The Finchley Charities

2025-2030 Strategy

(April 2025)

1. Introduction:

The Objects of The Finchley Charities are:

1) The provision of accommodation for beneficiaries, and allotments for the benefit of persons of limited means in the area of benefit.
2) Such charitable purposes for the benefit of the residents as the Trustees decide.
3) Relief in need for persons in the area of benefit who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by making grants of money or providing or paying for items, services or facilities calculated to reduce the need, hardship or distress of such persons.
4) Payments to Parish churches situated in the Ancient Parish of Finchley.

1.1 As we approach The Finchley Charities' 537th anniversary year, the Trustees have set out this new five-year strategy which reaffirms our focus on our main areas of work: *supported/sheltered housing, support services, allotments and grant giving*. Trustees have reiterated our commitment to work solely with adults aged 55 and over who are in housing need, community organisations who require funding to provide worthwhile services in our area of benefit, to and provide relief to those in need.

1.2 Other themes in this strategy cover awareness raising to ensure we reach the full area of benefit (London Borough of Barnet), and building partnerships to enhance our offer in areas where we lack specialist expertise. The strategy also includes a commitment to grow, within clear parameters, by exploring opportunities within and outside the London Borough of Barnet - if other Almshouse charities need assistance or when there is an opportunity for a merger. This will increase our footprint and strengthen our position as one of the lead providers of Almshouse accommodation.

1.3 There is a clear need for an increase in housing provision – in particular for affordable housing for older adults. To inform our future strategy we will research what older adults need and want, and develop further provision to meet that clearly identified need.

1.4 The implementation of our 2025-2030 strategy will further develop the resilience of our foundations and structures to enable successful service development and growth for many more years to come. Implementation will be underpinned by operational delivery plans and a performance management framework.

2. Our Vision and Mission

2.1 The Finchley Charities commits to the following Vision and Mission: To become the leading community housing charity that is centred on providing a trusted, secure and safe environment for older people.

2.2 By 2025 The Finchley Charities will be one of the leading providers of accommodation in the sector, with a reputation for providing excellent accommodation in high quality, supportive housing communities that promotes independence. We will be working in collaboration with other providers to ensure all our beneficiaries can access services that enable them to live in their accommodation for life or for as long as possible.

3. Our Values

During 2024 Residents, Colleagues and Trustees renewed and refreshed the Core Values of The Finchley Charities and were excited to confirm them as: Community, Inclusion, Support, Security and Quality. We are now working to further embed these Core Values into our culture by integrating them into training, performance evaluations, recognition programmes, and decision-making processes so that they remain a central part of the Charity.

4. Operating Principles, and Strategic Objectives

In pursuit of its Vision, Mission and Charitable Objects, The Finchley Charities will work

to Nine Operating Principles and deliver against a number of Strategic Objectives, each underpinned by detailed delivery plans covering the first year of implementation. Further delivery plans will be generated in response to quarterly reviews of progress.

Operating Principles

1) Ensure that The Finchley Charities is financially sound and prudent
2) Ensure effective governance and compliance EDI / Community
3) Ensure Health and Safety is compliant with relevant regulations across the organisation
4) Provide safe, secure and high-quality homes that are well maintained through excellent asset management
5) Maximise the independence of our existing beneficiaries through the provision of excellent support
6) Improve and enhance the quality of service delivery and infrastructures
7) Improve resident engagement
8) Ensure committed involvement of well trained, skilled and experienced Trustees and staff
9) Ensure excellent customer service across the organisation

Strategic Objectives

1) By 2030 be providing xxx additional housing units by optimising our existing land and premises, and taking advantage of funding opportunities and partnerships
2) Heighten the profile and position of The Finchley Charities within the area of Barnet as a leading provider of services to those in need

Inclusion and Belonging

1) Inclusion and social justice are principles we hold dear. We are committed to inclusion for all in our community and are guided through this by our commitment to celebrating and valuing the rich diversity at the heart of The Finchley Charities.
2) As a Charity we are dedicated in our journey to becoming actively anti-racist and promoting the diverse nature of our community. The Charity is a place where societal challenges are tackled to support everyone.
3) The Trustees are committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunities for all Colleagues and Residents. The Core Values and Mission of The Finchley Charities are based on valuing our diversity and enabling everyone within our organisation, staff and residents alike, to thrive and to support each other. As an employer of a diverse workforce there is representation at all levels from the front line staff through to the Senior Leadership team and Board and we are committed to tackling all forms of inequality whether structural or personal wherever this may occur.
4) The Trustees have an absolute and ongoing commitment to address injustice wherever it occurs and are confident that together we can emerge stronger and more united for the betterment of all. In August 2024, The Finchley Charities, together with 15 other local organisations and faith leaders, signed a Community Statement expressing their pride in the diverse borough in which we live and work and condemning anti-immigrant hatred, Islamophobia, violence, and hatred of any kind.
5) As part of this commitment, an equalities panel consisting of members of The Finchley Charities community will come together to look closely at all aspects of our housing and community life to make sure everyone is respected, valued, treated fairly and protected. We continue to think of ways to promote equality and diversity.

Tasks

1) Keep weekly maintenance contributions and other housing costs at affordable levels whilst maximising savings opportunities, where possible, to ensure income meets expenditure

2) Minimise income loss through void turnaround times and effective rent arears monitoring
3) Produce annual impact reports that demonstrate our purpose.

Customers

1) Achieve the Customer Service Excellence Award and retain this on an ongoing basis. (Dec 2025)
2) Enhance the residents' Voice.
3) Can we help people live in our homes for longer – 'Homes for Life'?
4) Future-proof our properties (re 'homes for life', and sustainability).
5) Look into the speed and practicality of converting stock into 'lifelong homes' – just as voids arise, or what? Aim for 25% of stock converted by 2030.
6) Adaptations - be sensitive – don't make people's homes feel too clinical, or institutional.
7) Carry out surveys of residents.
8) Make sure our planning takes account of the needs of future residents as well as current ones.
9) New generations of residents will have higher aspirations and expectations regarding access to and use of technology.
10) Use technology to improve communications between residents and staff/trustees.
11) Get better at gathering and using data about our customers, to help us understand their demographics, and plan to respond to their evolving needs.
12) Define 'excellent' – then build on this.
13) Deliver to Consumer Standards.
14) Carry out a feasibility study into offering care home provision.
15) Develop our understanding of the potential demand.
16) Ensure compliance with Regulatory Standards, and reporting against how these are being met.
17) Explore how best to engage with residents who don't come to events.
18) Offer more clubs and increase awareness of these.

Colleagues

1) Enable more staff participation in Committee meetings.
2) Review all policies and procedures.
3) Build on and improve current skills levels.
4) Consider the Investors In People framework – achieve Gold by 2030
5) Be clear about minimum statutory training requirements. Keep careful records of who has done what, and identify gaps.
6) Have regular 1:1s with staff, focussing on agreed objectives.
7) Identify skills gaps; have clear succession plans – underpinned by documented processes to facilitate handover.
8) 360 degree feedback at all levels.
9) Long service recognition.
10) Health and wellbeing strategy for staff.
11) How best to reward and motivate staff (note different things may motivate different people).
12) Staff retention – note that as we are a small organisation there are few opportunities for promotion. So try to make up for this with excellent communications (including with the Board), clear responsibilities, helpful standard processes etc.
13) As we grow, recognise we are moving to slightly more formal ways of working.
14) Make sure all staff understand the strategic plan, and their individual roles in making it happen.
15) Carry out staff surveys, with a feedback loop.
16) Obtain and share feedback from residents.
17) Work though the outcomes of the governance review and skills audit.

18) Make use of the staff development opportunities available through the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Community

1) Breaking down barriers – between communities, between ages, between residents and the wider community.
2) Keep it simple, and measure progress against targets we set ourselves.
3) Explore how to create stronger linkages between residents and staff on our different sites.
4) Explore how to embed the charity more in the wider community.
5) Our own allotment site being used more by community groups.
6) More co-production with other partners.
7) Gain the Community Engagement Award.
8) Explore opportunities to provide work experience placements and internships.
9) Raise awareness – e.g. improving signage. But beware of creating demand we cannot meet!
10) Engage more with Age UK, other local groups, and the Council.
11) Explore and create and promote employment, education and volunteering opportunities – for residents, and the wider community.
12) Explore what more we can do to help, beyond grants.
13) Use Community Halls for U3A etc.
14) Can we / should we create 'safe spaces' for residents, if we are going to increase non-residents use of our facilities?
15) A helpful summary for the Community heading might be "exploring all the ways in which we might be a Good Neighbour".
16) Allotments – can we engage with a Farmers Market organiser? (note: the sale of produce from the allotments is not permissible, but it may be OK to run a Farmers' Market selling produce brought in for the purpose.)
17) Sell more advertising hoardings around the allotments etc – to generate more income but also use them to promote The Finchley Charities.
18) When putting work out to tender, ask contractors to specify additional social value being offered.

Compliance

1) Put together a Compliance Register in the form of an Assurance Framework and convert the Compliance Dashboard to set of agreed KPIs
2) Plan to carry out internal audits
3) Identify and group all the KPIs we currently measure ensuring all key areas of Compliance covered
4) Create a Master Folder of Procedures etc that can be kept digitally for each scheme so that each is working to the same standards, policies and procedures.
5) Increase our newsletter for Residents to say 6x per annum.
6) Comply with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman.
7) External audit reports should be considered both by the relevant Committee, and the Board.
8) Policies should also be considered both by the relevant committee, and the Board.
9) Review the meetings schedule to allow time for Committee minutes to be reviewed by Board members, ahead of Board meetings.
10) As appropriate, build all these ideas into our new IT system, so we work smarter, not harder.
11) Also retain a sense of proportionality – what makes sense for an organisation as small (and as large) as The Finchley Charities.

Construction

1) Need to achieve Board consensus on acceptable levels of risk. We need to define

our ‘red line’ of acceptable risk.

2) Make sure we stress-test the costs
3) Recognise the potential abortive costs if a project doesn’t go ahead.
4) By 2030 have created a ‘significant’ number of new homes.
5) Stick with our existing ‘niche market’.
6) Bear in mind the implications of having a small team. Be alert to the operational drain of a building project on the staff team – and the Board.
7) We would need to hire in a project manager.
8) Explore the feasibility of development at Homefield.
9) Explore different types of building – eg where care can be provided.
10) Explore the potential offered by modular buildings.
11) Learn from other organisations of our size.
12) Note we are well placed to respond to Government targets, but review the impact of on the market go mad after the budget, with construction costs rocketing and technical skills being in short supply?
13) There is clear need/demand for more housing of the type we offer- Older Persons’ housing need