

Housing
Executive

Corporate and Business Plans

CORPORATE SERVICES

2015/16-2017/18



excellence

customer satisfaction

our services

strategic

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We can let you have a copy of the plans in a language that meets your needs and in different formats, including: large print, Braille, computer disk, DAISY, audio cassette.



Our Vision

One in which housing plays its part in creating a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous and fair society.

Our Values

As a key part of our Journey to Excellence, our Board gave staff the opportunity to review our current organisational values and propose new values to reflect what they believe should be the ongoing guiding principles for the organisation. Our staff responded enthusiastically and have developed a new set of values for this new business year. These new values retain some of the important characteristics of our previous values, but have been refreshed to capture those elements that staff feel are important for them to aspire to when engaging with customers through our Journey to Excellence.

Making a difference through Fairness, Passion and Expertise

Making a difference

We strive to make people's lives better;
We put our customers first and deliver right first time;
We build strong partnerships and share great ideas.

Fairness

We treat our customers, staff and partners fairly;
We respect and promote diversity and equality for all;
We work in an open and transparent way.

Passion

We are professional in all that we do;
We strive for excellence;
We look for new, creative, better ways to do things.

Expertise

We believe in our people;
We are constantly learning, developing and innovating;
We provide strong confident leadership.

Foreword

Our Corporate and Business Plans articulate our vision, priorities and outcomes for the period 2015-2016 to 2017-2018 and set out how we will achieve them. Our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are for the business year, 2015-2016. This document provides an overview of the Housing Executive as the corporate body and complements the individual plans produced for the separate Regional Services and Landlord Services businesses.

One organisation - two different businesses

Whilst the Housing Executive continues as a single statutory organisation, for budgetary and accounting classification purposes there is now a dual reporting arrangement where the Regional Services and Landlord Services are managed as separate entities. This revision took effect from the 1st of April 2014, when the Housing Executive was re-classified, following a determination by the Office for National Statistics and the Department of Finance and Personnel, as follows:

- Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) - Regional Services;
- Quasi-Public corporation - Landlord Services.

The reclassification introduces important changes, as to how each business area is funded with separate budgetary monitoring and reporting requirements.

The Regional Services business is funded almost entirely through government grant and is subject to more stringent budgetary and reporting controls placed on a Non Departmental Public Body within the central government funding structure. The Landlord Services body, by comparison, is almost entirely funded, on the revenue account, through rental income with minimal government funding. This means that the ability of the Landlord business to deliver its services successfully is dependent on the income it generates and collects.

Therefore, our Plans have been designed differently this year, with a Corporate overview and individual plans for Regional Services and Landlord Services, each with its own mission for delivering their distinct services, but still very much working together to deliver our one single overall vision: "One in which housing plays its part in creating a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous and fair society."



*Donald Hoodless,
Chairman*

Regional Services Division is the strategic enabling and delivery side of the business, providing services ranging from assessing housing need, managing the Social Housing Development Programme for new social homes, Supporting People services and Homeless services. Alongside this we undertake an ongoing research programme to produce a comprehensive body of housing market intelligence to help us identify and determine how best to shape our services and the places where people want to live in Northern Ireland.

The Housing Executive's traditional landlord role is delivered by the Landlord Services Division. As the largest social landlord in the UK, we manage over 88,600 homes in urban and rural areas throughout Northern Ireland together with a significant commercial property portfolio of just over 400 units. As well as managing and improving our stock, we also implement a range of interconnected community safety, cohesion and integration strategies, designed to help our tenants to feel safe, connected and involved.

A comprehensive range of business support services are provided to all business areas by our Finance and Corporate Services Divisions.

The separate Regional Services and Landlord Services business plans should be read in conjunction with this plan. They set out our Objectives and Key Performance Indicators for 2015-2016.

This year, and indeed the next few years, will be challenging times for all organisations working within the Northern Ireland public sector. During January 2015, the then Minister for Finance, Simon Hamilton, published the budget (April 2015-March 2016) following a period of consultation. In the foreword of the consultation document he stated that "This draft Budget offers the best way through what was always going to be a difficult year and starts to prepare us for the testing times that lie ahead."

In the absence of a formal Programme for Government (PfG) that would cover the 2015-16 financial year the Northern Ireland Executive has agreed that the Budget would be predicated on a continuation of the five key PfG priorities.



*Clark Bailie
Chief Executive*



The UK Government has made it clear that the improvements in the wider economy will not be reflected in increased public spending until the national budget deficit has been brought within manageable levels, with the amount of funding available for public services at a UK level remaining restricted. This ultimately affects the Northern Ireland budget allocation from HM Treasury and we know that substantial savings have to be made in the public sector during 2015/2016 and beyond. Continuing to deliver high quality customer services with reducing resources will require substantial changes to the way in which we deliver those services.

Therefore, it is timely that we had already embarked on our 'Journey to Excellence' Strategies which are designed to improve all aspects of our business, allowing us to deliver top quality services that meet the needs of all our customers. Given the anticipated reduction in public funding, we believe we are in a better position to respond to these new challenges. The excellence strategies will allow us to do more with fewer resources as well as improve and extend the services we provide, with well trained and committed staff using leading edge technology. Details of the Strategies can be found in the separate Regional Services and Landlord Services Business Plans.

Inevitably there will be impacts upon the roles which staff had previously carried out and the number of staff required at certain grades, locations or functions will reduce. The Voluntary Early Severance programme will allow the Housing Executive to manage the reductions in staffing levels on a voluntary basis. While the voluntary retirement of many experienced staff in the year ahead will be challenging, we are confident that we will be able to adapt, respond and deliver high quality services during this period of considerable change. Each retirement is being timed and managed to ensure minimal impact upon service and in the context of succession planning and effective knowledge transfer programmes to ensure that our staff are equipped to deliver excellent services in the years ahead.

A fundamental part of our transformation programme is the implementation of new structures within the Housing Executive. These new arrangements will empower staff to engage more positively with customers and provide services which better fit their needs.



This is an important time for us in the Housing Executive as this year we expect to see consultation on the Minister for Social Development's Social Housing Reform Programme. This fundamental review will look at how social housing will be delivered in Northern Ireland in the future.

There are a number of other relevant government priorities that we take into account when developing our Corporate Plan for the coming years, some of which are outlined under the context heading in this document.

We have constructed these plans after careful deliberation by our Board and officials and we have taken account of many of the comments made by consultees in finalising these plans.

Donald Hoodless
Chairman

Clark Bailie
Chief Executive

Context

As Northern Ireland's Comprehensive Housing Authority we deliver a wide range of housing and community related services across Northern Ireland. These reflect our statutory obligations, government priorities and in particular, the Programme for Government (extended to 2016) and the Department for Social Development's (DSD) 'Facing the Future' Housing Strategy Action Plan 2012-2017. These along with our evidence based research help us to direct our plans and programmes where they are most needed. We continue to carry out equality screening/impact assessment and rural proofing of our policies and to develop policies in ways which will further promote equality of opportunity and Good Relations for the people of Northern Ireland.

Social Housing Reform Programme

In January 2013 the then Minister for Social Development, Nelson McCausland, announced proposals to radically change the way social housing is delivered in Northern Ireland. He said that his "proposals seek to establish a housing model that is tenant-focused, that is sustainable and that enables investment in our communities." The programme's mandate was to look at:

- Structural reform to consider the need for reform of the organisations involved in the delivery of social housing services, including the Department for Social Development, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and housing associations;
- Policy reform of social housing rent, tenant participation, local government engagement and, the regulation and inspection of social housing.

We understand that a series of consultations will be undertaken this year on different aspects of the Social Housing Reform Programme and we await the outcome of the results with interest.

Reform of local government

The reform of Local Government in Northern Ireland was implemented in April 2015 with the inauguration of the eleven new Councils. We welcome this opportunity to work with the new councils in our role as a statutory consultee within the development planning process, as a statutory partner in the Community Planning process, and also to promote housing and associated regeneration.

Welfare Reform

At the time of writing, the Welfare Reform Bill has not been passed through the NI Assembly. The Housing Executive will still be responsible for the administration of Housing Benefit for the foreseeable future however, staff will continue to work to ensure that we have processes in place to deliver any changes to the service in the future.

The Housing Market

The latest Northern Ireland Quarterly House Price Index for the final quarter of 2014 indicated signs of recovery in the housing market with a more buoyant housing market with "both activity levels and average prices up over 8% in simple terms." However, there were variations in recovery in some areas across NI, with Belfast, Lisburn, the North Coast, Derry/Strabane and Mid/South Down showing year on year price increases. The overall weighted increase of 5.7% in average house prices reflects the gradually improving labour market conditions, growing business confidence and a more relaxed lending market.

Our House Condition Survey measures the impact in terms of overall percentage energy efficiency improvement against the baseline, fuel poverty rates, SAP improvement, CO2 reductions, annual NI savings on fuel bills and more.

The latest result from our research - the Net Stock Model - indicates that there is a continuing need to provide approximately 1,500 social housing units based on basic household growth. However, when backlog is taken into consideration the estimated need indicates that around 2,000 units per annum are required.



Asset management

During 2014, DSD and the Housing Executive commissioned a comprehensive survey of our stock which will identify future investment. The survey was completed earlier this year and has provided us with a more robust evidence-based understanding of our asset base and its requirements on which to plan our future investment activity.

An interim investment strategy has been developed to bridge the gap between our current Maintenance Investment Strategy and the new investment plans.

It will reintroduce a programme of major capital improvements across our housing stock as part of our aim of achieving the Decent Homes Standard in all of our homes by 2020. More information can be found in the Landlord Plan under Objective 2.

Fundamental review of allocations

A fundamental review of the allocations policy is being undertaken, led by the Department for Social Development. This has involved independent research being carried out by the Universities of Ulster and Cambridge and published for comment and stakeholder engagement during 2014. Following this, the Department, working with the Housing Executive, will bring forward proposals for consultation in due course.

Reporting structure

The Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, has responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of our policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding public funds and the Housing Executive's assets. We operate a risk management process in line with best practice. We will continue to apply the requirements of the Management Statement and Financial memorandum (Dossier of Controls) which sets out the controls to be exercised over the different areas of the Housing Executive's activities.



We welcome comment on our Plans and all aspects of our work.

To discuss or comment on the Corporate Plan get in touch with:

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