Community Investment

Strategy 2017~2020
Action Plan 2017~2018

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Community Investment

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Making a real difference to people's lives

Working beyond our core activities

Apex works in some of the most deprived communities within Northern Ireland and increasingly sees itself working beyond its core business activities. This is necessitated by the considerable pressures society in general continues to face in the challenging economic climate that prevails.

The impact of recession, welfare reform, spending cuts and unemployment is severely affecting the already disadvantaged members of society that we serve. Apex therefore seeks to deliver a range of programmes and services that instigate positive change and make a fundamental difference to people's lives, thereby making society a better place.

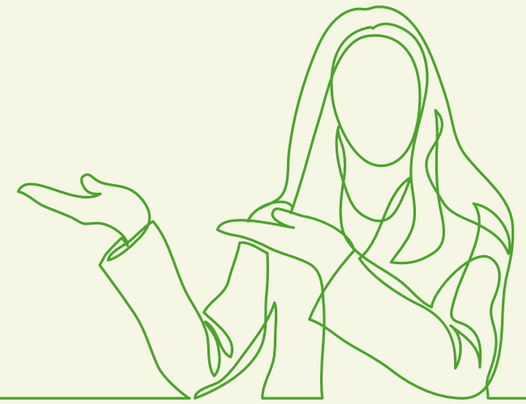
Through investing in people, property and the environment, we aim to make a real difference to the way people live their lives. To help achieve our aim, we have opened the Apex Living Centre in Springtown, Derry~Londonderry. The Centre is designed to enable tenants and residents to access a range of initiatives including; self-development programmes, advice on health and well-being, budgeting, etc. The Centre is well resourced with an IT training suite and demonstration kitchen.

By enhancing our engagement in community investment activities we want to establish Apex as one of the leading socially responsible organisations in Northern Ireland.

Key Areas

The 'Community Investment Strategy 2017~2020' provides a focus to ensure we are working towards common goals which in turn have been shaped by feedback from stakeholders including tenants, community groups and employees. They target the following areas of activity:

- Health & Well-Being
- Financial Well-Being
- Work & Learning
- Community Empowerment & Engagement
- Volunteering



Individual, community and environment

What guides us
The 'Community Investment Strategy 2017~2020' has three strategic themes aimed at the individual, the wider community and the environment.

STRATEGIC THEMES	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2017~2020
1.0 Enable people to fulfil their aspirations	1.1 Support people to make informed decisions about their lives and increasing their independence.
	1.2 Support people to recognise their potential by increasing their motivation, confidence, skills and knowledge.
2.0 Enable successful communities	2.1 Provide opportunities for people to participate in making decisions about their communities.
	2.2 Support people to fulfil their vision and aspirations for their community and between communities.
3.0 Enable people to reduce their impact on the environment	3.1 Support people in the efficient use of energy and other resources.
	3.2 Support people to enhance the quality of their environment.

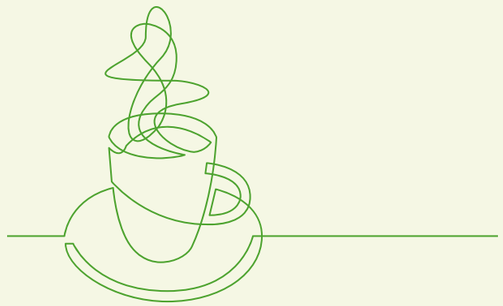
Measuring our effectiveness
To ensure we achieve our strategic objectives, the 'Community Investment Action Plan 2017~2018' sets specific tasks. These are measurable and the outcomes are reported. Impact will be assessed through the measurement of outputs and outcomes using the 'Value Calculator' for well-being, developed by Housing Associations Charitable Trust.

The 'Community Investment Strategy 2017~2020' does not operate in isolation, but instead seeks to develop working partnerships with a range of organisations to ensure effective delivery.

1.0 Enable people to fulfil their aspirations

Strategic Objectives 2017~2020

1.1 Support people to make informed decisions about their lives and increasing their independence.



Action Plan Tasks 2017~2018

1.1.1 Health & Well-Being Activity

a) Implement the 'Employee Well-Being Calendar', with a focus on mental well-being by 31 March 2018.

b) Provide a minimum of 80 meals per week for older people through the luncheon club facility at Abbey House by 31 March 2018.

c) Deliver a series of cooking and food preparation skills sessions for tenants in Supported Living by 31 March 2018.

d) Work with Foyle Foodbank to provide emergency food from the Apex Living Centre, Springtown, Derry~Londonderry by 31 March 2018.

e) Deliver a minimum of 12 training sessions at the Apex Living Centre to promote the health and well-being of Apex tenants by 31 March 2018.

f) Investigate and address the transport needs of local communities attending the Apex Living Centre, Springtown, Derry~Londonderry by 30 September 2017.

g) Submit four applications for funding to develop skills and opportunities for tenants by 31 March 2018.

h) Ensure at least three sheltered schemes participate in a cultural event in conjunction with Derry City & Strabane District Council by 31 March 2018.

i) Ensure a minimum of three sheltered schemes hold a workshop facilitated by Arthritis Care by 31 March 2018.

j) Ensure a minimum of three sheltered schemes hold a home safety event in conjunction with the Community Safety Wardens/PSNI Community Safety Team/Neighbourhood Watch Teams by 31 March 2018.

k) Monitor the impact of the 'Enhanced Repair Service' for disabled tenants by 31 March 2018.

1.0 Enable people to fulfil their aspirations

Strategic Objectives 2017~2020

1.1 Support people to make informed decisions about their lives and increasing their independence.

Action Plan Tasks 2017~2018

1.1.2 Community Empowerment & Engagement Activity

a) Organise bi-annual focus group meetings to ensure supported living tenants/residents are offered the opportunity to make choices and participate in decisions affecting them by 31 March 2018.

b) Organise quarterly meetings of the 'Active Tenant Network' during 2017~2018.

1.1.3 Financial Well-Being Activity

a) Assist a minimum of 20 people to access training for employment by 31 December 2017.

b) Encourage 20 tenants to commence savings with the affordable credit project by 31 March 2018.

c) Ensure all new Apex tenants receive a social security benefits health check within two months of commencing their tenancy.

d) Ensure all tenants seeking debt assistance are referred for specialist advice within three days of initial contact.

e) Set up basic bank accounts for 12 tenants who have difficulty in accessing a bank account by 31 March 2018.

f) Implement a benefits uptake project for people over 65 years of age by 31 December 2017.

g) Develop a resettlement clinic with Advice NI to support new tenants by 30 September 2017.

h) Investigate the potential to develop working partnerships with advice centres in other areas of Northern Ireland by 31 December 2017.

ACTION PLAN 2017~2018

1.0 Enable people to fulfil their aspirations

Strategic Objectives 2017~2020

1.2 Support people to recognise their potential by increasing their motivation, confidence, skills and knowledge.

Action Plan Tasks 2017~2018

1.2.1 Work & Learning Activity

a) Employ two apprentices within the direct labour team by 31 March 2018.

b) Provide at least 20 work placements in partnership with North West Regional College and Ulster University by 31 March 2018.

c) Implement the schedule of activities through the 'Making Connections' project between Apex and Lisneal and Oakgrove Colleges by 31 March 2018.

d) Assist 12 children from the Model Primary School, Derry~Londonderry in a 'Time to Read' programme by 31 March 2018.

e) Support at least 20 staff to successfully complete an accredited qualification by 31 March 2018.

f) Deliver an 'Essential Skills and Personal Development Training Programme' to residents in Springwell House, Belfast and the Strand Foyer, Derry~Londonderry through joint working with partner organisations by 31 March 2018.

g) Support the Fr Mulvey Park Gardening Club, Derry~Londonderry in partnership with Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum during 2017~2018.

h) Investigate the potential to develop a community social enterprise within one Apex estate by 31 March 2018.

2.0 Enable successful communities

Strategic Objectives 2017~2020

2.1 Provide opportunities for people to participate in making decisions about their communities.

Action Plan Tasks 2017~2018

2.1.1 Community Empowerment & Engagement Activity

a) Hold at least two meetings per year with the supported living focus groups to support residents/tenants to participate effectively by 31 March 2018.

b) Use the information received from the 'Value Calculator' for well-being to inform decisions about positive change within communities during 2017~2018.

c) Produce a video on Apex's supported living schemes in conjunction with students from North West Regional College by 31 March 2018.

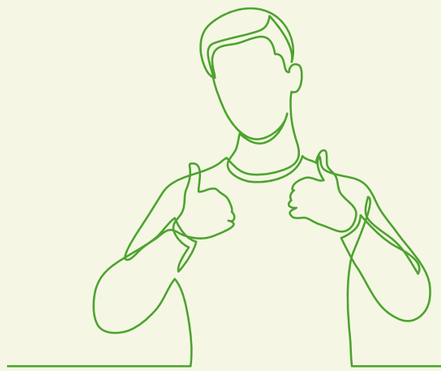
2.2 Support people to fulfil their vision and aspirations for their community and between communities.

2.2.1 Community Empowerment & Engagement Activity

a) Continue to work with Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum to increase the outcomes of the 'Getting on Well' project, throughout the Derry City & Strabane District Council area.

b) Measure the outcomes of support provided to community groups and through Apex's community centres at Cornshell Fields and Ferndale/Fernabbey in Derry~Londonderry; and Falcarragh, Co. Donegal by 30 September 2017.

c) Work with Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) to commence implementation of the 'Housing Associations Integration Project' during 2017~2018.



2.0 Enable successful communities

Strategic Objectives 2017~2020

2.2 Support people to fulfil their vision and aspirations for their community and between communities.

Action Plan Tasks 2017~2018

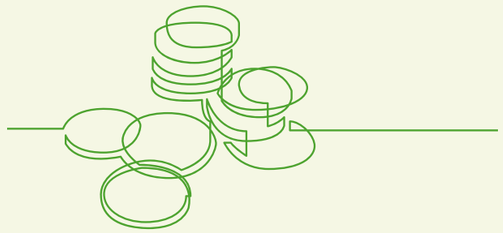
2.2.1 Community Empowerment & Engagement Activity

d) Deliver two inter-generational projects between sheltered housing tenants and two local schools by 31 March 2018.

e) Investigate the possibility of developing a retail unit and community hub at Clon Elagh, Derry~Londonderry by 31 March 2018.

f) Work with local groups to develop a community facility at Trench Road, Derry~Londonderry by 31 March 2018.

g) Review systems for accessing grant funding for community projects and make recommendations by 31 December 2017.



2.2.2 Volunteering Activity

a) Implement a 'Volunteers Strategy' by 31 March 2018.

b) Ensure that at least £14,000 is raised in 'Give As You Earn' contributions and other fundraising activities by 31 March 2018.

c) Make at least £10,000 available to Children in Crossfire for the 'Safe Water Project' in Miwaleni, Tanzania by 30 September 2017.

d) Assist Apex staff in their fundraising activities for at least four charities and record charitable giving by 31 March 2018.

e) Recruit appropriate volunteers to help deliver six anti-poverty initiatives at the Apex Living Centre by 31 March 2018.

3.0 Enable people to reduce their impact on the environment

Strategic Objectives 2017~2020

3.1 Support people in the efficient use of energy and other resources.

3.2 Support people to enhance the quality of their environment.

Action Plan Tasks 2017~2018

3.1.1 Community Empowerment & Engagement Activity

a) Hold four energy switching campaigns to assist tenants and staff to source the best deal for energy provision by 31 March 2018.

b) Encourage 25 new tenants to join local oil buying clubs by 31 March 2018.

c) Source external funding to produce energy efficiency information for tenants by 31 December 2017.

3.2.1 Community Empowerment & Engagement Activity

a) Manage the service level agreement with the Bogside and Brandywell Initiative for the development and upkeep of the Ballymagowan Community Park, Derry~Londonderry during 2017~2018.

b) Measure the impact of the allotment plots at Ballymagowan Country Park, Derry~Londonderry by 31 March 2018.

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This document is available in alternative formats on request.

The Apex Voluntary Housing Group comprises:

Apex Housing Association Limited
Newington Housing Association Limited
Fairbuild Homes (NI) Limited

View detailed information about ***Apex's services*** *on www.apex.org.uk*

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