The Journey Ahead

Apex Corporate Strategy
2020 - 2023

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Planning our journey

Over the last three years we have come a long way on our journey to build sustainable communities by delivering high quality, affordable homes including tailored support and care services.

We continue to enable and engage our team, support our service users, maintain our homes and provide more homes whilst being an efficient, best practice business that promotes tenant participation and community investment.

This Strategy has been developed in consultation with tenants, board members and staff. It lays out the 'road map' for the next three years of our journey.

We are passionate about our vision, committed to our communities and determined to deliver on the six strategic priorities identified within this strategy. We will respond to the challenges and opportunities that may arise along the way, ensuring we deliver for those who use our services and need our help.

We know 'the only impossible journey is the one you never begin.'

John Meehan
Chairman

Sheena McCallion
Chief Executive

OUR BUSINESS

What we do...

About us

700 staff at Apex work to provide and maintain 6,000 high quality homes and deliver care and support for almost 15,000 tenants and residents. The number of homes under management is expected to grow to more than 7,000 within the next three years.

We provide:

- General needs housing for families and single people
- Purpose-built accommodation for older people and families with complex needs
- Supported housing for people with mental health difficulties, learning disabilities, alcohol/drug addictions, those who are physically disabled and young people in need of support
- Housing support for vulnerable groups under the Supporting People programme
- Support services for tenants and the wider community through our community investment programme
- Community buildings under the management of local communities

We facilitate home ownership

We facilitate home ownership through the provision of affordable housing for sale and the opportunity for shared ownership.

We work with other Associations

Apex works with Newington Housing Association, using our joint resources for mutual benefit and we provide services on behalf of Apex Housing Association (Ireland).

What guides us?

**This Strategy gives us direction for the period 2020-2023.
Our vision, mission and values continue to underpin everything we do as an organisation, both collectively and individually.**

Vision

For every person to enjoy great quality homes and support in vibrant and caring communities.

Mission

To lead the way in building sustainable communities through the delivery of quality, affordable homes including tailored support and care services.

Values

We care
We want to make a positive difference to people's lives.

We take ownership
We are all responsible for ensuring we deliver our mission.

We do things well
We lead the way, we aim to get it right and to continuously improve.

We work together
We collaborate to get the best result.

We show respect
We are respectful and courteous to everyone we come in contact with.

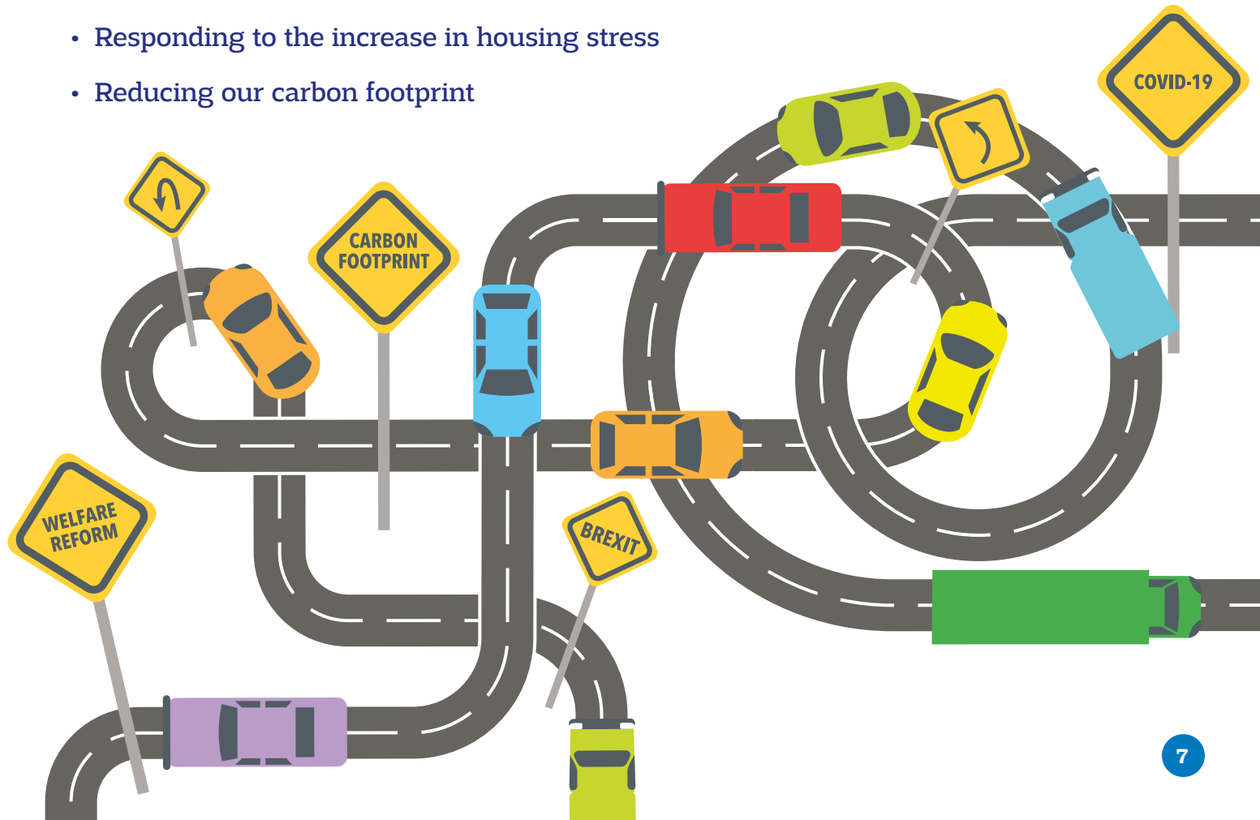
Factors influencing our journey

Apex recognises that as we continue on our journey there are factors that will influence implementation of our Strategy.

We will continue to identify, assess and manage the risks, challenges and opportunities arising, in pursuit of delivering our vision.

These include:

- Ensuring effective governance
- Ensuring compliance
- Ensuring tenancy sustainment
- Implementing Welfare Reform
- Managing our finances
- Managing the impact of Brexit
- Managing the effects of Covid-19
- Responding to the increase in housing stress
- Reducing our carbon footprint



Priority for the journey...

1.0 Enable and engage our team

What we've achieved (2017-2020)

- The total number of people employed by Apex increased from 644 to 690.
- Almost 350 recruitment campaigns were carried out.
- 104 staff were supported to successfully complete an accredited qualification.
- A dedicated communications resource has been established.
- Three new apprentices joined the Property Services team.

Priority for the journey...

1.0 Enable and engage our team

What we plan to do (2020-2023)

- Review recruitment and retention strategies to ensure that we attract and retain the right people with the right skills.
- Equip managers with the necessary skills to lead effectively through a tailored leadership development programme.
- Review absence management within the organisation and develop tools to assist line managers with this responsibility.
- Continue to build on our relationship with UNISON – following the introduction of the recognition agreement.

Priority for the journey...

2.0 Support those who use our services and need our help

Priority for the journey...

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What we've achieved (2017-2020)

- Maintained strong performance in regard to our Key Performance Indicators.
- Maintained high levels of tenant satisfaction with 88% of our tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by Apex.
- Fundamentally reviewed our front line service delivery for general needs tenants to ensure that we continue to support tenants who need our help.
- Met the standards set by both the Department of Health and Supporting People for the delivery of housing care and support to tenants living within our supported living facilities.
- With the assistance of funding from the Supporting People Innovation Fund we reviewed the service model for those with mental health difficulties.
- Provided housing related services to almost 6,000 households, and support and care to over 1,000 of these.

What we plan to do (2020-2023)

- Continue to deliver reliable, high quality, cost effective services.
- Help maintain tenancies and provide flexible support in response to the changing needs of tenants.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to provide broader tenancy support.
- Continue to go that extra mile to help our tenants deal with the challenges arising as a result of Welfare Reform.
- Work with our partners to progress the outcomes arising from the review of mental health services.
- Enhance continuity of care for our service users by reviewing how we deliver services.

Priority for the journey...

3.0 Have well maintained, energy efficient homes

What we've achieved (2017-2020)

- 77,000 repairs were carried out.
- 84% of tenants were satisfied with their last repair.
- Invested over £10m in our homes through planned upgrades and cyclical maintenance projects.
- Assisted tenants in 570 homes across Northern Ireland to reduce fuel poverty through our partnership with Bryson Energy.

What we plan to do (2020-2023)

- Invest a further £10m to upgrade and maintain our properties.
- Continue to work in partnership with Bryson Energy to ensure our homes are energy efficient and our tenants benefit from lower energy costs.
- Continue to ensure timely and efficient statutory compliance.

Priority for the journey...

3.0 Have well maintained, energy efficient homes

Priority for the journey...

4.0 Provide more homes and sustainable development

What we've achieved (2017-2020)

- Worked to meet government's social housing agenda by delivering more than 1,400 new site starts and completing more than 1,000 new homes.
- Provided access to affordable housing by selling 117 homes through our shared ownership product - FairShare.

Priority for the journey...

4.0 Provide more homes and sustainable development

What we plan to do (2020-2023)

- Help reduce waiting lists in areas of high housing need by commencing construction of between 400 and 450 energy efficient new homes per year, subject to planning and project approvals.
- 300 homes will be completed and handed over to new tenants annually across Northern Ireland including Lisburn, Belfast, Newtownabbey, Newry and Derry~Londonderry.
- The development programme will be part-funded by the Department for Communities. In addition Apex will provide £30m - £35m per year in private finance.
- Explore low-carbon and affordable home heating solutions that align with government's plans to end fossil fuel heating systems in new homes from 2025.

Priority for the journey...

5.0 Be an efficient, best practice business

What we've achieved (2017-2020)

- Secured £130m through a low cost finance contract with the European Investment Bank and invested £93m of this in our new build social housing development programme.
- Introduced Capita Totalmobile to enable more effective and efficient delivery of services to tenants.
- Streamlined our payments system by introducing electronic purchase-to-pay.

Priority for the journey...

5.0 Be an efficient, best practice business

What we plan to do (2020-2023)

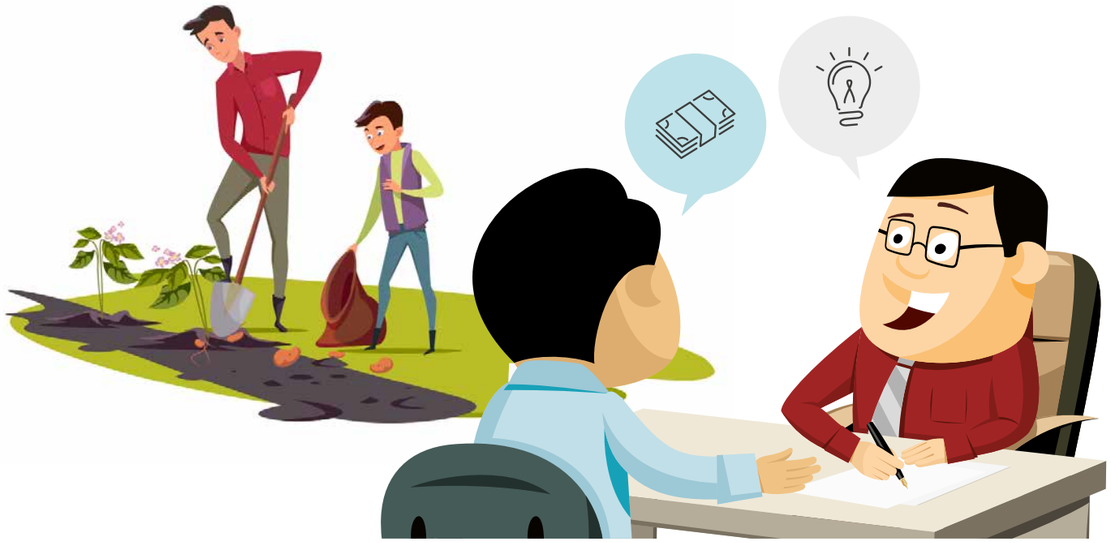
- Continue to ensure effective governance.
- Effectively manage our finances by retaining our S&P credit rating at an investment grade; and forging out new partnerships with bond investors with an appetite to invest in the sector.
- Benchmark our services and report on Value for Money to ensure we continue to deliver effective and efficient services.
- Improve the customer experience and reduce our carbon footprint through new and innovative ways of working and communicating, underpinned by smarter use of IT.

Priority for the journey...

6.0 Promote tenant participation and community investment

What we've achieved (2017-2020)

- Expanded our Tenant Participation team and increased tenant engagement; further strengthening the 'tenant voice'.
- Further developed opportunities for tenant involvement through our menu of options and established an editorial panel for the Apex Observer.
- Worked to address food poverty through our partnership with Foyle Foodbank and secured funding and successfully developed the Apex Community Supermarket to assist those experiencing financial difficulties.
- Recruited 44 volunteers and provided employment and education opportunities to over 140 tenants and residents through our Community Supermarket and Financial Inclusion initiatives.
- Provided 132 placement opportunities to school/college and university students providing a taster of the world of work.
- Achieved recognition for the positive impact of our community investment work receiving awards from Business in the Community NI, Social Enterprise NI and the Chartered Institute of Housing.



Priority for the journey...

6.0 Promote tenant participation and community investment

What we plan to do from 2020-2023

- Continue to put tenants at the centre of all we do.
- Involve tenants in service improvement by engaging with them to review our existing services, measure performance in key areas, discuss the key issues affecting where they live and ensure the services we offer meet their needs and expectations.
- Continue to work towards our vision of establishing Apex as one of the leading socially responsible organisations in Northern Ireland.
- Support the development of successful communities; promoting positive partnerships and enabling people to fulfil their aspirations.
- Continue to address poverty and seek out opportunities to enable individuals and communities to thrive.

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This document is available in alternative formats on request.

GROUP

The Apex Voluntary Housing Group comprises:

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

APEX.ORG.UK

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

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