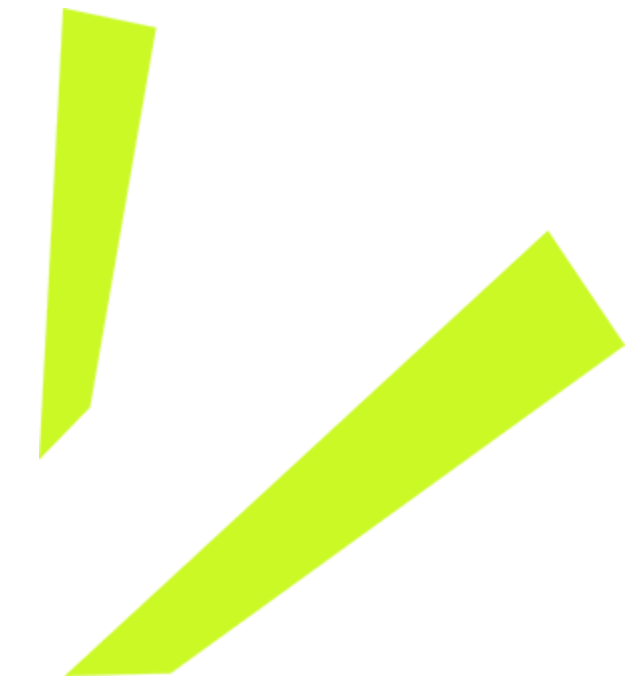




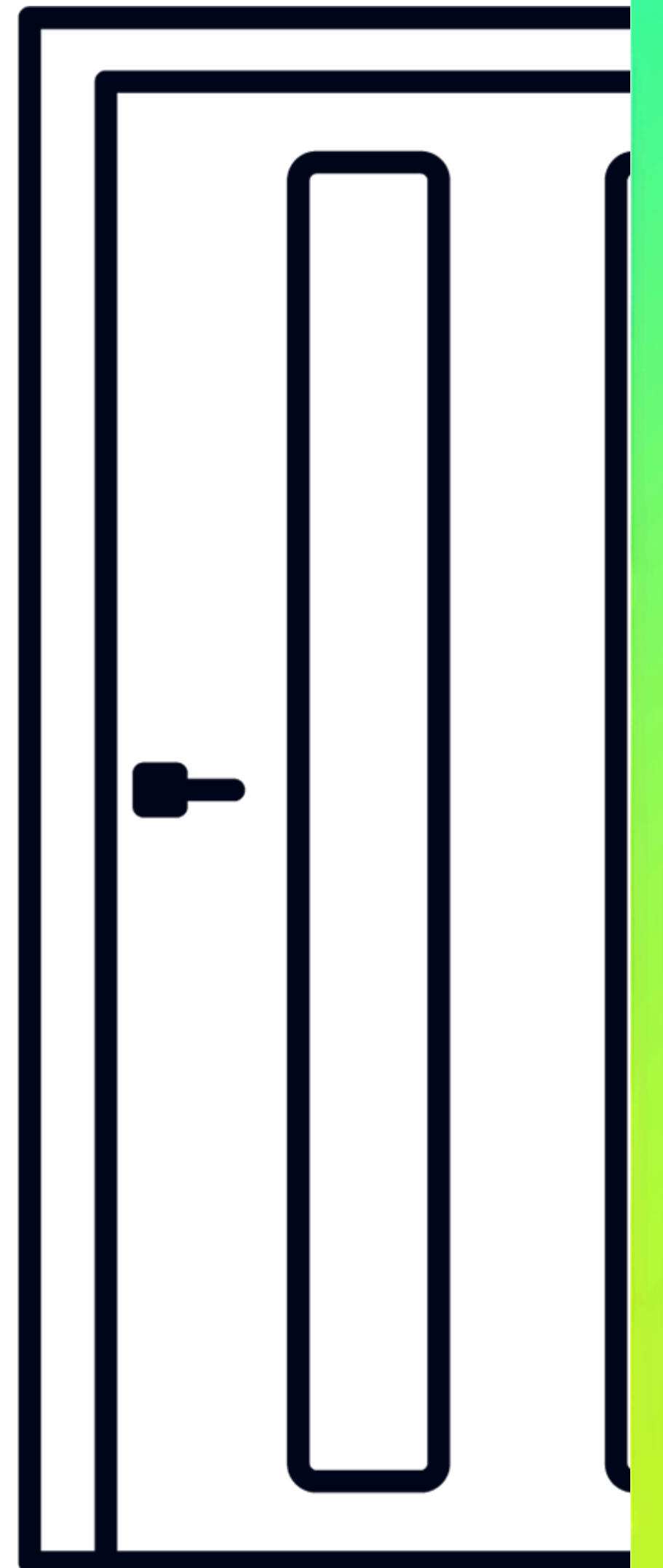
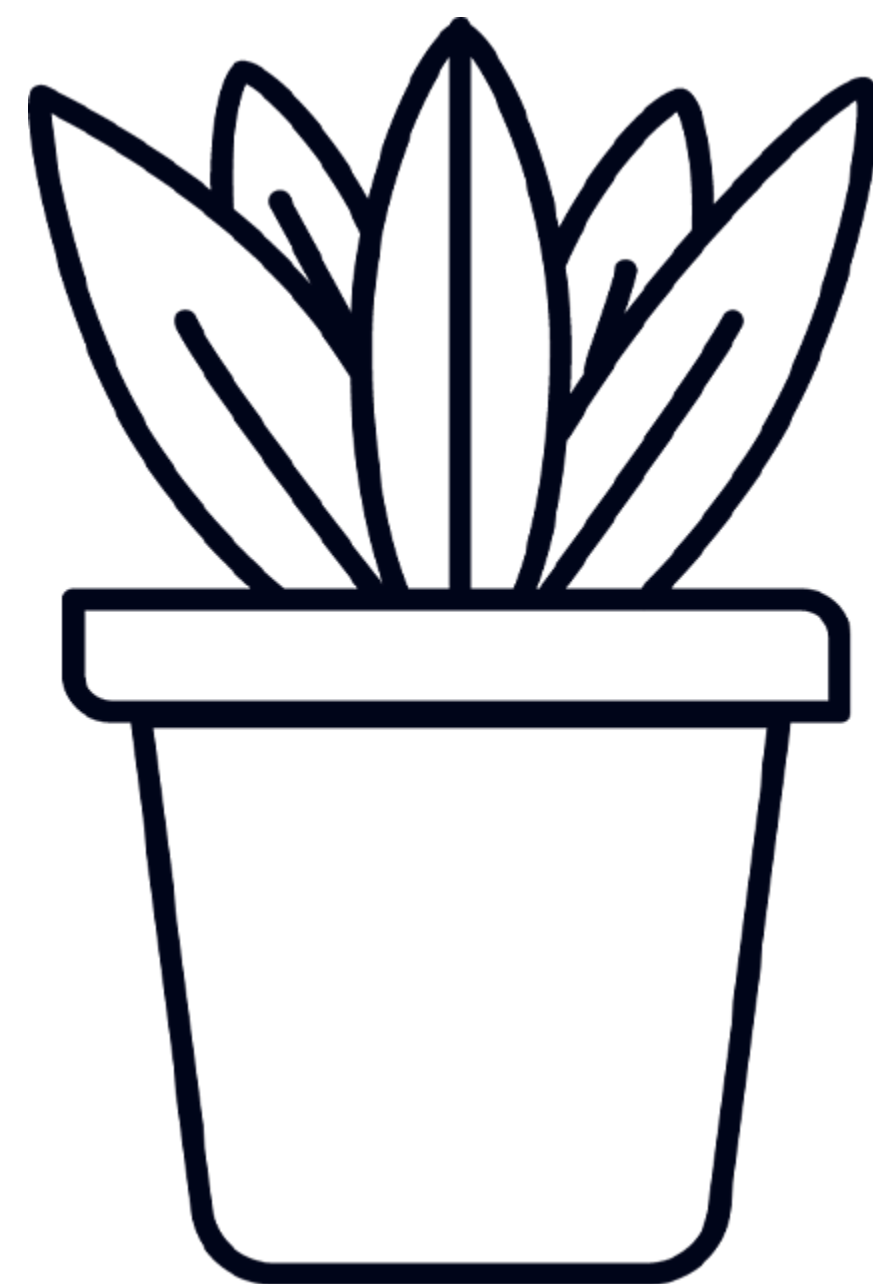
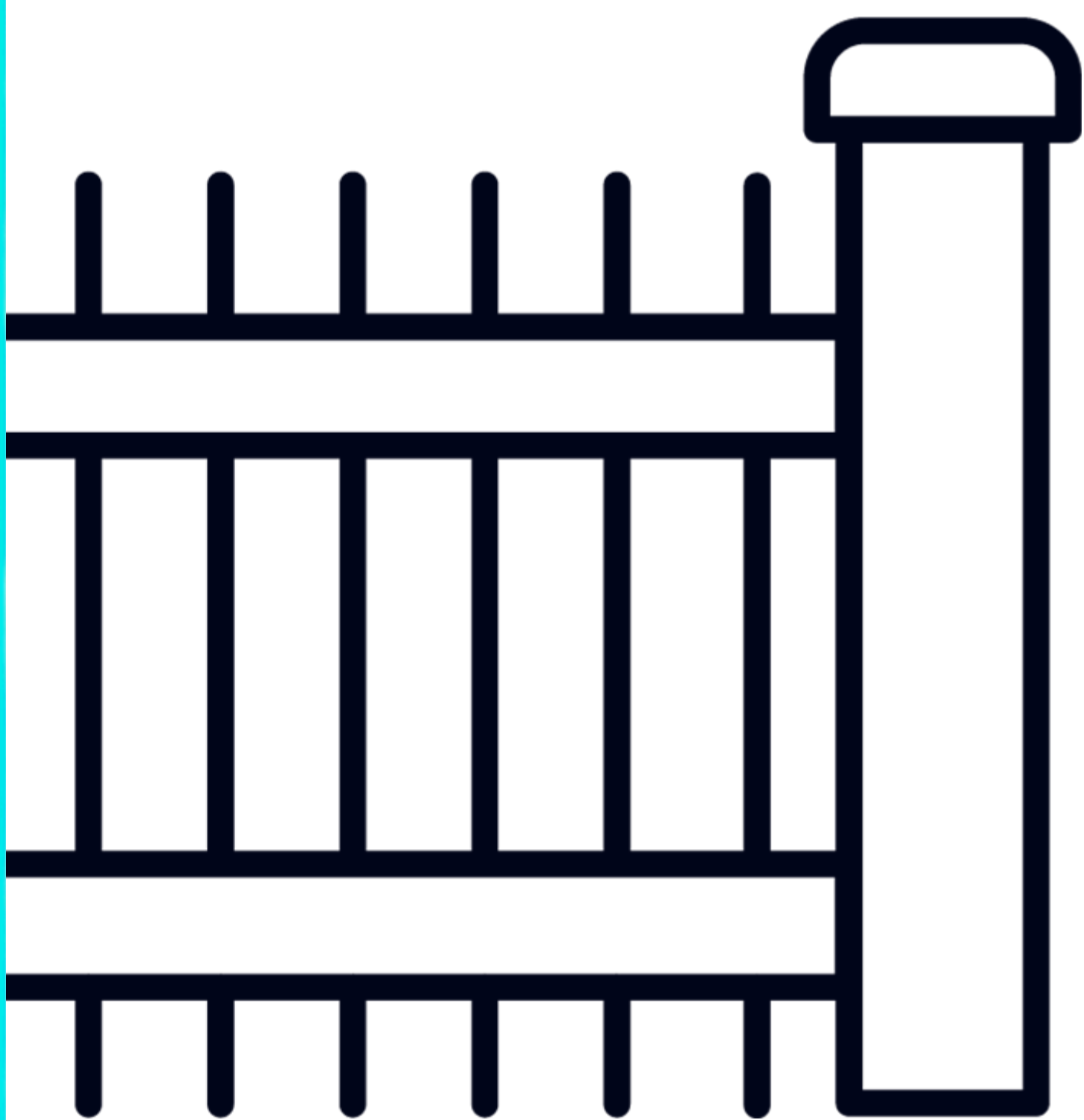
**NORTH STAR**

Creating homes, building futures

**North Star**



**Community Investment  
Strategy  
2025–2028**



# Who is North Star?

We're a North East based Housing Association and our purpose is to provide affordable housing, invest in our communities and develop new homes across the Tees Valley, North Yorkshire and County Durham.

We care about the people and the communities that we serve. We work, in collaboration with others, to create stable, secure, trusting and supportive environments where people feel they belong.

## AT OUR CORE ARE OUR VALUES:

### Creative

We create environments to enable people, places and communities to thrive. We believe many things are possible and that our energy brings about exciting change.

### Connected

We are connected to the world we live in. Therefore, we are relevant, informed and knowledgeable. We develop strong relationships that are based on integrity and trust.

### Courageous

We challenge ourselves and others. We experiment; pioneer and we dare to be different.

## What does this strategy do?

This strategy sets out how North Star will continue to invest in the projects and organisations that matter to the communities we operate in, connecting them to the core purpose of our organisation. It details the resources we will commit and how we will distribute them. It provides clear explanations of the priorities we have identified and how we will work with partners and residents to co-create community led solutions.

## Our approach

North Star practice asset based community development principles. This means we start with what is strong in a community, rather than what's wrong, working with strengths rather than addressing deficits.

We commit funding and staff resource each year to our community investment work. Our team allocate our community investment funding, support the projects during their delivery, monitor the progress they have made and the impact the work has made.

We work hard to understand the communities we work in. We use a wide range of statutory and public data alongside our own data from surveys, Tenant Satisfaction Measures work and transactional feedback as well as our knowledge from working in the communities to know what really matters.

Using this knowledge we prioritise the communities we invest in to ensure we are able to create the largest positive impact possible. We will also utilise our Heartbeat initiative to involve our wider staff team and maximise benefit to our communities.

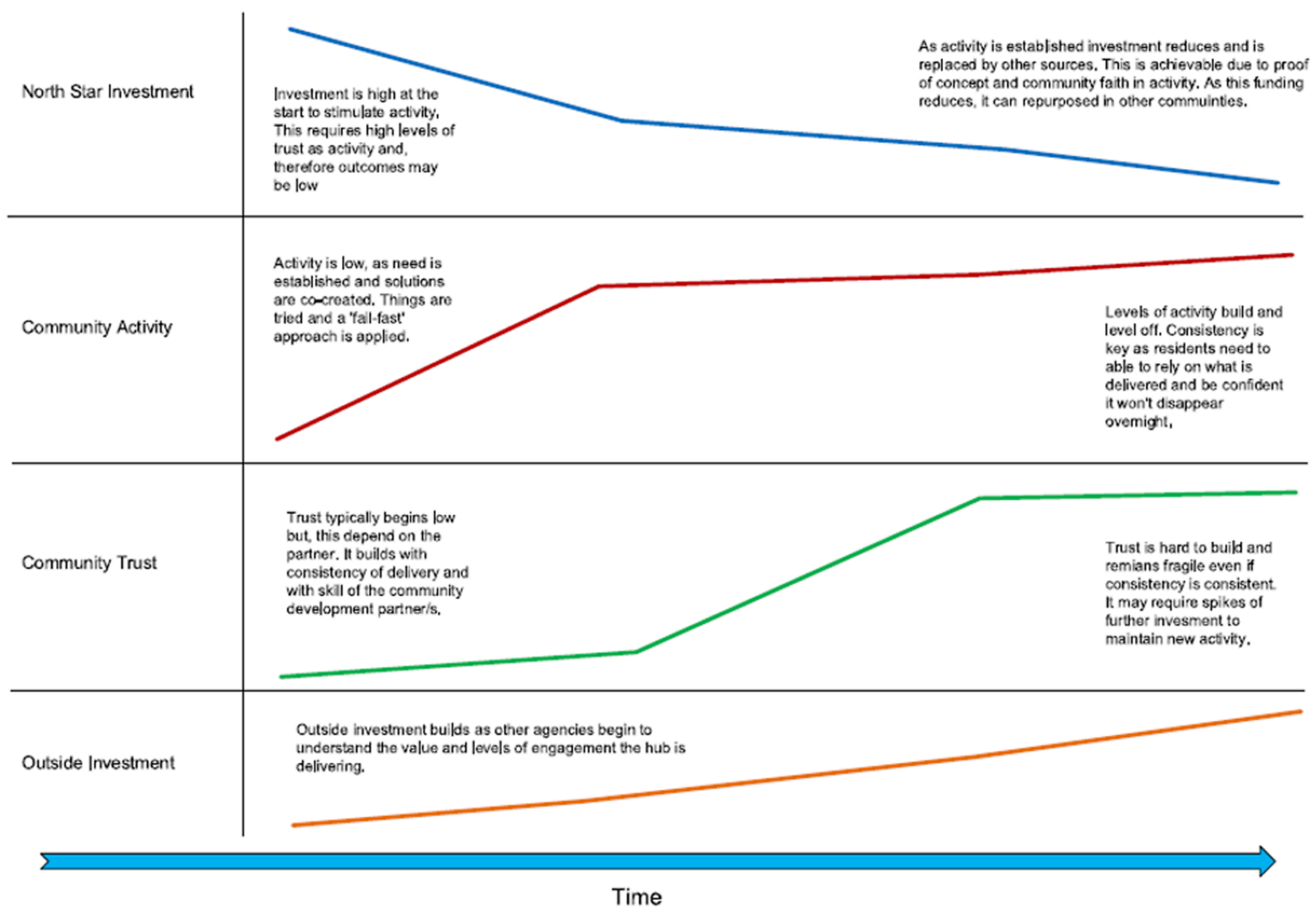
Ultimately, our goal is build community capacity from within that stands the test of time.

Our grants target grass roots organisations, embedded in the communities we work in. The organisations we support have high levels of community trust. We prioritise supporting projects that work, whether they have been delivered for many years or are completely new and innovative. We are also keen to support the creation sustainment of sustainable, grass roots, community led hubs. This could be asset or an organisation that is vital to the community around which great community work takes place. In order to do this, we will consider funding core costs for organisations allowing them to concentrate their efforts and funding on providing services.

We have developed a specific model for funding these hubs that has been extremely successful in supporting the award winning work of Sprouts CiC in Thornaby.



Community Hub Investment Model



We have a streamlined, yet robust grant-making process that is proportionate to the amount of funding we are allocating. Above all, we want to understand the ideas and creativity of our communities whilst also making sure they have the necessary infrastructure and assurances to carry them out safely and effectively.

We also ensure our tenants influence the decision-making process by holding regular panel meetings to sense check and approve the projects we support.

We ensure our decision making and evaluation processes are proportionate and robust. This allows our partners to focus on the delivery of outcomes for the communities we serve. We also provide partners with core funding grants that allow them to be as flexible as possible in response to community needs.

We also work closely with our contractors to deliver social value in our communities. Our approach allows us to focus their contributions on communities and projects that will generate as much positive impact as possible.

# Our Objectives

Through our community investment work in previous years we have supported projects that contribute to the delivery of four of the United Nations' Sustainability Goals, specifically:

- Goal 1 – No poverty
- Goal 3 – Good health and well-being
- Goal 4 – Quality education
- Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities

However, through this work and through discussion with our partners and stakeholders we have come to realise that the over-arching issue for our communities is rooted in poverty, particularly when that poverty is defined not necessarily by lack of resource but, lack of opportunity.

Therefore, we are streamlining our focus and making Goal 1 – No Poverty, the over-arching theme of our community investment work. We have undertaken engagement with our tenants to understand what we can most effectively invest in to improve their communities. The three priorities below have been directly informed by this work.

## Our Community Investment Priorities 2025-28



### Priority 1 – Improving Safety and the Local Environment

Tenants have told us that improving their local environment is a top priority. We know that your home doesn't stop at your front door or your fence or wall. It's about the community it's in and environment that surrounds it.

We also know that there are organisations in the communities we work in that specialise in supporting people to make the most of the shared and green spaces close to their home.

We also know that feeling safe in your community is important to everyone. This isn't just about crime and anti-social behaviour but also, knowing that there are places to go for help and support if you need it.

We will deliver on this priority by:

- Supporting projects that improve the physical environment.
- Supporting projects that develop the skills and capacity of community members to improve their local area.
- Supporting projects that bring people together to identify collective action and solutions.
- Supporting projects that have a long term presence in communities and projects that build community trust.

## **Priority 2 – More Inclusive Activities and Opportunities**

We have worked with Civil Society Consultants to understand how we can better support our delivery partners and stakeholders. Their work told us that projects that ensure everyone has equal access to experiences that some may take for granted, can have huge impacts in communities. This could be something as simple as a community outing to the beach or to a pantomime. These kinds of projects not only open up experiences but, can also build community trust and provide opportunities for support agencies to engage with people in a relaxed and informal environment.

We will deliver on this priority by:

- Supporting projects that prioritise equality of access to services and opportunities.
- Supporting projects that build community trust.
- Working with expert partners to ensure our work and access to our projects is fair and equitable.
- Working with communities to understand what activities and opportunities they would like to access.

## **Priority 3 – Improving Physical and Mental Well-being and Tackling Loneliness.**

We know from engaging with tenants that social isolation can lead to a number of physical and mental well-being challenges. We know that communities and, the activities and project they deliver can have a massive impact on people's ability to connect with one another. We also know that challenging mental and physical well-being is easier when the message is delivered by people communities know and trust.

We will deliver on this priority by:

- Supporting projects that prioritise long term community outcomes.
- Supporting projects that promote community participation and interaction.
- Supporting projects that identify and tackle social isolation and loneliness.
- Working with organisations and partners that can find engaging ways to improve physical and mental well-being.

How we will measure impact:

We have developed our own, tailored approach to measuring impact using recognised Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Treasury methodologies. This methodology focusses on the factors that matter most to our tenants including health, the local area and skills. Alongside this we are measuring four pillars of well-being as identified by the ONS. We will use these to measure distance travelled for individuals and groups that engage with our projects.

We have always prioritised the story telling element of our impact measurement work and we feel this method makes these stories easier to tell and crucially, easier for us to demonstrate to our tenants, board, staff and stakeholders.

We will collect this data using simple, accessible before and after surveys (and in long term projects, during) that will allow us to track impact on our key priorities.

We will also be utilising Most Significant Change methodologies to capture the detail of these journeys and improve the quality and consistency of the stories we are able to tell.

**If you would like more information on how we collect this data and how we will present it, please contact [communities@northstarhg.co.uk](mailto:communities@northstarhg.co.uk).**