Community Counts
Milnbank
Housing Association
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TO:	Board Members
PREPARED BY:	Linda Smith (G&A Manager)
SUBJECT:	VALUE FOR MONEY STRATEGY 2026/27
DATE OF MEETING:	10 NOVEMBER 2026
APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)

VALUE FOR MONEY STRATEGY

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1. MILNBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION (MHA) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

MHA's mission is to provide excellent homes and services in a thriving community. We believe that people living in the MHA community should:

- Have warm, safe, and affordable homes, and receive excellent services from MHA.
- Live in neighbourhoods that are clean and well cared for, with real community pride.
- Have access to opportunities and services that promote a good quality of life.

2. MHA's VALUES

Working as 'One Milnbank' so that we offer the same quality of services, support and housing to all tenants and residents.

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The Board leads and directs MHA to ensure good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. MHA adheres to the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework Financial & Regulatory and to all relevant legal employment requirements associated with this policy.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Regulatory Framework (2019) provides clear guidance on VFM and linking to rent affordability, to ensure our approach is both robust and appropriate. The SHR expects housing associations to have a VFM Strategy and systems in place to ensure the strategy is being delivered.

Regulatory Standard 3 states "The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford".

SHR Standard 3.1 states "The RSL has effective financial and treasury management controls and procedures, to achieve the right balance between costs and outcomes, and control costs effectively. The RSL ensures security of assets, the proper use of public and private funds, and access to sufficient liquidity at all times".

The Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter, (2012) sets out standards and outcomes which RSLs should achieve. Outcome 13: Value for Money – "Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay".

Section 4 below demonstrates how MHA achieve the above regulatory and legislative requirements.

MHA also works to the Gov. UK Value for Money Standard & Code of Practice which provides VFM standards that registered providers of social housing must comply within and the supporting Code of Practice (June 2021)

4. POLICY INTRODUCTION

4.1 The application of Value for Money (VFM) is fundamental to Milnbank Housing Association (MHA) operation and underpins the achievement of the Association's vision and values. MHA's commitment to achieving VFM is relevant to the following strategic objectives stated in the Business Plan 2026/29:

- People – to maximise the potential of our people.
- Putting Customers First – to listen to our customers and respond to what matters most.
- Assets – to maximise the potential of our assets.
- Investment – to make the best use of our resources to support our priorities.
- Innovation – to improve how we work and respond to change

5. AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE VFM STRATEGY

VFM is about achieving the right balance between Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness.

> *Economy - the price paid for what goes into providing a service. It is also about minimising the cost of resources of an activity, whilst not losing sight of quality.*
>
> *Efficiency - a measure of productivity considering how much you get out in relation to what is put in.*
>
> *Effectiveness - a measure of the impact achieved or a measure of outcomes.*

This essentially means that MHA needs to assess the impact of all its costs to best meet all its stakeholder's needs by spending efficiently. VFM needs to be achieve economic, social impact and environmental sustainability benefits. This approach incorporates economic, efficiency, and effectiveness and the SHR's VFM standard, but also captures the vision and values of MHA.

VFM is important to MHA as we want to ensure that we can achieve our Business Plan priorities every year to maintain our existing homes, manage liabilities, improve our operating cash flows, manage costs to not only protect but to also add value to the services we deliver to tenants and, where possible, continue our development programme. VFM is not only about achieving excellent quality services to the satisfaction of our tenants and service users, it also about helping MHA to contribute to important services that the Board support.

6. DEFINING VALUE FOR MONEY

As the governing body, the Board set the strategic priorities for MHA achieving VFM. The Board will subsequently, on a regular basis, review these aims and objectives to ensure that MHA is achieving VFM. The is done as follows:

MHA Customers	Tenants and factored owners express high levels of satisfaction with our services in all out main services areas.
	Tenants find our rents affordable and good VFM
	Customers receive a consistently high level of service from MHA.
	MHA has good knowledge about customers expressed needs and priorities
	MHA deals promptly and fairly with customer complaints and seeks to learn from complaints.
	MHA makes increasing use of technology in our customer services.
MHA's Services	We continually seek ways to improve and make changes to our services.
	MHA's services and use of resources are responsive to tenants' priorities.
	VFM Indicators show that MHA is a high-performing organisation in comparison with our peers.
	The Asset Management Strategy provides a framework for MHA to manage our stock proactively and support Business Plan objectives. It links knowledge of the stock gained to date, the property requirements in response to local demand and tenant aspirations and what is affordable within our financial plan.
MHA's people and organisation	Our staff work in an efficient and effective way and receive training and support to achieve this.
	Have performance management and scrutiny functions which are effective at driving and delivering improved VFM performance
	We make increasing use of modern technology to help us to work smarter and more efficiently, using tools such as automation and workflows.
	We make changes to our organisational structures to improve outcomes.
MHA's Resources	MHA remains a financially viable and sustainable business.
	We set budgets and control expenditure to achieve VFM.
	Our business processes avoid waste and are designed to facilitate efficiency and simplification where possible.

	We get the best value when we are procuring works, goods, and services. MHA's Procurement Policy recognises the importance to achieve optimum VFM in a sustainable manner by ensuring that whenever appropriate, we assess quality, cost and sustainability. It is recognised that the lowest cost will not necessarily be the best value in the longer term, and that we cannot award contracts based on price alone. Therefore, MHA will use where appropriate all available mechanisms to obtain VFM from spending on goods, works and services. This may involve the use of framework agreements, partnering, collaboration with other organisations, and procurement processes.
	We work in partnership with like-minded organisations to achieve better VFM. Wider Role is a high priority for MHA and one of our Key Values within our Mission Statement as we recognise that providing homes is only one element of our service. MHA will ensure VFM is achieved by seeking and working with grant funders to maximise income and with community organisations to assess the requirements and needs of the community and ensure, where we can, the best fit of the limited resources to provide best value.
	We seek to make efficiencies without compromising the overall quality of our services, to help keep rents affordable and support investment in tenants' homes.

7. BENCHMARKING VFM

MHA sets out actions for achieving VFM as highlighted in Business Plan priorities approved by the Board. These actions along with responsible persons, resource requirements and timelines are detailed in Appendix A.

In addition to the action plan, MHA is committed to continuous improvement and uses key performance indicators to manage and improve our performance. The mechanisms used are noted below and will be regularly discussed by the MC and Leadership Team to provide assurance that our services strive to achieve VFM.

- Regular updates of our Business Plan.
- SHR data (e.g. measuring our range of services against other housing providers).
- Having achievable VFM targets against the continual review of our service provision

- Tenant satisfaction surveys used to gauge the quality of our services
- provided, which is a critical component of VFM.
- Benchmarking the outcomes with external sources (e.g. internal audits, Scottish Housing Network Benchmarking reports)
- Providing a detailed business case for any investment or partnership opportunities.
- Updated financial planning identifying areas for investment and the allocation of resources
- Acknowledging that MHA staff have the skills and expertise to deliver the VFM strategy and noting the value of opinions of all staff in setting these.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

8a. Board Members

Is responsible for maintaining a robust assessment of all its assets and resources and a robust approach to decisions on the use of resources to deliver the Business Plan.

Approves the VFM strategy and action plan.

Seek to ensure a culture of VFM in all aspects of MHA's activities and ensure that challenging but achievable efficiency targets are agreed as part of the annual financial planning process. VFM is a standard consideration in all reports primarily identified within the sections 'Relevance to Business Plan', 'Financial Implications' and 'Risks' and this is designed to ensure that the Board are aware of all the options and implications for each decision.

8b. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Leadership Team (LT)

Responsible for ensuring that VFM is considered in both the day-to-day management of their services and in respect of any new proposals or service reviews. They need to ensure that VFM is understood by all and that actions relevant to their services are completed.

Responsible for ensuring that a VFM culture is embedded throughout MHA and that decisions taken consider VFM across all activities.

8c. All MHA Employees

Are made aware of the importance of VFM through training, and team meetings, and encouraged to contribute ideas for improving VFM.

Assist in the implementation of improvements and the development of performance targets, and all employees will have at least one VFM related objective contained within their annual staff appraisal.

8d. Other partnerships

MHA is committed to developing partnerships with community groups, GCC and other registered providers where the partnership will achieve VFM and deliver services that MHA could not deliver as effectively on its own.

Partnerships will only be entered into where the aims and objectives are clear and can be linked to the strategic objectives of MHA, and the association is satisfied that joining the partnership is the best way of meeting its objectives. Our partners will be briefed on how we are approaching VFM and how they can contribute to the strategy where appropriate.

9. SUMMARY

9a. MHA's strategic framework is designed to ensure that all activity is considered, developed, and delivered through a VFM approach. This means that VFM will be woven into all supporting strategies and policies, committee reports, business plans, work plans and MHA's business strategic objectives, thus ensuring that VFM is considered at every level of the organisation.

9b. MHA business strategic objectives are set out the high-level principles and strategic direction for the Association. Customer and stakeholder engagement forms a key part MHA's VFM approach. This includes engagement with tenants, owners and other customers, funders, lenders, boards, local authorities, strategic partnerships, and regulatory bodies to ensure our strategies are delivering against VFM principles.

9c. MHA business strategic approach to VFM during 2026/27is as follows:

- We will align Value for Money activities with the five Strategic Objectives contained within the Business Plan 2026-2029, ensuring that resources are directed towards achieving positive outcomes for tenants, customers and the wider community.

- We will continue to implement the Customer First Strategy, using customer feedback, Tenant Satisfaction Survey results, complaints information and tenant engagement activity to inform service improvement and investment decisions.

- We will maintain a clear focus on rent affordability and value for money for tenants by balancing investment requirements, service quality and financial sustainability

- We will maximise the value derived from our housing assets through delivery of the Asset Management Strategy, investment based on stock condition information, and effective management of compliance and safety risks.

- We will ensure that significant investment decisions, including major repairs, stonework programmes and new build developments, are supported by robust financial, risk and performance information and demonstrate clear benefits for tenants and the Association.

- We will continue to benchmark our costs, performance and customer outcomes against relevant peer organisations and sector information, using the results to identify opportunities for improvement and efficiencies.

- We will maintain effective financial control, challenge non-essential expenditure and seek opportunities to improve efficiency while protecting service quality, compliance and tenant safety.

- We will use procurement, partnership working and contract management arrangements to secure quality services, achieve value for money and support delivery of Business Plan priorities.

- We will support digital transformation and innovation, including greater use of technology, automation and appropriate AI solutions where these improve customer experience, service performance or organisational efficiency

- We will report regularly to the Board through performance, financial and Balanced Scorecard reporting arrangements, providing assurance that Value for Money is being achieved and that improvement actions are implemented where required.

(Appendix A provides details of areas where VFM will be examined during 2026/27).

10. EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS

MHA's is committed to equal opportunities, and we will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals, and we will not discriminate against any individual for any reason outlined in Equality & Human Rights Legislation. Appendix B provides details of our Equality Impact Assessment Statement of the VFM Strategy

11. DATA COLLECTION

MHA will manage all personal data in accordance with our obligations under the GDPR regulations and the Association's Policy.

12. MONITORING & REVIEW OF STRATEGY

The VFM Strategy will be reviewed by the Board annually in line with the Business Plan updates, or as otherwise deemed necessary.

APPENDIX A

VFM FOCUS 2026/27

VFM ACTIVITY	2026/27 BUSINESS PLAN COMMITMENT	REPORT TO	TIMESCALE	VFM OUTCOME / MEASURE
Customer insight and service quality	Analyse and report on the independent Tenant Satisfaction Survey; use ongoing engagement and Customer Service Standards to target service improvement.	Board	Q1–Q4	Tenant feedback informs decisions; service quality and satisfaction are monitored.
Rent affordability and fairness	Keep rents affordable and aligned with the SFHA benchmark; implement the financial plan and Year 4 of rent harmonisation.	Board	Q1–Q4	Affordability, fairness and financial sustainability are considered together.
Benchmarking and performance	Use the Balanced Scorecard and KPIs to monitor customer outcomes, service performance, financial performance and risk.	Board / Audit & Risk Sub-Committee	Monthly and quarterly	Performance and emerging pressures are identified, scrutinised and acted upon.
Asset investment	Deliver the agreed 2026/27 programme of £1.655m in major repairs and renewals to existing homes.	Board	Q1–Q4	Investment is controlled, prioritised and linked to stock condition, risk and tenant outcomes.
Cost control and financial resilience	Maintain firm control over running costs and non-essential expenditure; monitor funding and financial capacity for future investment.	Board / Audit & Risk Sub-Committee	Q1–Q4	Resources are maximised for tenants' homes while financial headroom and lending requirements are protected.
Procurement and contractor performance	Monitor the contractor framework to ensure it delivers best value, with active oversight of contractor performance and costs.	Board / relevant committee	Q1–Q4	Contracts demonstrate an appropriate balance of quality, cost and performance.

VFM ACTIVITY	2026/27 BUSINESS PLAN COMMITMENT	REPORT TO	TIMESCALE	VFM OUTCOME / MEASURE
Stonework and tenant safety	Manage the stonework repairs programme on a risk-based basis and report progress regularly.	Board / Stonework Sub-Committee	Q1–Q4	Resources are targeted to the highest risks, supporting tenant safety and protection of stock.
Wider role and partnership working	Continue wider role activity within the agreed framework, seek external funding and keep activity under Board review.	Board	Q1–Q4	Community outcomes are delivered with clear oversight of cost, funding and organisational benefit.
Digital improvement and innovation	Develop the Digital Transformation Strategy, increase use of digital communication and explore AI and workflow improvements.	Board	Q1–Q4	Technology produces evidenced service improvements, improved access and resource savings while retaining personal service.

APPENDIX B

Milnbank Housing Association **Equality Impact Assessment Tool**	

Name of the policy / project proposal to be assessed	Value for Money Strategy	Is this a new policy /proposal or a revision?	Revision
Person(s) responsible for the assessment	Linda Smith (Governance & Assurance Manager)		
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / proposal	VFM is about achieving the right balance between Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness		
2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy/ proposal? *(e.g. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)*	Customers		
3. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/ proposal? *(e.g. the benefits to customers / benefit to staff)*	Benefits to tenants and residents, being able to demonstrate true VFM		

4. Which protected characteristics could be affected by the proposal? (*tick all that apply*)

☒ Age ☒ Race ☒ Disability ☒ Marriage & civil partnership ☒ Pregnancy / Maternity

☒ Religion or belief ☒ Sex ☒ Gender reassignment ☒ Sexual Orientation

5. Which other characteristics could be affected by the proposal? (*tick all that apply*) ☒ Socio-economic ☒ Geographic Location ☐ Literacy & Numeracy ☐ Carers ☒ Migrant Status ☒ Single Parents ☒ Families ☒ Other (including Human Rights), please state: Policy is inclusive of all individual needs		
6. Have you consulted on the potential impacts of the policy/proposal? (this could be internally with other staff, or externally with customers, focus groups etc) ☐ Yes ☒ No If yes, provide further details, of who was consulted:		
7. Describe the likely positive or negative impact(s) the policy/proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4 & 5.	**Positive impact(s)**	**Negative impact(s)**
	excellent quality services to the satisfaction of our tenants and service users, it also about helping MHA to contribute to important services that the Board support	
8. What actions are required to address / mitigate the impacts arising from this assessment? *(This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts).*		
Decision / Outcome (Pending Committee Approval)	☐ Approved, no changes required (no impact) ☒ Approved after changes made ☐ Approved with no changes (despite impact) ☐ Stop the Policy . Proposal	

Signed:  Job title: _Governance & Assurance Manager_____

Date the Equality Impact Assessment was completed: _____