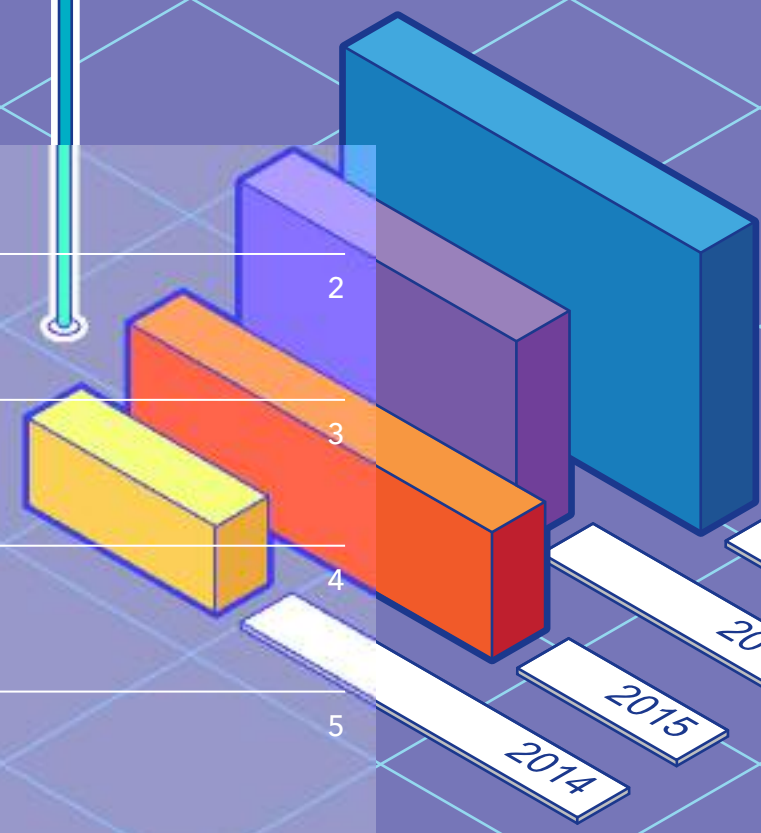
Corporate Strategy 2014~17
Business Plan 2014~15

The Apex Plan

The Apex Plan



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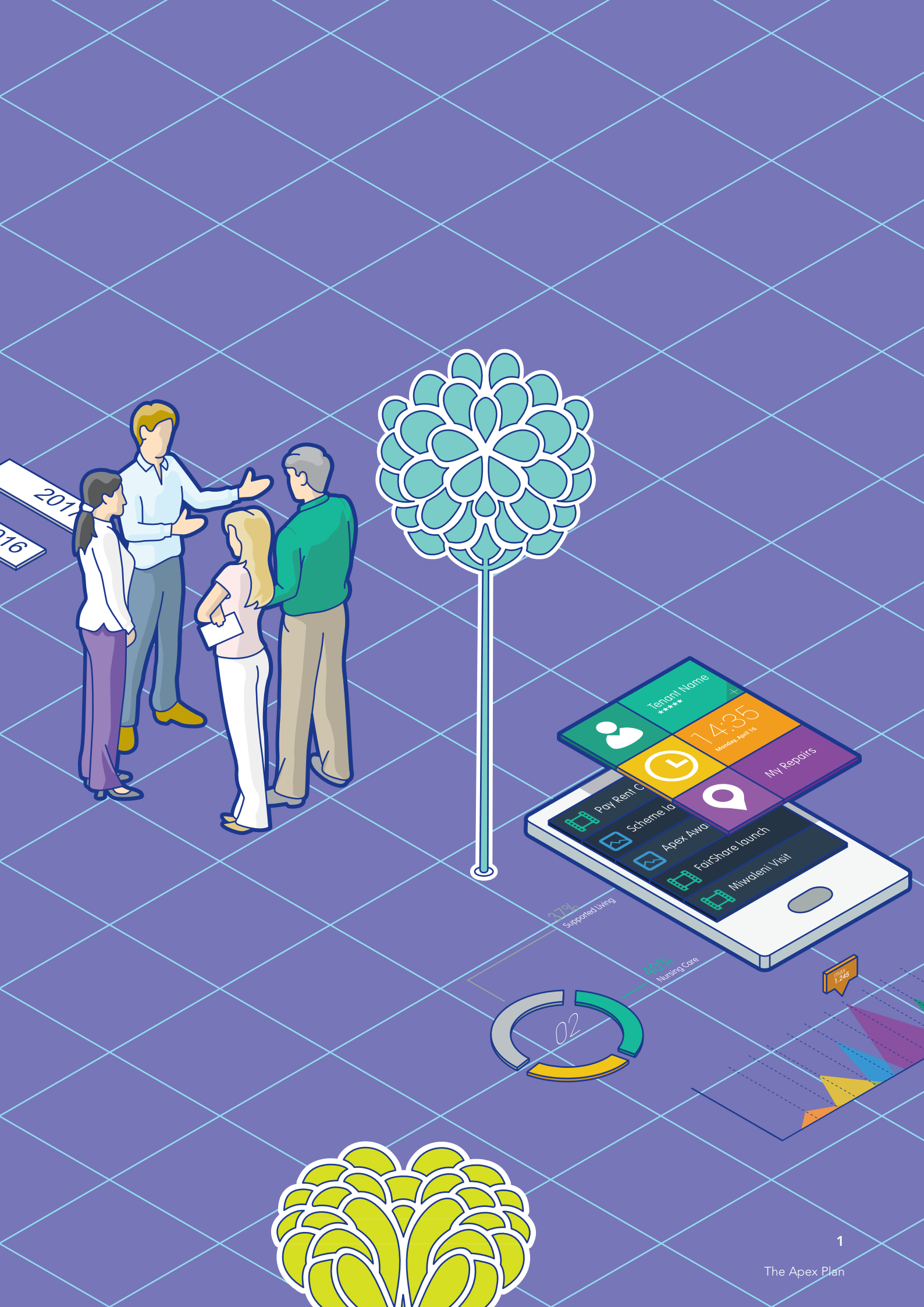
2.0 Have well maintained energy efficient homes 15

3.0 Provide more homes and sustainable development 16-17

4.0 Be an efficient, best practice business 18-19

5.0 Enable and engage our team 20


Tenant Name
*****
14:35
Monday, April 16
My Repairs
FairShare launch
Miwaleni Visit
37%
Supported Living
49%
Nursing Care
02

Our Business

What we do

Apex Housing Association (Apex) is a major housing association managing a stock of some 4,500 homes, which will grow to over 5,500 when our current planned programmes are completed. Our business is housing and associated care and support services, and from tiny beginnings almost half-a-century ago in Derry~Londonderry, we have grown into a substantial organisation which provides:

- *General needs housing for families and single people*
- *Purpose-built accommodation for older people*
- *Supported housing for people with individual needs, including those with mental health difficulties; learning disabilities; alcohol/drug addictions; and those who are physically disabled*
- *Support services for vulnerable groups under the Supporting People programme*
- *Community buildings under the management of local communities*

Apex works across Northern Ireland and in the Republic. We are a not-for-profit housing association, led by volunteers and work to social enterprise principles. We employ over 600 staff throughout the organisation and through our group structure we also provide affordable housing both for rent and for sale.

We have recently introduced FairShare, an innovative shared ownership scheme for the Northern Ireland housing market. FairShare gives homebuyers the opportunity to buy a share of their new home now, with the option of buying the rest later. The scheme enables homebuyers to buy a new-build home or an existing property, directly from Apex, a developer or private home owner.

What we will do

The Apex Plan provides us with strategic themes and objectives which set the direction of travel for everything we will do over the next three years. We need this to give us a focus and to make sure we are working towards common goals. To ensure we achieve these goals, the Business Plan section sets specific tasks annually for each of the three years. These are measurable and the outcomes are reported to the Board of Management and to shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

The new Plan has been shaped by feedback from employees, tenants and Board members. It sets out our priorities to build on the success of the past three years and will introduce new initiatives to help deliver our aims. Over the coming period, the themes of the Plan will feed into staff appraisals, training and development initiatives, team action plans and key performance indicators.

Apex does not operate in isolation, but instead is influenced by and has to react effectively to changing contexts, not only within the housing and care sectors but also within the societal and community fabric. In the same way we must learn from our own recent past, using our experiences - both good and bad, to help us plan ahead.

Due to the hard work and commitment of our staff over the lifetime of the previous Corporate Strategy 2011-14, Apex has performed well and remains in a strong position despite challenging times.

By pulling together in the same direction we can continue our success and make a real difference to people's lives.

Vision, Mission & Values

What we value

Although the new Plan will give us direction for the next three years, our vision, mission and values will run beyond that period and underpin everything we do as an organisation, both collectively and individually.

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Our Values

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

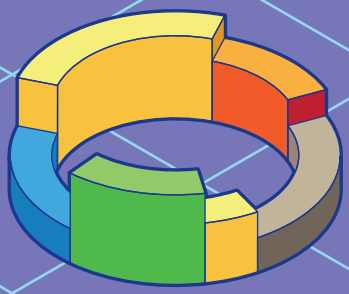
We take ownership ~
we are all responsible for ensuring we deliver our mission.

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 of and courteous to everyone we come in contact with.

Recent Performance



What we have achieved

The specific achievements of the previous Corporate Strategy 2011-2014 include:

- The development and delivery of over 1,000 additional new homes
- A number of construction and care awards for specific projects and schemes
- Increased annual income from £24.1m to £30.3m while decreasing cost base from 82% to 76%
- Growth in housing assets from £291.1m to £417.3m
- Re-accreditation of Investors in People recognition - enhanced to Silver award
- Significant progress in implementing the new standards introduced by DHSSPS in regard to the delivery of nursing, residential and domiciliary care services and by Supporting People for the delivery of housing support services
- Implementation of an accredited and structured staff training and development programme
- Acquisition of and re-location to new office accommodation in Belfast
- Achievement of over 90% of Business Plan tasks year on year
- Additional funding of £6.25m for community initiatives

This demonstrates the hard work and commitment of our staff at every level within the organisation during the past three years, a period when we also had to deal with:

- The continued collapse in the housing and housing land markets with little sign of recovery
- Continuing major difficulties within the banking and financial sectors curtailing the flow of private finance to housing associations
- Ongoing growth in regulation affecting every part of our work
- Unilateral freezes and reductions in health and social care and housing support funding for much of the Association's core work
- Growing need for affordable housing

Factors Influencing our Plan

Government Policy

At national government level, major changes in benefit support to households and individuals under the Welfare Reform agenda are now well underway. Within Northern Ireland, a strategic review of the Housing Executive is being progressed and the Reform of Public Administration will see the significant transfer of planning and regeneration functions to local government in 2015.

The austerity approach of the UK government will mean that funding pressures will continue within all Northern Ireland departments for the foreseeable future. As we work hard to cope with the effect of an ongoing reduction in our spending power in real terms, increasing regulation will continue to force the cost of provision upwards. Finally, sustainability (social, economic and environmental) and the good relations/shared future agenda will continue to be important themes that we wish to embrace.

Social & Community Changes

By 2023 the population of Northern Ireland is projected to grow by 8% (or almost 145,000), with the highest rates of growth in the south and west. At the same time, household sizes will continue to fall (from 2.7 now, to 2.4 in 2021) - a parallel increase in the number of households (projected to increase by 20% by 2021) will significantly drive up the demand for new housing.

Family and kinship structures continue to shift, with for example, lone pensioner and lone parent households now accounting for one in five of all households in Northern Ireland. There is now a sizeable migrant worker population, though it is not evenly distributed, with some areas such as east Tyrone having major concentrations of migrant households.

Deprivation and disadvantage persist as core issues across Northern Ireland with major concentrations in a number of urban and rural communities. Well over a third of 16-74 year-old adults are economically inactive and in many communities significant numbers of people are dependent on benefits, have poor levels of educational achievement, and/or work in low-paid, often unskilled jobs. All the while, anti-social behaviour is seen to be a growing concern.

Factors Influencing our Plan

The Housing Market

The collapse in the housing and financial markets continues to have major impacts. Among them are:

- Minimal new private house-building
- Many people experiencing difficulties in obtaining mortgages
- Many people in negative equity

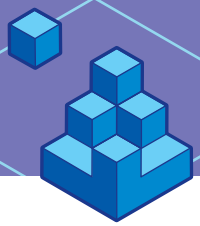
The Housing Executive's 2013-16 Housing Market Review sets out a clear analytical context for much of our work. It confirms:

- Demand for social housing will remain high with some 2,000 new homes required each year for the next three years
- The number of applicants on the waiting list stands at more than 40,000, with those in 'housing stress' (more than 22,000) continuing to rise
- Much work remains to be done to make housing fit for purpose in terms of energy efficiency and fuel poverty, and in meeting the specific needs of households

We believe that over the coming years the main strategic housing issues will include:

- Helping meet the substantial need for social housing through new-build and other means
- Improving the energy efficiency of our stock, thereby addressing fuel poverty
- Supporting existing households
- Providing and managing housing stock which meets the needs of an ageing society and smaller family sizes
- Helping those trying to get on the property ladder by providing shared ownership homes

Factors Influencing our Plan



Care & Support

Across Northern Ireland, levels of need and demand remain strong, with one person in five having a limiting long-term illness and one in nine providing unpaid care to someone. The population is also ageing, with the 'over 65' cohort projected to increase by 37% to some 356,000 by 2023 and those over 85 years increasing by 46% to 51,000.

A review of Health and Social Care entitled 'Transforming Your Care' was published in December 2011 which acknowledged that with people living longer the demand for health and social services will increase.

The review made a series of recommendations on how future services can be delivered differently while making the best use of resources available. This included focusing delivery of services in the home, or as close to it as possible. The UK government's Welfare Reform programme will, however, limit the ability of recipients to purchase their care and support needs.

For new supported housing projects, funding and regulatory pressures will lead us to concentrate more and more on providing the bricks and mortar, while increasingly relying on Joint Management Partners and service level arrangements with Health & Social Care Trusts to deliver the necessary care and support elements.

Investing in Our Future

How we go forward

We have consistently invested significant time and effort in governance and our robustness here is seen from many positive audits and inspections and strong performance against core DSD standards. We have committed and effective staff in place, continually working to improve our systems, processes and procedures. We have top quality office accommodation and have been successful in attracting high calibre voluntary Board members.

When we are at our best we are up there with other top performing organisations. Our customers are looking for something straightforward: a responsive, reliable and timely service offering value for money. While the majority get that service, we must strive to identify any weaknesses that adversely impact upon our performance. Utilising our strong work ethic, we will continue to direct our energies to improving our weaker areas and tackling issues before they become problems. This ensures a strong customer focus and better service delivery which underpin our overall direction of travel.

Strategic Themes

Our analysis of the issues has determined that our work over the next three years falls under five main strategic themes. The first four are things we want to achieve, but we will only get there by committing to the fifth.

- ***Support those who use our services and need our help***
- ***Have well maintained energy efficient homes***
- ***Provide more homes and sustainable development***
- ***Be an efficient, best practice business***
- ***Enable and engage our team***

Strategic & Operational Framework 2014~2015

Strategic Themes

1.0	Support those who use our services and need our help	12-14
2.0	Have well maintained energy efficient homes	15
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1.0 Support those who use our services and need our help

Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

1.1 Work to help maintain tenancies and provide flexible support in response to changing needs.

1.2 Develop partnerships with other agencies to provide broader support.

Business Plan Tasks 2014~2015

1.1.1 Investigate tenant profiling to assist with targeting resources by 31 December 2014.

1.1.2 Research practical solutions for developing financial capability to help tenants respond to Welfare Reform and implement within one Apex community by 31 March 2015.

1.1.3 Assess the feasibility of implementing a harm reduction service at Foyle Valley House by 31 December 2014.

1.1.4 Review the role of the active tenant and provide training for staff and active tenants to support their role on estates by 31 March 2015.

1.1.5 Review the operation of the Floating Support service and make recommendations for future service delivery by 31 March 2015.

1.2.1 Implement Year 1 of the Community Involvement Strategy 2014~17 by 31 March 2015.

1.2.2 Investigate the potential to implement the affordable loans projects in two more areas in partnership with Credit Unions by 31 March 2015.

1.2.3 Review the structures in place for developing and maintaining partnership arrangements with community and voluntary organisations supporting Apex communities and make recommendations to strengthen relations by 31 March 2015.

1.2.4 Review the process for overseeing joint management arrangements between Apex and partner organisations and make recommendations for improvement by 30 September 2014.

1.0 Support those who use our services and need our help

Strategic Objectives 2014~2017	Business Plan Tasks 2014~2015
1.2 Develop partnerships with other agencies to provide broader support.	1.2.5 Develop joint working arrangements for the delivery of services at Rossorry House and Cedar Villa by 31 March 2015.
	1.2.6 Investigate the potential to extend the opportunities for placements, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities by 31 March 2015.
	1.2.7 Extend 'Strive to Work' (the employability initiative) to the Coleraine area in partnership with Business in the Community by 31 March 2015.
1.3 Deliver high quality support and care services.	1.3.1 Complete the transfer of Ardavon House to Apex and implement the supported living service model by 31 December 2014.
	1.3.2 Complete the remodelling of Railway Court, Beechway House and Mullagh House to the supported living service model by 31 March 2015.
	1.3.3 Review the staffing model and structure within mental health services by 31 March 2015.
1.4 Deliver reliable, high quality, cost effective services to our tenants and service users.	1.4.1 Ensure total stock void does not exceed 1.5% during 2014-2015. [Note: DSD Performance Indicator is 4%]
	1.4.2 Collect at least 98% of total rent receivable by 31 March 2015. [Note: DSD Performance Indicator is 98%]
	1.4.3 Reduce non-technical arrears by 1% to 6% by 31 March 2015. [Note: DSD Performance Indicator is 5%]

1.0 Support those who use our services and need our help

Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

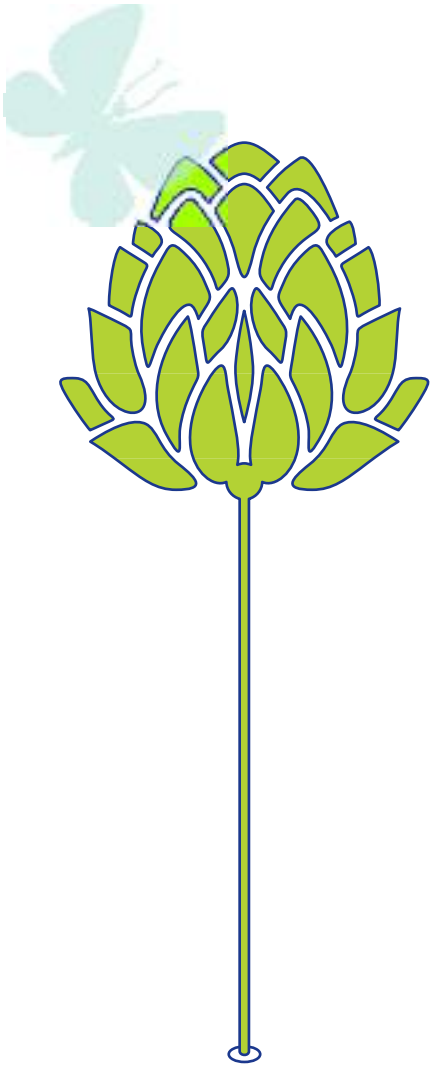
1.4 Deliver reliable, high quality, cost effective services to our tenants and service users.

Business Plan Tasks 2014~2015

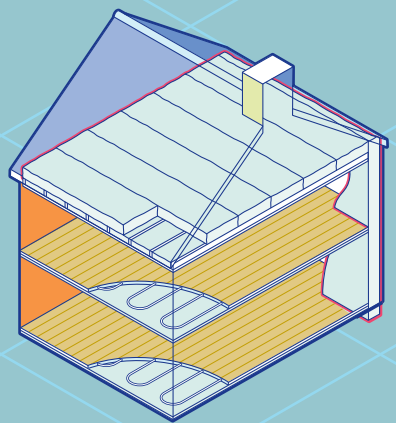
1.4.4 Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Supporting People contract management regime, and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's inspection standards during 2014/15.

1.4.5 Implement the Tenancy Fraud Strategy and provide training for staff by 30 September 2014.

1.4.6 Implement the Customer Satisfaction Strategy Action Plan 2014-2015 by 31 March 2015.



2.0 Have well maintained energy efficient homes



Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

2.1. Maintain our homes by investing more than £10m in replacing major building components over the next three years.

2.2 Help address fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of 300 homes over the next three years.

2.3 Work to improve the efficiency of the maintenance service and ensure all properties are statutory compliant.

Business Plan Tasks 2014~2015

2.1.1 Carry out multi-element improvements works to Grafton Street bungalows by 31 March 2015.

2.1.2 Upgrade emergency and nurse call systems in Mulvey House and Daleview House by 31 December 2014.

2.1.3 Develop a servicing component list for all supported living schemes and incorporate items within the servicing software module by 31 March 2015.

2.2.1 Increase energy performance of 100 properties to above the Northern Ireland benchmark average of a 57% rating by 31 March 2015.

2.2.2 Carry out gas heating conversions to Creggan Bungalows, Swilly Gardens, Foyle Valley House and Methodist City Mission by 31 March 2015.

2.2.3 Implement new heating controls in Bellgray House, Fr Mulvey Park and Glenbrook House by 31 March 2015.

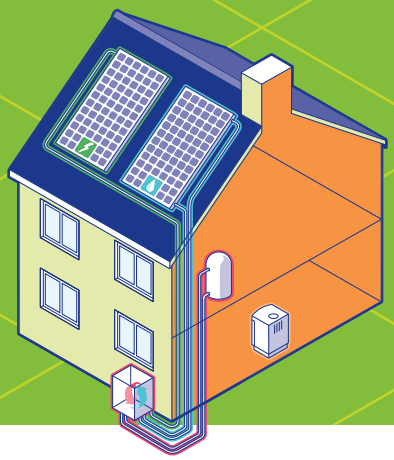
2.2.4 Investigate the potential to deliver educational programmes which assist tenants to maximise the energy efficiency of their homes by 31 March 2015.

2.3.1 Achieve ISO 9001 accreditation by 31 March 2015.

2.3.2 Work in conjunction with the Housing Executive to register appropriate properties under HMO standards by 31 March 2015.

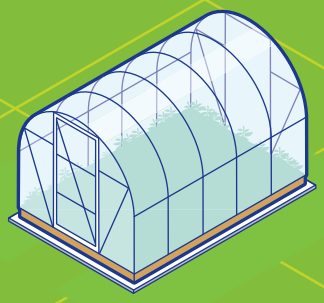
2.3.3 Review fire risk assessments on all supported living and commercial premises by 31 January 2015.

3.0 Provide more homes and sustainable development



Strategic Objectives 2014~2017	Business Plan Tasks 2014~2015
3.1 Work to meet government's social housing agenda	3.1.1 Achieve the total number of site starts allocated to Apex in the published Social Housing Development Programme by 31 March 2015 subject to the availability of finance.
	3.1.2 Achieve the completion of at least 200 new homes before 31 March 2015.
	3.1.3 Continue to work in partnership with the Procurement Strategy Programme Board to implement good practice in the delivery of social housing.
3.2 Work to meet government's affordable housing agenda.	3.2.1 Finalise FairShare, the shared ownership scheme and make it available to other housing associations and developers by 31 March 2015.
	3.2.2 Market shared ownership at Victoria Close through the FairShare website by 30 June 2014.
	3.2.3 Purchase and renovate 10 Empty Homes and have them available for sale (or sold) with FairShare, the shared ownership scheme, by 31 March 2015.
3.3 Respond to new housing initiatives and opportunities.	3.3.1 Apply for Urban Development Grant assistance to ensure the viability of the home ownership initiative at Clifton Park Avenue, Belfast by 31 March 2015.
	3.3.2 Investigate a possible role for Apex in at least one of the DSD's pilot regeneration areas by 31 March 2015.
	3.3.3 Assist Apex (Ireland) to investigate registration with the Housing Finance Agency by 30 September 2014.

3.0 Provide more homes and sustainable development



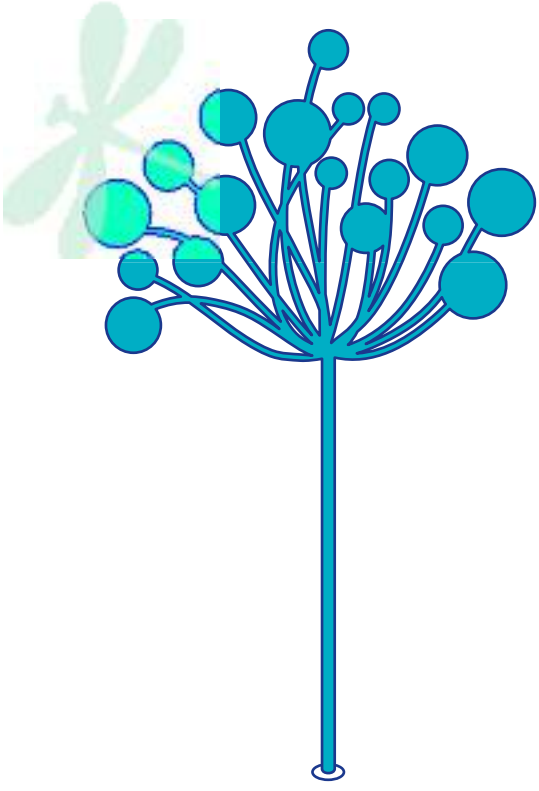
Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

3.3 Respond to new housing initiatives and opportunities.

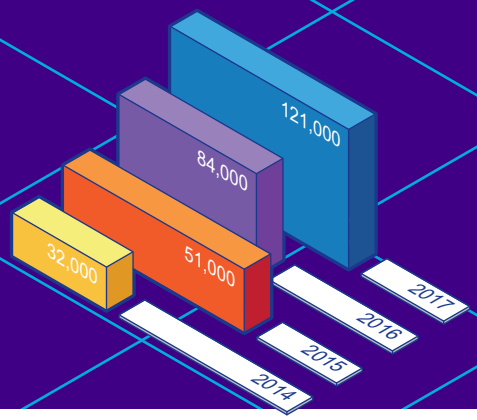
Business Plan Tasks 2014~2015

3.3.4 Work in partnership with Greater Shantallow Area Partnership to formulate a housing-led regeneration proposal by 31 March 2015.

3.3.5 Secure a new development opportunity for Fairbuild Homes by 31 March 2015.



4.0 Be an efficient, best practice business



Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

4.1 Grow the Balance Sheet, while meeting key financial targets.

4.2 Benchmark performance against others.

4.3 Improve the way we communicate and deliver services through increasing and smarter use of IT.

Business Plan Tasks 2014~2015

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.

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

4.1.3 Achieve a credit rating for the Association by 31 December 2014.

4.1.4 Add one additional subsidiary to the Apex Group Structure to enhance its overall financial strength by 31 March 2015.

4.2.1 Participate in NIFHA benchmarking and monitor performance against similar organisations and provide regular updates to the Senior Management Team and Board of Management by 31 March 2015.

4.3.1 Implement Capita Version 12 upgrade by 31 December 2014.

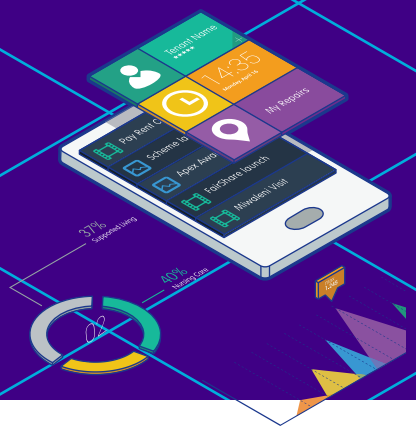
4.3.2 Implement InSight reporting tool by 31 March 2015.

4.3.3 Implement Outlook integration module by 31 December 2014.

4.3.4 Upgrade Exchange 2003 to 2010 version by 31 March 2015.

4.3.5 Implement Star Outcomes electronic support planning system within supported living schemes by 31 December 2014.

4.0 Be an efficient, best practice business



Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

4.3 Improve the way we communicate and deliver services through increasing and smarter use of IT.

Business Plan Tasks 2014~2015

4.3.6 Introduce Epicare software into Nursing Homes by 31 March 2015.

4.3.7 Migrate computer operating systems from Windows XP to Windows 7 by 31 March 2015.

4.3.8 Research electronic purchase orders and on-line approvals by 31 March 2015.

4.3.9 Implement the web-recruitment module within Trent software by 31 December 2014.

4.3.10 Introduce the self-service function within Trent software for recording and monitoring annual leave by 31 March 2015.

5.0 Enable and engage our team

Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

Business Plan Tasks 2014~2015

5.1 Develop capability in our teams and board of management.

5.1.1 Implement the pilot e-learning programme covering infection control; COSHH; fire safety and first aid awareness across the organisation by 31 March 2015.

5.1.2 Investigate the potential to deliver specific elements of housing management training via e-learning by 31 March 2015.

5.1.3 Identify leadership behaviours and competencies linked to Apex's amended values by 31 December 2014.

5.1.4 Further develop the skills of line managers to facilitate increased ownership of staff related issues by 31 March 2015.

5.1.5 Assess the feasibility of developing an in-house resource capable of delivering MAPA training by 31 December 2014.

5.1.6 Further develop Corporate Governance skills and knowledge among Board members by 31 March 2015.

5.2 Develop mechanisms to better listen to and respond to our teams.

5.2.1 Evaluate the Leadership Development Programme for office-based managers by 31 March 2015.

5.2.2 Consider the benefits of introducing a measurement tool to assist in assessing the levels of employee engagement by 31 March 2015.

5.2.3 Implement the Staff Protection Policy and introduce Guardian 24 lone working system by 31 December 2014.

5.2.4 Develop an annual employee well-being calendar by 31 December 2014.

2014
2015
2016
2017
Tenant Name
14:35
My Repairs
Pay Rent
Schemes to
Apex Awp
Forshire launch
Mwebeni Visit
37%
02

Apex Housing Association Ltd

REGISTERED OFFICE:
10 Butcher Street
Derry~Londonderry
BT48 6HL

BELFAST OFFICE:
6 Cromac Place
The Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JB

Telephone: 028 7130 4800
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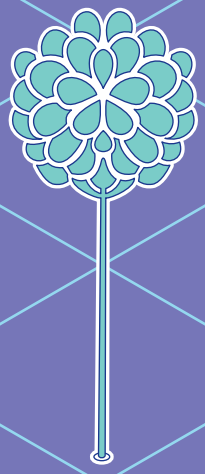
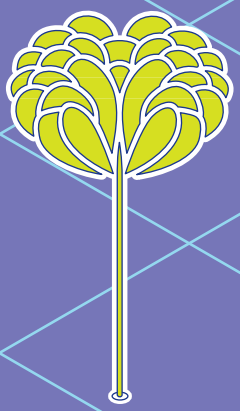
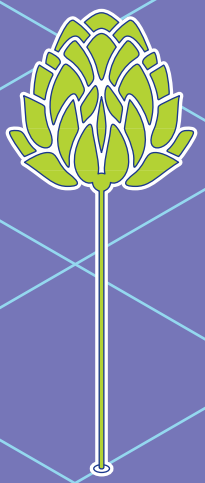
Web: www.apex.org.uk







The Apex Voluntary Housing Group comprises:

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