Apex Housing Association

Business Plan

2013/14

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Introduction

The Business Plan sets out the key tasks to be undertaken by the Association in the year 2013/14 to achieve the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2011/2014. The Plan addresses the main issues facing Apex. The key tasks indicated are measurable and time bound to allow for the reporting of performance which will be included in the Annual Report, and in regular reports to the Board of Management.

The Financial Plan incorporates the development programme, the methods of financing, together with administrative and management budgets, and indicates that the Association expects to achieve its objectives and maintain its present financial position.

1.0 Managing & Maintaining The Stock

Objectives and Key Tasks

1.1. Continue to deliver effective housing management, ensuring quality; compliance; continuous improvement; value for money; and effective community involvement.

1.1.1 Develop a Tenancy Fraud Prevention Strategy by 31 December 2013.

1.1.2 Implement Year 3 of the Community Involvement Plan by 31 March 2014.

1.1.3 Develop the Community Involvement Strategy 2014 - 2017 by 31 March 2014.

1.2. Further develop responses to ensure stable communities.

1.2.1 Review implementation of Apex's anti-social behaviour procedures and make recommendations for improvement by 31 March 2014.

1.2.2 Extend the 'active tenant' role to 90% of estates and provide training for staff and 'active tenants' by 31 March 2014.

1.2.3 Review the implications of Welfare Reform and make recommendations to address any adverse impact by 31 March 2014.

1.2.4 Research funding opportunities and make an application to further develop Apex's financial inclusion work by 30 September 2013.

1.3. Maintain the stock condition database and roll out responding maintenance programmes.

1.3.1 Analyse all condition survey data to estimate projected annual expenditure for future planned maintenance over a 30 year period by 31 March 2014.

1.4. Raise the energy efficiency of Apex's housing stock.

1.4.1 Increase the overall energy performance of 100 general needs properties to above the Northern Ireland benchmark average of 57 by 31 March 2014.

Objective ■ Key Task ■

1.5. Ensure the efficiency of the maintenance service.

1.5.1 Achieve a 60:40 split of (planned/cyclical: response maintenance) expenditure by 31 March 2014.

1.5.2 Monitor the performance of new contractors in the Minor and Major Works Framework in meeting agreed project delivery targets by 31 January 2014.

1.6 Improve performance through Key Performance Indicators.

1.6.1 Collect 98% of the rent receivable for the current financial year by 31 March 2014.

1.6.2 Reduce 'non-technical' rent arrears by 1% by 31 March 2014.

1.6.3 Reduce void loss by 0.1% by 31 March 2014.

1.7 Ensure services reflect tenant and resident needs and expectations.

1.7.1 Implement the Customer Satisfaction Strategy Action Plan 2013-2014 by 31 March 2014.

1.7.2 Publish performance information for the year 2012-2013 by 31 December 2013.

1.7.3 Undertake a customer journey mapping exercise on the implementation and effectiveness of the Association's Anti-Social Behaviour Procedures, making recommendations for improvement by 31 December 2013.

1.7.4 Implement the new Complaints Policy and Procedure throughout the organisation by 31 December 2013.

1.7.5 Carry out consultation with tenants and residents regarding all planned maintenance works and obtain project completion feedback by 31 March 2014.

2.0 Developing & Delivering Care and Support

Objectives and Key Tasks

2.1 Maintain and develop the Association's existing care and support portfolio in sustainable and affordable ways.

2.1.1 Review the service delivery model within schemes currently in receipt of SNMA, develop an action plan, and implement Stage 1 by 31 March 2014.

2.1.2 Complete the review of tenancy, support and care agreements for Supported Living by 30 September 2013.

2.1.3 Implement the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF 2) process and agree improvement plans by 31 December 2013.

2.1.4 Develop an action plan to address any gaps in meeting the 2013/14 Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSS&PS) Inspection Standards by 30 June 2013.

2.1.5 Implement the outcomes of the tendering exercise on the procurement of agency staff by 30 September 2013.

2.1.6 Assess the feasibility of developing a psychometric tool to assist in the recruitment of care and support staff by 31 March 2014.

2.2 Examine peripatetic care and support delivery models from elsewhere.

2.2.1 Implement the harm reduction service model at the House in the Wells by 30 September 2013.

2.2.2 Review the service delivery model at Springwell House and implement recommendations arising by 31 March 2014.

2.3 Continue to enhance the quality of life of service users.

2.3.1 In conjunction with the Western Health and Social Care Trust, implement the Korsakoff's Amnesic Syndrome project at St Julian's House, Omagh and Alexander House, Derry during 2013/14.

2.3.2 Review the systems to support tenants manage their finances by 31 March 2014, maximising income whilst ensuring appropriate management systems.

2.3.3 Review systems to ensure vulnerable tenants are supported in matters relating to consent and sharing of information and make recommendations by 31 December 2013.

3.0 The Development Agenda

Objectives and Key Tasks

3.1 Deliver the Association's Development Programme, with an increased focus on energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty.

3.1.1 Achieve the total number of site starts allocated to Apex in the published Social Housing Development Programme by 31 March 2014, subject to the availability of public finance.

3.1.2 Achieve at least 200 completions before 31 March 2014.

3.2 Look at innovative and effective ways of delivering good quality, value for money social and affordable housing.

3.2.1 Begin to implement the business plan for Apex's shared ownership Affordable Homes initiative by 30 September 2013.

3.2.2 Begin to implement the business plan for Apex's shared ownership Empty Homes initiative by 30 September 2013.

3.3 Develop Apex's subsidiary (known as Fairbuild Homes) into a going concern.

3.3.1 Raise the profile of Fairbuild Homes through the marketing of 17 homes for sale at Victoria Road, Sydenham.

3.3.2 Assess the feasibility of using Fairbuild Homes to market Apex's shared ownership Affordable Homes initiative by 31 March 2014.

3.4 Continue to manage the Apex Procurement Group to the best advantage of the Group's member associations.

3.4.1 Continue to work in partnership with the Procurement Strategy Programme Board to implement good practice in the delivery of social housing.

3.4.2 Continue to implement the group's five year Business Plan in partnership with the members of Apex Procurement (NI) Limited.

3.4.3 Implement Year 2 of Apex's Procurement Strategy by 31 March 2014.

4.0 Governance

Objectives and Key Tasks

4.1 Continue to seek sustainable, long-term funding support.

4.1.1 Ensure the Association successfully accesses sources of funding to meet the financial commitments and cash flow requirements of the Business Plan throughout the year.

4.2 Manage the Association's financial and other resources to best effect, using performance measures which help Apex manage its business.

4.2.1 Ensure key ratios continue to meet lender financial covenants throughout the year.

4.2.2 Participate in NIFHA/DSD training workshop aimed at establishing standard management and maintenance cost apportionment across the sector and provide regular updates on benchmarking to the Senior Management Team and Board of Management throughout the year.

4.2.3 Arrange advanced training aimed at further developing the skills of team members using the BRIXX financial planning software by 30 September 2013.

4.3 Ensure the on-going effectiveness of the Board of Management.

4.3.1 Develop an action plan to address any issues arising from Board Member's appraisals by 31st March 2014.

4.4 Continue to develop the workforce to meet the Association's business objectives.

4.4.1 Ensure that a further 10 candidates successfully complete either QCF Level 2 or 3 in Health & Social Care by 31 March 2014.

4.4.2 Ensure that a further 3 candidates successfully complete QCF Level 5 in the Management of Health & Social Care by 31 March 2014.

4.4.3 Evaluate the leadership development programme for directors and middle management levels of staff by 31 March 2014.

4.4.4 Source and deliver refresher training on housing management legislation for the specific client groupings by 31 March 2014.

4.5 Look at the issue of 'people succession' at all levels and in all areas within Apex.

4.5.1 Review current organisational performance management systems by 31 March 2014.

4.5.2 Conduct a benchmarking exercise of terms and conditions across the organisation and establish a system of communicating results to staff by 31 March 2014.

4.5.3 Implement the new Recruitment & Selection strategy within the organisation by 31 December 2013.

4.6 Ensure diversity is valued.

4.6.1 Introduce new equality screening procedures to the organisation by 31 March 2014.

4.7 Further improve the Association's IT/ICT capacity.

4.7.1 Implement Real Asset Management Component Accounting software by 31 March 2014.

4.7.2 Ensure iTrent software is fully compliant with HMRC RTI requirements and pension auto-enrolment by 31 December 2013.

4.7.3 Continue to improve communication within and beyond Apex, in particular using IT/ICT-based methods.

4.7.4 Research the implementation of an electronic care planning system and make recommendations as appropriate by 31 December 2013.

4.8 Continue to improve communication within and beyond Apex, in particular using IT/ICT-based methods.

4.8.1 Implement Storage Area Network (San) to permit the amalgamation of data storage into one central unit by 30 September 2013.

4.8.2 Introduce a pilot programme delivering identified modules of training on-line by 31 December 2013.

4.8.3 Issue all job tickets to external contractors by e-mail by 30 September 2013.

4.8.4 Ensure satisfactory web conferencing between boardrooms in Derry and Belfast offices by 30 June 2013.

4.9 Ensure Apex has a sustainable management presence which reflects the geographical spread of its operations.

4.9.1 Implement the revised staffing structure within the Housing and Care Services department by 31 December 2013.

4.10 Continue to develop Apex's corporate social responsibility in meaningful and sustainable ways.

4.10.1 Continue with the Time to Read initiative for staff volunteers within Apex.

4.10.2 Continue to identify suitable placement opportunities with the organisation.

Revenue Budget For Year 2013/14

	£m
Income	
Rents	28.3
Other Income	2.3
	30.6
Expenditure	
Direct Property Management	19.4
Administration	4.4
	23.8
Operating Surplus	6.8
Net Interest Payable	5.7
Transfers to/(from) Reserves	-0.4
	5.3
Retained Surplus	1.5

Financial Statement 2013/14

The Association's Revenue Budget for the next financial year indicates strong growth in income from rents and other activities to £30.6m, an increase of 12.1% on 2012/13. Revenue expenditure is budgeted at £23.3m (an increase of 12.8% on 2012/13) resulting in an overall operating surplus of £6.8m. This is an increase of 9.7% on the current year and represents a good result for the Association in a difficult operating environment. After deducting net interest payable and transfers to reserves totalling £5.3m, the budgeted retained surplus for the year is set at £1.5m.

The Association has continued to develop much needed social housing despite public sector cuts affecting both its capital and revenue streams. This year will see a 10% cut in Special Needs Management Allowance legacy funding and this has the potential to affect the quality of services to vulnerable adults in our Learning Disability schemes. This is a concern for the Association and plans are underway to mitigate these reductions and maintain services. Inflationary pressures continue to reduce slightly, however higher borrowing costs continue to impact on the overall results. The Association's sizeable development programme will start to contribute positively to revenue income in the second half of this year. Over the coming year, the Association will spend £63.9m on developing new schemes and capital alterations and improvements to existing properties. To fund the capital programme, Apex expects to receive £30.9m of Housing Association Grant, release £4.6m from the Disposal Proceeds Fund and draw down a further £28.4m of private finance. These additional borrowings will bring total loans to £155m by the end of March 2014. Based on historic costs, the projected total assets of the Association after deduction of capital grants at 31 March 2014 is forecast to be £156m.

At the start of 2013/14 Apex had 922 units at construction stage. The year will see the completion of 652 units by 31 March 2014, including significant projects in Northern Ireland such as 146 dwellings at Burren Meadow, Newcastle, 180 dwellings in Creggan, Derry and 67 dwellings on the Ravenhill Road, Belfast. All these houses are energy efficient incorporating Lifetime Homes, Code for Sustainability and Secured by Design standards. The Association's design teams and three Clerk of Works ensure high quality housing developments with good workmanship on all sites.

During the year the Association's development team will continue to work up new proposals to bring a further 300 units on site before the end of the financial year.

Apex's subsidiary company, Fairbuild Homes (NI) Ltd will also start the construction of its first scheme comprising 17 homes for sale at Victoria Road, Belfast.

The Apex Voluntary Housing Group comprises:
Apex Housing Association Limited
Apex Charitable Trust (NI) Limited
Fairbuild Homes (NI) Limited

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