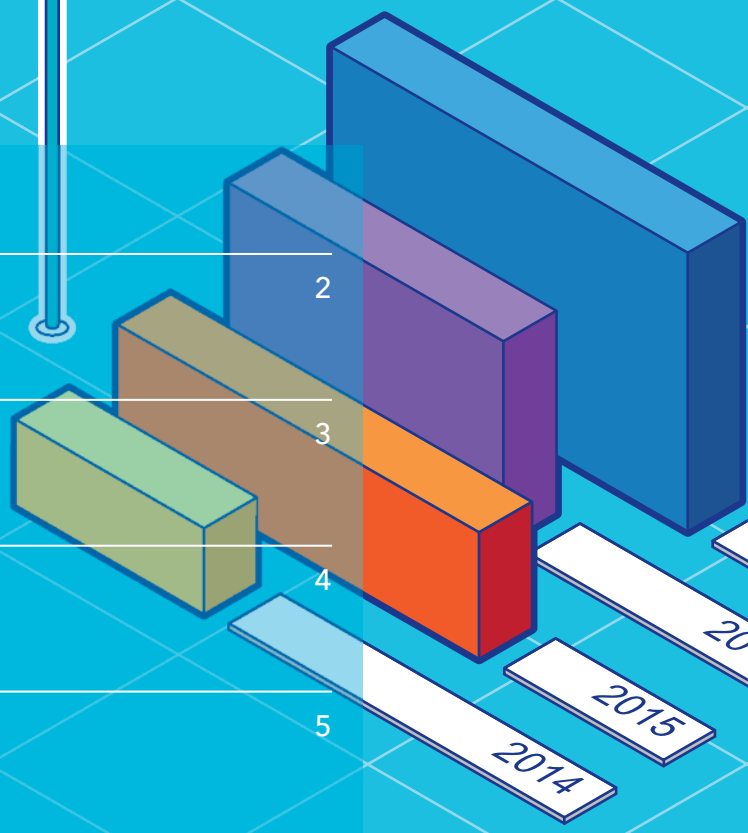
**Corporate Strategy 2014~2017**
Business Plan 2015~2016

# The Apex Plan

# The Apex Plan





## Our Business

What we do 2

## Our Plan

What we will do 3

## Vision, Mission & Values

What we value 4

## Recent Performance

What we have achieved 5

## Factors Influencing our Plan

- Government Policy 6
- Social & Community Changes 6
- The Housing Market 7
- Care & Support 8

## Investing in Our Future

- How we go forward 9
- Strategic Themes 9

## Strategic & Operational Framework 2015~2016

1.0 Support those who use our services and need our help 12-14

2.0 Have well maintained energy efficient homes 15

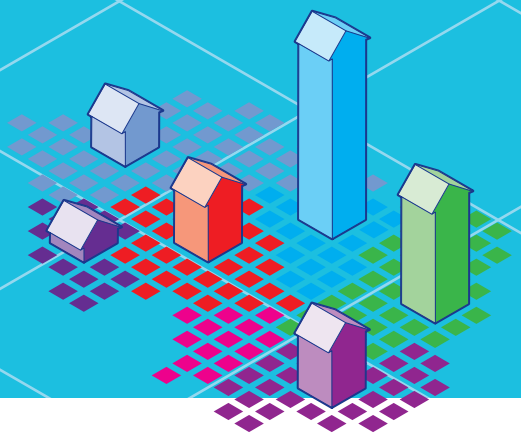
3.0 Provide more homes and sustainable development 16-17

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
Pay Rent
Scheme Id
Apex Awa
FairShare launch
Milwaleril Visit
37%
Supported Living
40%
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.

# Our Plan

## 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.*

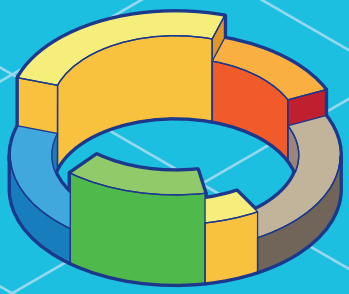
***We take ownership ~***
*we are all responsible for ensuring we deliver our mission.*

***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 2015~2016

## 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 |
| 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 |

# 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 2015~2016

1.1.1 Implement an enhanced emergency repairs service to those households identified as elderly or disabled by 31 March 2016.

1.1.2 Agree measures to support tenants impacted by the Welfare changes and commence implementation by 30 September 2015.

1.1.3 Implement a welfare benefits review for all new tenants by 30 September 2015.

1.1.4 Review the Apex Tenancy Agreement and Handbook, ensuring compliance with regulations, standards and best practice by 31 March 2016.

1.1.5 Review the delivery of the housing support service at Strand Foyer, in consultation with Supporting People by 31 December 2015.

1.1.6 Investigate the potential for funding a new affordable loans project by 30 September 2015.

1.2.1 Review Apex's Community Involvement structures in association with Supporting Communities (NI) and tenants, and implement recommendations by 31 March 2016.

1.2.2 Develop and maintain relationships with community and voluntary organisations supporting Apex tenants in association with Supporting Communities (NI) by 31 March 2016.

1.2.3 Investigate the potential to develop joint working arrangements with organisations delivering services to assist with the effective management of anti-social behaviour by 31 December 2015.

# 1.0 Support those who use our services and need our help

## Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

*1.2 Develop partnerships with other agencies to provide broader support.*

*1.3 Deliver high quality support & care services.*

## Business Plan Tasks 2015~2016

1.2.4 Develop joint working arrangements for the delivery of services at Rathmoyle House, Ballycastle by 31 March 2016.

1.2.5 Assist a minimum of 6 people to access paid or voluntary employment by 31 December 2015.

1.3.1 Begin the remodelling of Beechway House by 30 September 2015.

1.3.2 Review operation of the new supported living service models at Iona House, Railway Court, Mullagh House and Ardavon House by 31 March 2016.

1.3.3 Implement the revised staffing model and structure within mental health services by 31 December 2015.

1.3.4 Implement the recommendations arising from the review of Housing with Care by 31 March 2016.

1.3.5 Implement the recommendations arising from the review of Nursing Care by 31 December 2015.

1.3.6 Investigate the potential to implement Financial Capability Assessments within Learning Disability and Mental Health in association with the Health Trusts by 31 March 2016.

1.3.7 Extend the services available to tenants living within Supported Living to assist with budget planning and financial advice by 31 March 2016.

# 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 2015~2016

1.4.1 Ensure voids do not exceed 1.5% of total stock during 2015-2016. [Note: DSD Performance Indicator is 4%]

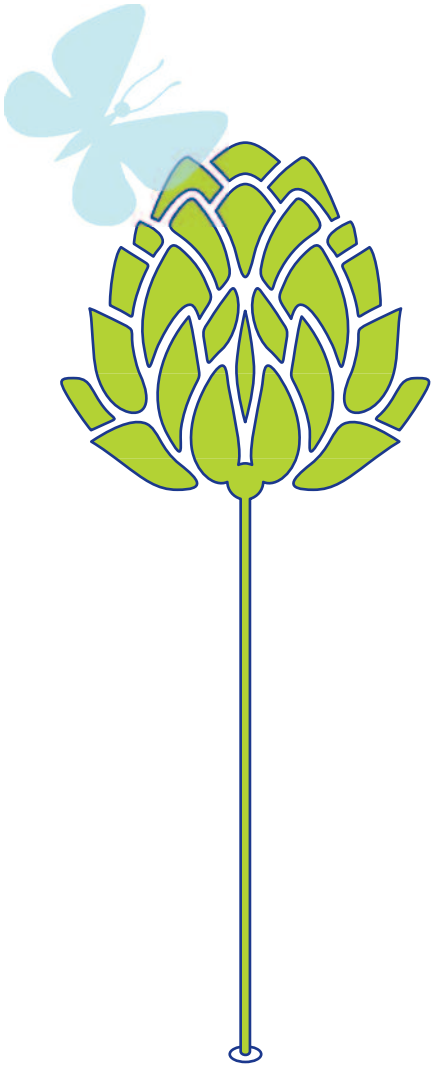
1.4.2 Collect at least 98% of total rent receivable by 31st March 2016. [Note: DSD Performance Indicator is 98%]

1.4.3 Reduce non-technical arrears by 1% to 5% by 31 March 2016. [Note: DSD Performance Indicator is 5%]

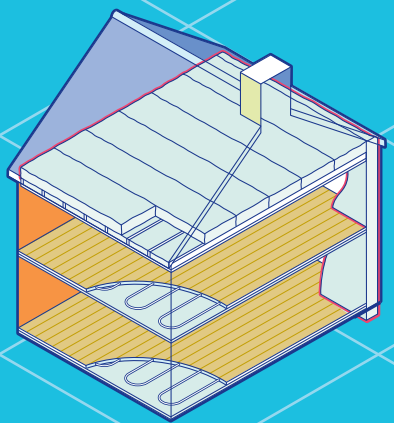
1.4.4 Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Supporting People contract management regime and the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety Inspection Standards during 2015/16.

1.4.5 Implement Year 2 of the Community Involvement Strategy 2014-17 by 31 March 2016.

1.4.6 Review the management of restrictive practices, capacity and consent, and challenging behaviour within Supported Living, and deliver training on Apex's updated policy by 31 March 2016.



# 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 2015~2016

2.1.1 Carry out multi-element improvement works to Northland Way houses and Methodist City Mission apartments by 31 March 2016.

2.1.2 Implement a phased kitchen replacement programme in Fernabbey by 31 March 2016.

2.1.3 Implement new response maintenance contract by 1st January 2016.

2.2.1 Increase energy performance of 100 properties to above the Northern Ireland benchmark average of a 57% rating by 31 March 2016.

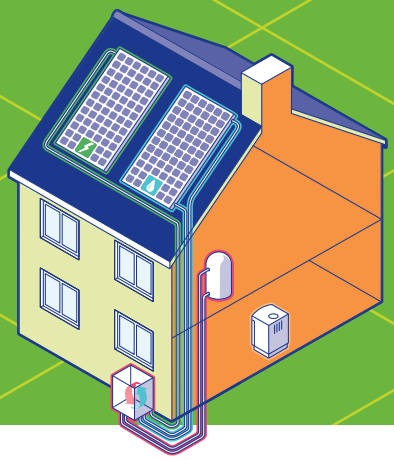
2.2.2 Begin rolling programme of gas heating conversions to Fernabbey homes by 31 March 2016.

2.2.3 Offer energy advice to 150 tenants and staff to ensure the cheapest suppliers are being accessed by 31st March 2016.

2.3.1 Achieve ISO 9001 accreditation by 31 March 2016.

2.3.2 Sub-divide servicing tasks into monthly segments in order to compile a comprehensive statutory compliance five year rolling programme by 30 September 2015.

# 3.0 Provide more homes and sustainable development



## Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

## Business Plan Tasks 2015~2016

*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 2016 subject to the availability of finance.

3.1.2 Achieve the completion of at least 200 new homes before 31 March 2016.

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 the FairShare shared ownership scheme and seek formal endorsement of it from lenders by 31 December 2015.

3.2.2 Start construction of affordable housing for sale at Saintfield Road, Lisburn by 31 March 2016.

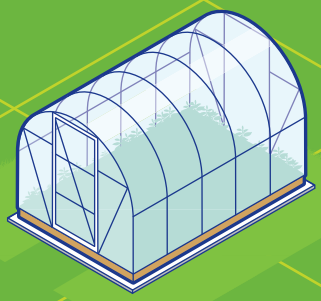
3.2.3 Purchase and renovate 10 Empty Homes and have them available for sale (or sold) by 31 March 2016.

*3.3 Respond to new housing initiatives and opportunities.*

3.3.1 Work in partnership with DSD under its Building Successful Communities initiative, to identify a flagship housing project in Tiger's Bay / Mountcollyer by 31 December 2015.

3.3.2 Seek to secure five development opportunities in areas of high housing need through the use of competitive design and build tenders by 31 March 2016.

# 3.0 Provide more homes and sustainable development



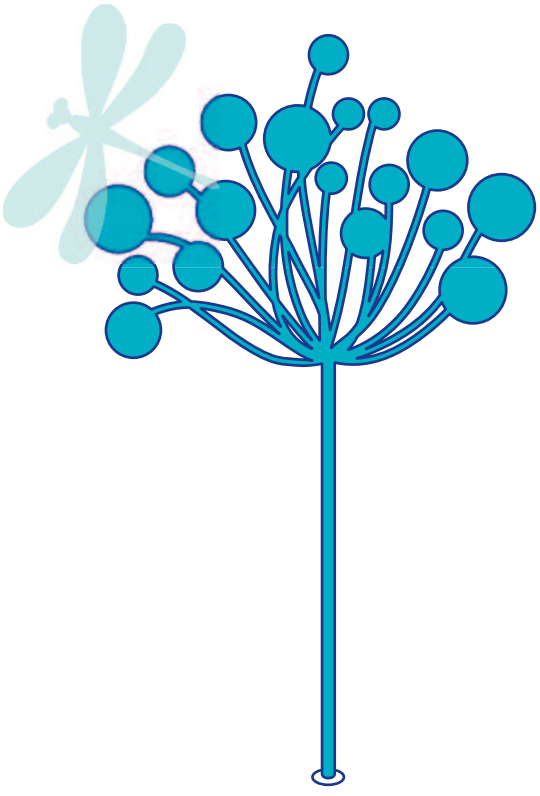
## Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

*3.3 Respond to new housing initiatives and opportunities.*

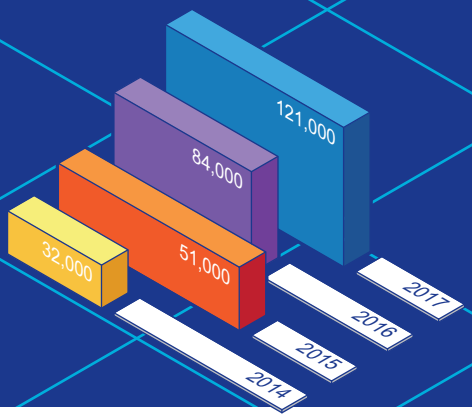
## Business Plan Tasks 2015~2016

3.3.3 Assist Apex (Ireland) in investigating the feasibility of delivering social and affordable housing in the Republic of Ireland in response to the government's Social Housing Strategy 2020 by 31 March 2016.

3.3.4 Secure a new development opportunity for Fairbuild Homes by 31 March 2016.



# 4.0 Be an efficient, best practice business




## Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

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

*4.2 Benchmark performance against others.*

## Business Plan Tasks 2015~2016

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 Maintain Apex's current credit rating throughout the year.

4.1.4 Continue to investigate opportunities to add further subsidiaries to the Apex Group to further enhance its overall financial strength by 31 March 2016.

4.2.1 Continue to participate in NIFHA Benchmarking and monitor performance against similar organisations and provide regular updates to Senior Management Team and Board of Management by 31 March 2016.

4.2.2 Research suitability of House Mark benchmarking club as a further tool to help monitor and control financial performance by 31 March 2016.

4.2.3 Carry out strategic review of under-performing activities and make recommendations for improvement by 31 December 2015.

# 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 2015~2016

4.3.1 Implement an e-mail archiving solution and upgrade to Microsoft Exchange 2010 by 31 March 2016.

4.3.2 Upgrade computers in all schemes to Windows 7 by 31 March 2016.

4.3.3 Implement additional servers and reconfigure Open Housing to allow other housing associations to log repairs via Apex's housing software by 31 December 2015.

4.3.4 Introduce Twitter facility supported by Management protocol by 31 December 2015.

4.3.5 Research suitable software to allow for reporting on social outcomes by 31 December 2015.

4.3.6 Implement electronic purchase orders and on-line approvals by 31 March 2016.

4.3.7 Introduce the self-service function within Trent software to facilitate e-payslips by 31 March 2016.

4.3.8 Introduce self-service function within Trent for line managers, for the purposes of recording and monitoring of annual leave and absence by 31 March 2016.

# 5.0 Enable and engage our team

## Strategic Objectives 2014~2017

*5.1 Develop capability in our teams and board of management.*

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

## Business Plan Tasks 2015~2016

5.1.1 Implement Year 1 of the e-learning programme covering fire prevention; safeguarding vulnerable adults; deprivation of liberty safeguards; Mental Capacity Act; first aid update; medication training; dementia awareness; awareness of end of life care; blood borne pathogens and COSHH by 31 March 2016.

5.1.2 Complete the pilot ILM at award level for first line supervisors by 31 March 2016.

5.1.3 Consider the feasibility of introducing a coaching programme across the organisation by 31 March 2016.

5.1.4 Develop a policy and procedure for the management of probationary periods and reviews by 31 December 2015.

5.1.5 Complete implementation of Finance Department restructuring by 31 March 2016.

5.1.6 Further develop Corporate Governance skills and knowledge among Board members by 31 March 2016.

5.1.7 Deliver training on community involvement to Board members, staff and tenants by 31 March 2016.

5.2.1 Develop and implement a policy and procedure to facilitate the introduction of the Shared Parental Leave and Pay regulations in line with timescales dictated by legislation.

5.2.2 Review provision of service from current occupational health provider by 31 December 2015.

5.2.3 Implement the employee well-being calendar, with a focus on mental well-being by 31 December 2015.

2017
2016
2015
2014
Tenant Name
14:35
My Repairs
Pay Rent
Schemes to
Apex Awp
FanShare launch
Mkwdeni Visit

**Apex Housing Association Ltd**

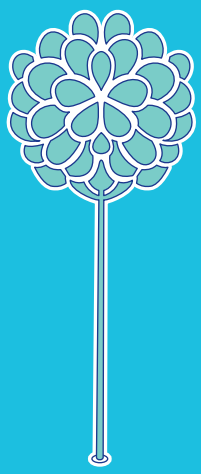
**REGISTERED OFFICE:**
10 Butcher Street
Derry~Londonderry
BT48 6HL

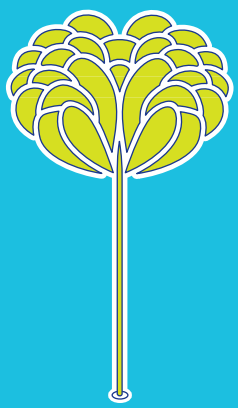
**BELFAST OFFICE:**
6 Cromac Place
The Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JB

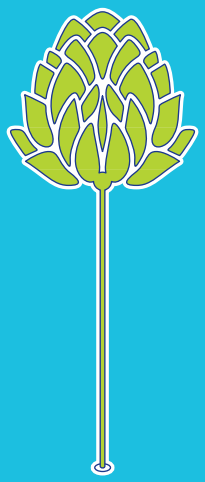
**DUNGANNON OFFICE:**
2 Dungannon Enterprise Centre
Coalisland Road
Dungannon
BT71 6JT

**Telephone: 028 7130 4800**
Email: info@apexhousing.org
Online: www.apex.org.uk

This document is available in alternative formats on request.







apex

**The Apex Voluntary Housing Group comprises:**

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