



WEST MIDLANDS
HOUSING
ASSOCIATION
PARTNERSHIP

MANIFESTO
2024



*“We live in uncertain times, but our commitment to the right for everyone to have a decent home will not waver. **Clear political direction and support is critical** if we are to provide the right homes of the right quality for the people of the West Midlands”*

Kevin Rodgers, *Chair WMHAP*

WMHAP manifesto



The **West Midlands Housing Association Partnership** (WMHAP) brings together 18 housing associations from across the West Midlands, united by a single purpose – that everyone should be able to live in a safe, good quality and warm home they can afford.

Our **members employ over 7,000 staff** and **own and manage circa 200,000 homes** in the West Midlands, including homes for social and affordable rent, as well as market rent, shared ownership and sales, which **adds over £1.2bn in direct and indirect benefits to the local economy**.

Alongside this our members provide essential supported and specialist housing, as well as being major investors in and providers of services to support homelessness, employment, education, health and community wellbeing.

We are much more than just developers and landlords. Our members, and the local people we employ, have been involved with, and integrated into, their communities for decades. We understand our region, our localities.

We're anchor institutions in our communities:

- We provide the safe, warm, high-quality homes our tenants need
- We provide accommodation to get people experiencing homelessness away from rough sleeping, and the advice and support to get them into long-term housing
- We work with our local partners to support people suffering because of anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse
- We invest millions of pounds in our homes to make sure they are fit for the future and as energy efficient as possible with high EPC ratings
- Our colleagues are drawn from our local communities – we provide training and development for local people who contribute economically and socially to our region
- We know our role is to act as stewards of our communities.

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The opportunity in front of us...

The West Midlands' Mayor already has significant devolved powers to shape the region's economy and environment.

Whatever the outcome of the Mayoral election, the Mayor will be given significant new powers over housing in the region. Although there is a transition period, the Mayor will be given devolved funding from the Affordable Housing Programme alongside strategic planning powers, which will be exercised in partnership with Homes England.

These changes mean that in the future the Mayor will have the power and responsibility to shape the region's housing, employment and skills offer as well as transport. It is therefore vital that these powers are used in a coherent way to deliver joined up services.

The mayoral election and the pace of devolution creates further opportunities for the Combined Authority and members of WMHAP to work closely together on a shared ambition of *inclusive growth through place shaping*.

How we make this opportunity a reality...

Inclusive growth through place shaping

Our members are committed to building as many new homes as we can to make sure that as many people as possible have access to the safe, warm and comfortable homes they need.

But we're about much more than that, we're about shaping places and creating balanced and sustainable neighbourhoods, supporting communities to thrive, ensuring that our resources are used to deliver tenant centric services that boost the local economy as well as provide social value to the communities in which we serve.



Housing is critical infrastructure for the Region and should be treated as such. **What's more, it pays for itself.**

There are four fundamental ways in which we believe we can collaborate with the Combined Authority in order to demonstrate ***inclusive growth through place shaping.***

More homes in the right places

As rising house prices continue to outpace wages where the average price of a home is over eight times average wages, the West Midlands desperately needs more affordable homes to serve a thriving economy, effectively a re-supply of homes that are truly affordable regardless of income.

This is one of the key reasons that housing associations have been building 2,000 homes a year in the West Midlands for the past three years.

To do this, we need the next Affordable Homes Programme that will be devolved to the Combined Authority to be both ambitious and deliverable, offering more people the opportunity to rent or part buy a home in an affordable way.

More homes in the right places can be delivered through our access to long term loans melded with grant to make land viable and housing affordable.

A Mayoral Affordable Homes Programme should become an investible proposition, attracting investment into the West Midlands. More homes in the right places can be achieved if we can blend our delivery experience with a well designed affordable homes programme, the promotion of public sector land reform and timely planning decisions.

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Energy efficient homes for all

As we face the threat of climate change coupled with the sustained pressure on family finances, we need homes that are well insulated, well ventilated, with an energy supply that can be generated in a sustainable way.

Housing Associations are already making great strides in retrofitting existing homes that reduces fuel bills, reduces carbon emissions, and boosts the local economy through more investment in retrofit jobs and skills.

A retrofit programme of existing homes can provide numerous benefits to the region, moving households out of fuel poverty, reducing carbon emissions and boost the local economy with local jobs and new skills.

A devolved decarbonisation fund will enhance the capacity of housing associations to increase the scale and scope of retrofit programmes across the region, ensuring that all homes let by a housing association are at a minimum energy efficiency standard of 'C' by 2030.





Revitalising places

There are many areas where greater intervention is needed, which by their design are often blighted by low economic activity and high anti-social behaviour.

These areas have the potential for renewal, and as key delivery agents we can act as a catalyst for that change.

We would welcome, therefore, the opportunity for devolved funding under the Affordable Homes Programme to be used towards the regeneration of areas where the right decision will be to knock down old and poorly designed properties in favour of newly designed homes and public realm. This will result in new life being breathed into these areas and greater well being for local residents. A key deliverable of this work must be that existing residents are not disadvantaged by the change and in fact significantly benefit from it.





Combatting Homelessness

Nobody should be homeless. Somewhere to call home is the most basic of needs and something that we collectively can tackle head on, with the right determination and resources.



We would therefore wish to carry on the vital work of the homeless taskforce, together with devolved resources to delivery pathways out of homelessness and into work that will improve people's life chances and manage demand on public resources.

What are we asking for?

We're asking for the mayoralty to work with us in a genuine partnership to begin to solve the housing problems in our region.

Together we can:

- Find solutions to unlock additional supply
- Regenerate our brownfield sites into much needed homes
- Create the right environment to attract external funding to the region
- Create a partnership anchored in 'roots' and 'place'
- Open new routes to partnership and funding
- Create coherence across the region and a level playing field between the constituent local authorities.
- Design out homelessness in our region

Our Members



**Black Country
Housing Group**

bchg.co.uk



Bournville
Village Trust

bvt.org.uk

Bromford.

bromford.co.uk



CITIZEN

citizenhousing.org.uk



**Green
Square
Accord**

greensquareaccord.co.uk



**LENCH'S
TRUST**

Building Bridges in the Commu

lenchs-trust.co.uk



midlandheartgroup.org.uk



Supporting BAME communities to thrive

nehemiah.co.uk



orbit.org.uk



People. Housing. Community.

pioneergroup.org.uk



housing group
platformhg.com



rooftopgroup.org



stonewater.org



Works with young people

stbasils.org.uk



Trident Group

tridentgroup.org.uk



whg.uk.com

**The Wrekin
Housing Group**

wrekin.com




WMHAP



THE POWER OF HOMES

Kevin Rodgers Chair, WMHAP
0121 329 0320
kevin.rodgers@wmhousing.co.uk

wmhap.org.uk