access their Annual Health Check 80% of staff feel supported to deliver the best quality service
Sustainable Growth	<i>We aim to continue to grow so that we can provide housing and support to more people to transform more lives.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver 204 new homes Reduce the number of homes with a financial contribution <5% from 89 to 70 Increase Support income by 25% Support contracts achieve a minimum 12% financial contribution to central overheads Increase by 25% the number of people who receive both our housing and support Increase by 25% the number of customers with high support needs
High-Performing Organisation	<i>We will develop an organisational structure, with the right leadership and management skills, new business processes and systems to deliver higher performance across the business.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve Operating Surplus targets Achieve our annual Value for Money savings targets Central overheads not to exceed 12% of income Reduce void rent loss to <5% Rent arrears <5% 90% overall staff satisfaction Voluntary staff turnover <15% 80% of Support Workers qualified to NVQ level 2 or above 90% of staff have access to the development and training they need to do their jobs effectively 90% of system improvement projects are delivered to plan and achieve stated objectives

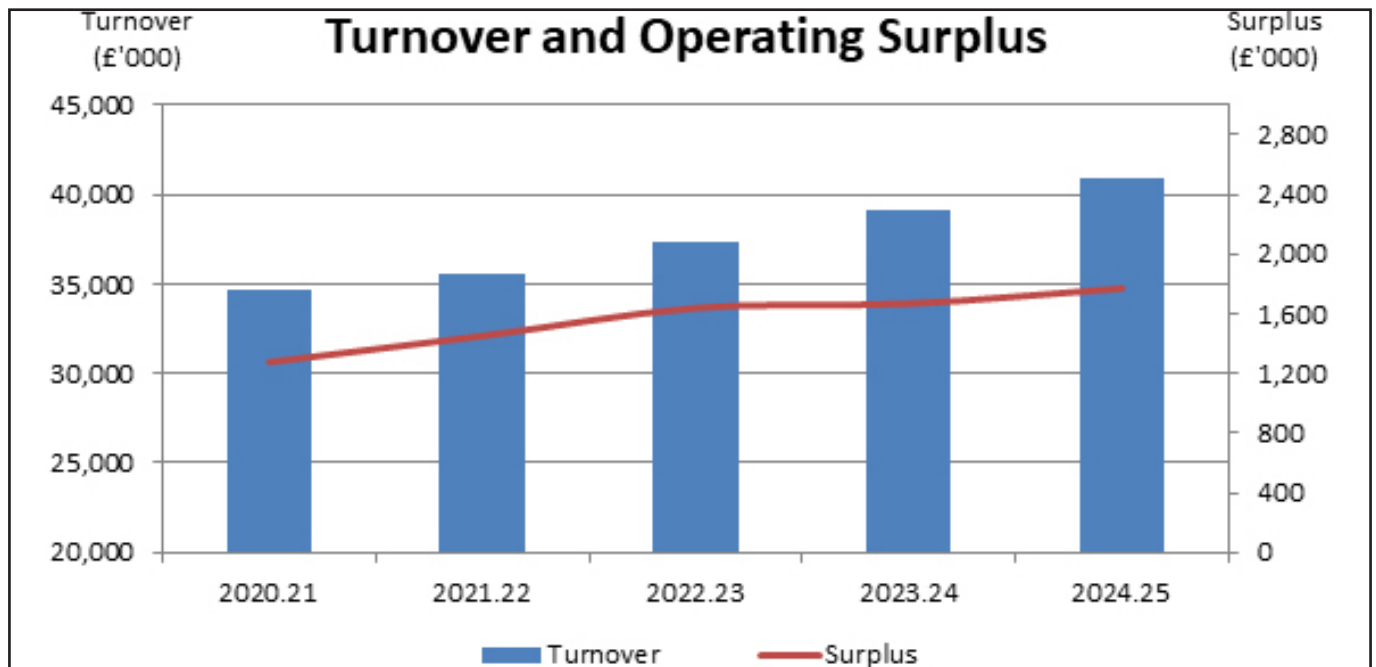
Appendix 2: Financial Forecasts

The graphs and charts provide comfort that financial viability of Advance is maintained through and beyond the period covered by the corporate strategy.

Turnover remains strong and will increase as a result of the investment being made in growth. Whilst operating surplus doesn't increase significantly it is being maintained at a prudent level even after allowing for the challenges that face Advance from the external environment.

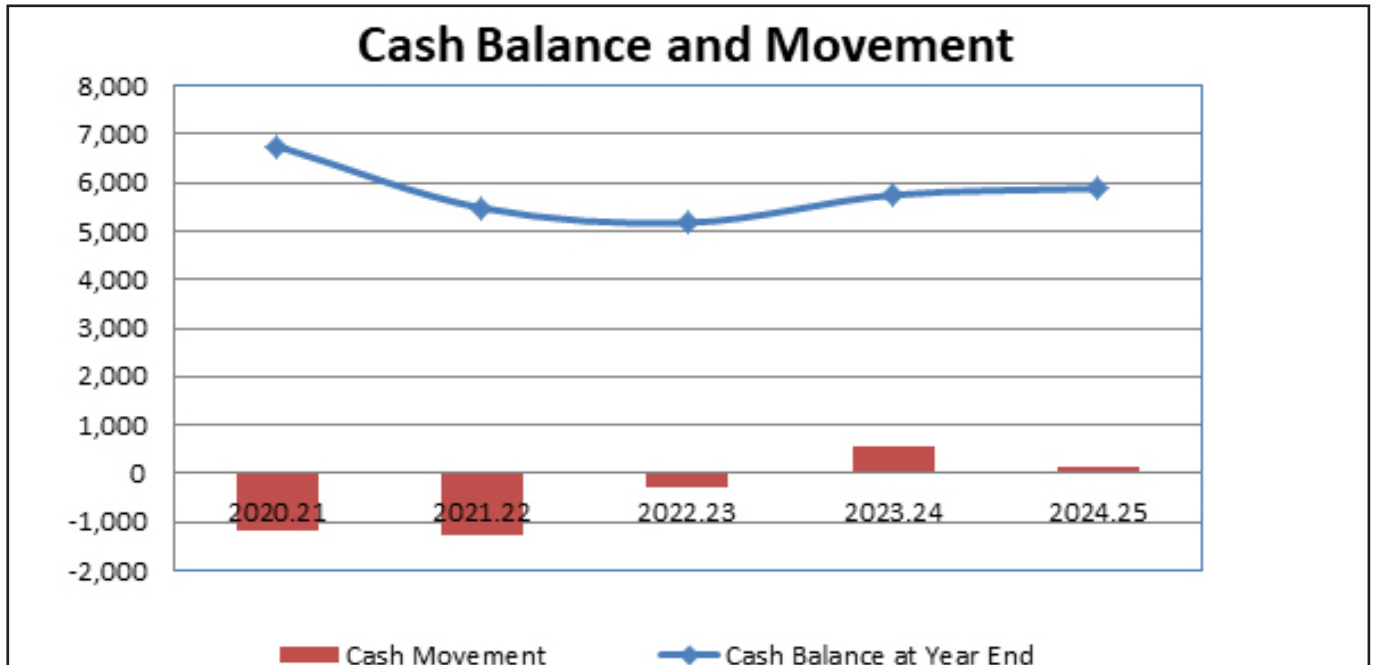
Sufficient cash is available to fund the investment in housing properties and even though cash balances drop during the period, a sufficient balance is maintained to ensure that working capital requirements are covered throughout the period in question.

The table below shows our anticipated turnover and operating surplus.

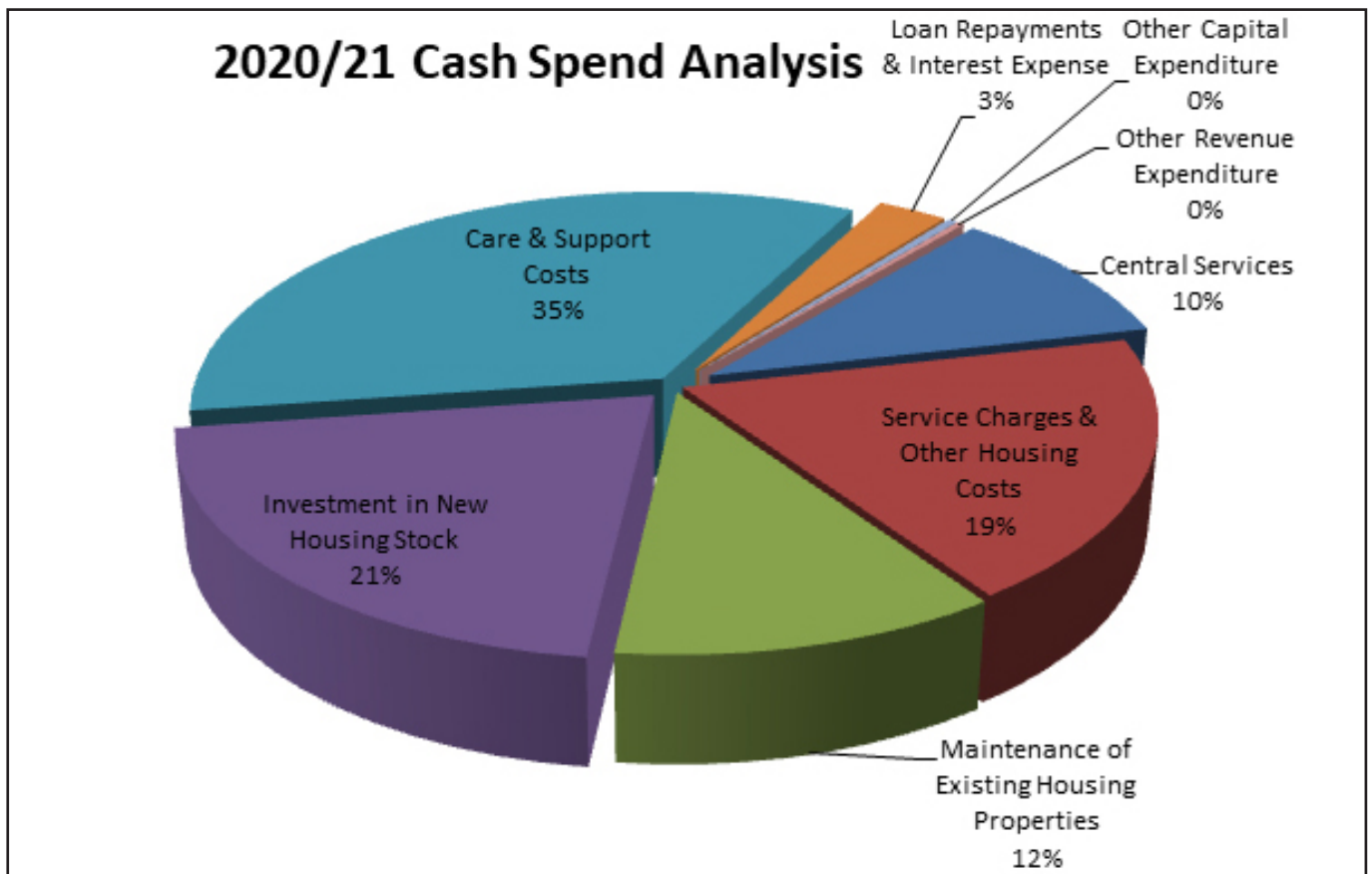


Appendix 2: Financial Forecasts

The diagram below shows our planned cash movement and projected cash balance for the coming five years.



The diagram below shows how we anticipate spending our money in the first year of the strategy:





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