 

**Barrhead Housing Group: Business Plan 2019-2024**

APPROVAL March 2019

**The Barrhead Housing Group consists of Barrhead Housing Associaiton registered in 1986 as a social landlord and subsidiary Levern Property Services registered with Companies House in 2011 to further the aims of the housing association.**

**Our Barrhead Housing Group Vision:**

**We believe that everyone deserves to live in a secure, good quality, well-maintained home within communities that are safe, supported and inclusive.**



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This is our new Plan for the next five years. It comes on the back of a number of events, publications and internal changes affecting the way we work. These changes mean that we have to plan and development our service for the future with feedback from our customers and our staff being part of this conversation.

We would like to thank all customers who have taken the time to give us feedback through our various surveys, feedback forms, questionnaires, opens days and focus groups. This all helps to guide the Association through the difficult economic times and provides a focus for improvements for the future. We know that you want us to focus on our rents to ensure they continue to be affordable, consider value for money across all services, and provide more opportunities for participation.

Our staff are also involved in the business review process too. They are proud to work for the Association, show dedication, loyalty and care for the work that we do and to you, our customers, we are here to help. Our staff are also committed to providing the best services we can offer. They have given their ideas and suggestions to shape this next period of Business Planning.

We have developed and continue to review five core values which we feel are important to how we work and perform – these are respectful, adaptable, dedicated, aspirational, and responsive – these will guide us through our relationship with one another and with our customers and we will use them to measure our achievements. We have provided in this Plan our key strategic objectives and operational objectives for the next five years based on this feedback. These are outlined in this Plan.

The future remains uncertain - the economic climate and how this might change with Brexit, increased devolved powers to the Scottish Government, increasing inequality and pressures on our customers due to changes in UK welfare reform and Universal Credit. But we have set out our aims in this Plan and look for opportunities to improve what we do and strengthen our longer term future. We will continue to work with our customers in order to get this right and we will do so by asking for advice and listening to what you want us to do. We will welcome your input in whatever way you think is appropriate so please feel free to speak to us at any opportunity – we are here to listen and respond. This Business Plan also takes on board the requirements from the Scottish Housing Regulator including their business planning recommended practice.

David McCready,

Chairperson

1. Connecting up our Values, Mission and Aims

Core Value - Adaptable – we are flexible and react to change

Core Value - Dedicated – we care about our purpose

Core Value - Respectuful – we are honest, respectful and trustworthy

**OUR MISSION: ‘*at the heart of our community-investing in your future'***

OUR AIMS- engage with our customers to meet needs and aspirations; provide quality affordable homes; create safe and desirable neighbourhoods; invest in our homes; strive for excellence; grow our business, communities and people; improve the quality of ourcustomers’ lives

Core Value - Responsive – we are efficient and accountable

Core Value - Aspirational – we are forward thinking and committed to improvement

1. OUR HISTORY

Registered in 1986, the Association was set up as a locally controlled community housing association, with its foundations in the rehabilitation of the centre of Barrhead. Working in partnership with East Renfrewshire Council, the Association has steadily grown over the year with the refurbishment of stock, the completion of new build projects, and the transfer of homes from Scottish Homes in 2001. Our Rankin Way development was opened on 11th September 2001 by HRH Princess Anne – a day that turned out to be significant for other reasons.

The Association’s geographical area started to spread following the stock transfer when properties from Neilston and Thornliebank were included with the Scottish Homes transfer of 27 sheltered housing properties on the Main Street in Barrhead. All properties were quickly refurbished by the Association following the transfer. Over recent years, new build developments included the creation of Connor Road, a 12-unit supported accommodation project for young homeless people in 2008/9, the 65 new homes in Auchenback and the 24 flats in partnership with Persimmon at St Mary’s, Barrhead during 2009/10. Little development has been possible since then, although our stock numbers have continued to grow on a small scale. As of March 2018, we completed one further small 15 unit development at Darnley Road – called Rankin Court – this was opened by the then Housing Minister Margaret Burgess MSP.

Like many housing associations, we became a charity in 2004 and created a private subsidiary company in 2011 to further the aims of the Association’s work, mainly but not exclusively to expand factoring services and create employment for our supported sheltered housing development. Today we have over 930 homes and factor over 250 properties including residential, commercial and two charitable organisation in Auchenback and Neilston.

Our governing Board is made up of local residents – tenants, residents, owners, housing and business professionals and support from the local councillor. Our newest Rules, adopted in 2014, allow for 12 Board members. Governing Board members are unpaid and voluntary but are supported through personal and team development to ensure the right skills and experience are in place to guide the Association forward. The governing Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the Association and staff are employed to guide the Board and deliver the operational work of the Association. We have a dedicated and loyal hardworking team of 22 staff members, including 3 employed by our subsidiary. Regeneration projects often include the recruitment of additional and specific staff members to oversee the project outcomes. Our staff are empowered to take responsibility for their tasks and for services to our customers. We encourage our staff team to contribute to improvements in service and to celebrate in the success of the organisation. We have Investors in People Silver accreditation and a good practice award for Investors in Young People, a standard that focuses on the recruitment and retention of young people through training and development. This demonstrates Barrhead Housing Association as an employer of choice for young people and the Silver accreditation demonstrates our commitment to care for our staff and a progressive approach to business improvement through people. We are proud of this achievement and will continue to strive to improve on this at each three year review.

We have worked to invest in our homes over the years but we also place the wider community regeneration equally important as we commit to making our communities safe, secure and good places to live now and in the future. We became accreditated as a Living Wage employer during 2018 as our Governing Board belief that the living wage not only benefits our employees but also our wider contractors. Paying the living wage reduces levels of in-work poverty, reducing absenteeism and strengthening the employer of choice brand. Becoming accreditated, employers are awared the living wage employer mark which is a badge of honour. Displaying this clearly demonstrates to our employees, customers and other stakeholders that we are committed ot tackling in-work poverty and that we are a responsible employer. Most of our contractors have confirmed their commitment to the living wage as employers already and only a couple fo contracts are being re-tendered to ensure the living wage commitment is made to contractors wishing to work with us.

1. BUSINESS PLAN KEY THEMES

The following is a summary of our key themes for the next five years. We will set and review progress against key strategic and operational objectives with our Governing Board and will update the Business Plan annually during the next five year cycle. We will also review the risks against the objectives set in line with Board reporting.

* LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE – to maintain the highest standards
* DEVELOPMENT – to continue to build new homes
* INVESTMENT IN OUR ASSETS – to deliver our asset management strategy
* VALUE FOR MONEY – to promote value for money and demonstrate organisational efficiencies
* QUALITY – to maximise customer satisfaction by providing high quality customer services
* CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT – to continue to improve customer engagement and participation
* INVESTMENT IN OUR PEOPLE - to support, develop and reward our staff team and to support continuous development of staff
* COLLABORATION – to enhance partnership working and maintain strong community collaboration
* OPPORTUNITIES AND CHANGE – to seek opportunities for growth and to respond to changes in legislation and good practice

We recognise however that there are a number of external factors that could continue to have an impact on what we do and currently provide some uncertainty to our work should we fail to keep up-to-date. These include the following:

* Brexit and the general economic climate
* Uk central government policy and Scottish devolved powers
* Legislative change, digital innovation and enhanced services
* Universal Credit for both our customers and our business
* Development opportunities and threats
* Changes to our wider housing sector, our engagement with Scottish Housing Regulator, lenders and key stakeholders
* Maintaining our tenants voice at governing Board level

1. STRATEGIC OPTIONS APPRAISALS AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Strategic Option Appraisal

Part of the revised business plan process in November 2018 was to work with an external consultant which allowed Board members to explore how the Group should move forward to ensure it delivered on its vision, maintaining its desired strategic direction and best serve the interest of its tenants and other customers. The Board considered 5 strategic options :

* Remain independent
* Remain independent and collaborate more
* Join up with another RSL to form a group structure where BHA becomes the parent
* Join up with antoehr RSL to form a group structure where BHA becomes the subsidiary and
* Merge into another RSL with a transfer of all engagements

The Board recognised that it was important to regularly carry out a full and systematic strategic optional appraisal as part of our business planning process and that is was important to set our option appraisal process in the context of succession planning. All the above varying options were discussed, recognising the lead role Barrhead HA mus take in this decision and agreed the following:

* Barrhead HA is a high-performing and financially robust RSL. It also has sound governance. There is no obvious driver for changing the business model at this time.
* BHA already has a successful track record of building effective collaboration and partnship working, not least FLAIR and IFLAIR. Participants also recognised that there were opportunities to strengthen existing partnerships and also to form new partnerships
* BHA found the recent opportunity to bid for a constitutional partnership with a local RSL a very useful learning experience. BHA Board remains interested in constitutional partnership and recognised the advantages of becoming a parent in a larger group structure in terms of increased value to the organistion, its tenants and the wider area.
* BHA’s recent governance review has strengthened the approach to succession planning. Members agreed that the preferred strategic option had to be one that was resilient in the face of changes in key personnel on the Board and at the senior management team.
* Based on the above, Governing Board members agreed:
  + Our preferred option is to remain as an independent RSL (with LPS as its subsidiary) but to seek opportunities to improve and widen its partnership working
  + As part of partnership working and where an opportunity arises again, Board members remain open to the idea of strengthening the Barrhead Housing Group by inviting another RSL to become a subsidiary of BHA, and
  + To support the RSL continuing to remain independent, should the CEO post become vacant (for whatever reason) the Board’s firm intention would be to recruit a new CEO at the earliest opportunity

Succession Planning

the Governing Board and senior staff team recognise the importance of planning ahead and while succession planning has been part of on-going discussions over several years and as part of IIP discussions, over 2018 the Board has worked with an external consultant to review the Regulatory Standards particularly against the need to recruit, maintain, develop governing Board members. Part of this governance review allowed the Board to work over a period of 6 months through workshops and detailed Board discussions on a plan for succession. Board members were involved in detailed and transparent discussions around current skills and experience, individual contributions and collective decision-making alongside identifying future Office Bearer positions. As part of this review, the following recommendations were approved and taken forward for implementation ahead of the AGM in august 2018:

* Remits for Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Office Bearers group were reviewed
* Secretary’s duties were reviewed and delegated to a senior staff member
* Board members approved a new chairperson, vice chairperson and 3 conveners in July 2018
* Chairpersonand vice Chairperson’s remits were approved as one-off appointments, 3-5years
* All Office Bearers and Conveners would have a minimum of 2 year’s experience at Board level
* Appraisals would continue to be focused on business skills and experience and future succession planning

Succession planning for senior staff would continue to be reviewed by the chairperson and Governing Board on an annual basis and the Chair agreed to on-going discussions with the Chief Officer on senior staff succession planning. The Governing Board would consider reports from both the Chair and Chief Executive on any new guidance and good practice from across the sector, including SFHA and SHR.

1. Our Mission Statement

‘***At the heart of our community – investing in your future’***

Our Core Values:

The following core values are important to us and to the delivery of services to our customers. We believe they represent the values of our organisation and are used to attract like-minded people through recruitment of new staff

***Respectful – we are honest, trustworthy and reliable***

***Adaptable – we are flexible and react to change***

***Dedicted –we care about our purpose***

***Aspirational – we are forward thinking and committed to improvement***

***Responsive- we are efficient and accountable***

Our Vision:

***The Barrhead Housing Group believe that everyone deserves to live in a secure, good quality, well-maintained home within communities that are safe, supported and inclusive.***

1. OUR overall AIMS

***What we want to do:***

* ***Create communities that fit the needs and aspirations of our customers and allow customers to engage with us***
* ***Provide quality homes that are affordable to our customers now and in the future***
* ***Create desirable safe and secure homes and neighbourhoods by investing in our homes***
* ***Strive for excellence across the organisation by being responsive to development and improvement in all areas of our work***
* ***Grow our business, our communities and our people***
* ***Improve the quality of our customers’ lives***
* ***Be flexible and adaptable to our changing environment***

***How we want to do it:***

* ***Empower our people to lead the changes we need to make***
* ***Deliver value for money and sound finances***
* ***Deliver responsive personal services to our customers in a ‘can do’ way***
* ***Be accountable, open and transparent***
* ***Prepare for change, growth and new opportunities***

7.1 Create communities that fit the needs and aspirations of our customers and allow customers to engage with us

**Fair and equal access to services and advice:** every tenant and customer has their individual needs recognised, is fairly treated and with respect. We monitor ethnicity of existing tenants and housing applicants and work with a range of specialist agencies to ensure fair and equal access to services. We offer ‘Happy to Translate’ services for interpretations, and translations where this is required.

**Housing options and access to social housing:** tenants and people on the housing lists can review their housing options. We ensure that people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness. We have our own house waiting list and provide details of our stock, turnover and prospects for re-housing to our applicants. We continue to work with our partner, East Renfrewshire Council to ensure that we meet our targets for homeless applicants and we share our property turnover information and work in partnership for the allocation and nominations for new properties. We now use our own waiting list information to shape demand for new housing ensuring that the needs of all are considered and propose to increase the supply of supported housing including for elderly residents and to accommodate residents in need of wheelchair accommodation.

**Homelessness –** we have had a good working relationship with East Renfrewshire Council to commit to meetings targets to address homelessness in our area, and have increased our allocation quota for homelessness lets to 40% of all rents over recent years. Despite the current review of the Agreement between BHA and East Renfrewshire Council, we are commited to playing our part to reduce and eventually eliminate homelessness in our society. We will also work with ERC and our partners to assist with re-modelling of supported accommodation for homeless clients affected by the Universal Credit changes where possible. We will also work with partners to eliminate rough sleepers and to introduce ‘rapid re-housing’ requirements to meet homeless targets.

**Quality of housing for re-let:** when a property becomes empty, we ensure it is brought up to a high standard before being let. We carry out safety checks, clean the property and repair any defects. We produce an energy efficiency certificate for each void and this allows us to assess the energy performance of each property.

**Estate management services and improvements** – deal with anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes: our tenants and other customers live in well –maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe. We work in partnership with other agencies on estate management issues including Council services and the Police Scotland. We monitor and record complaints by category and work within locally agreed targets for resolving cases.

**Tenancy Sustainment:** tenants need to get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their homes and we work with other agencies to provide this support. We support our sheltered housing residents, provide much needed medical adaptations to homes, and provide support services with a number of agencies to help vulnerable people remain in their homes

**Minimise the impact of UK welfare reform and changes devolved to the Scottish Government for Social Security – advice on money, benefits and debt –** we have our own dedicated staff member, Vivien Betteridge, who will provide advice on welfare benefits and changes to Universal Credit, following full roll out in our area in September 2018. We work with local partners on ensuring a co-ordinated approach to services being provided and information being available. This includes the HERO project, run by Citizens Advice Bureau, where tenants can help to complete applications on-line, and an agreement with the local Credit Union, Pioneer Mutual, to promote membership and allow direct payments of rent from Universal Credit.

**Provide advice on energy efficiency, and fuel poverty:** we will sign post our customers to dedicated energy advisors working in our area to ensure we provides advice and assistance on home energy assessments, fuel tariffs, tips for the home etc. Average savings from energy saving tips and fuel switch options, can often be as much as £300 per annum.

**Housing and Health – getting older – sheltered housing and support:** we have a dedicated housing support service which is registered with the Care Inspectorate for our sheltered housing complex of 27 self-contained properties. We offer a range of additional support in partnership with other agencies to ensure our residents maintain their independence and look after their health – these include our craft cafe, computer classes, and social activities. We continue to work with our local partners on helping to re-shape services for housing, health and social care going forward. We offer properties with support for a range of other specialist services including homeless accommodation for young people, support to people with disabilities, and women’s supported accommodation

**Work with partners to ensure we share what services are available –** craft cafes for older tenants, creative arts programme for younger people, employability projects to learn new skills, singing and drama groups, IT access and awareness, cooking especially on a budget, physical health, etc.

7.2 Provide quality homes that are affordable to our customers now and in the future

BHA’s governing Board are keen to see that we engage with our customers to ensure we consider rent affordability and we will use the various toolkits available across our sector to examine income levels and rent affordability.

**Rent affordability** - Rental income from our tenants is our main source of income and it must be sufficient to meet all of our costs including operational overheads, investment in our stock, and repayment of our private loans. Our rent levels are assessed annually, we consult with our tenants on the issues, plans and costs before the Governing Board make a final decision on the rent increase. We have been using the lower Consumer Price Index (CPI) over recent years to assess our rent increase but not all our costs rise by CPI and often many are associated with RPI higher increases. This is a difficult process to manage when we are also trying to keep rents affordable. For tenants facing increasing financial pressures, we know that changes to the UK welfare reform has increased these pressures. We have been using rent affordability assessment tools developed by our sector to assess incomes against our rents, so we are aware of the impact of our tenants income against the need to keep rents affordable. We will be doing more work on rent affordability over the business plan period.

**Rent harmonisation –** our rent setting policy is used to assess our rents at the point when a new house is let or a property is re-let. Over the last 4-5 years we have re-examined the structure of rent policy to make this more efficient and for apartment sizes the rents are more comparable, while taking into account the various additional amenities that apply to the rent structure – things like the type of property being either a flat or a house, the size and make of the accommodation in terms of bedrooms sizes, living space and additional toilets, etc. The rent harmonisation has generally seen an increase in the smallest properties and a decrease in the largest and has reduced the number of differnet rents that are applied – however this exercise isn’t yet finished as we indicated that this could take 5-10 years, so we will be re-examining the rent structure over 2019 and consulting with tenants again on what the options will be going forward.

**Value for money** – we will look at new strategies and good practice for reviewing services on a value for money basis, looking at where we spend money, how much we spend and whether we can make efficiencies across our business on the delivery of services. We produce an annual value for money statement to confirm what we are doing and how we are doing things.

**Procurment** – we have developed an internal procurement policy based on good practice. We will use external procurement of contracts for both the organisation and in partnership with other housing associations where such procurement benefits our customers. This will include an analysis of the benefits of such joint procurement and partnerships including FLAIR and IFLAIR contracts and projects. We will share services where opportunities arise and customers benefit.

**Short, medium and long term finances:** we will take a robust assessment of all our costs starting with our budget process, and have our longer term assumptions and plan validated by external consultants to ensure they meet our financial commitments. We will take treasury and investment advice where required and continue with a robust approach to identify and mitigate against the risks we face or potentially face. We will work with our internal and external auditors to improve our financial controls and strengthen our business.

**Our risk strategy**: we consider ourselves to be largely risk averse but there may be opportunities for us to reduce this risk to grow the business providing we are able to identify and control the risks we may face. We update our risk universe annually; review on-going risk at every senior staff meeting; and update the Board quarterly on our top risks and emerging risks. Our risk strategy also takes into account the risks identified by the Scottish Housing Regulator including UK welfare reform, developing new housing; pension liabilities, covenant compliance, treasury management, diversification, maintaining SHQS, achieving EESSH. Our top risks are embedded in our business planning framework and routine planning and reporting framework. We will seek advice where this is required on the options and risks we may face before making decisions.

7.3 Create desirable, safe and secure homes and neighbourhoods by investing in our homes

**Focus on Repairs**: tenants’ homes need to be well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done. We are working now with a single contractor to give more certainty over costs and drive up improvements in performance over the period of this plan. During late 2017, we introduced our first in-house repairs services to carry out minor repairs. Our first appointed trade person is a qualified plumber and initial performance results are very positive along with cost savings and good levels of satisfaction. We intend increasing this service over the period of this business plan. We offer most repairs via appointments to suit our tenants’ busy lives and we will use feedback from our customers to make improvements in services for the future.

**Investment in our stock through planned and cyclical repairs**: we have a 30 year cycle of planned investment in our stock that is based on the life cycle of each component like the kitchen and bathroom. However we also review the future housing need and demand for our properties to ensure that we are investing in the correct things. We completed a stock condition survey of our stock during 2017/18 and will have a completed and updated asset management strategy approved by the governing Board by Spring 2019. The first 5 years investment has been incorporated in to this business plan as a dedicated strategic objective and we will continue to update our asset management planning assumptions as go forward.

**Investment in energy efficient measures for the buildings**: during 2018/19, we had completed an energy performance certificates for every property – at Feb 2019 less than 25 properties were still to have this assessed and we have a around 100 properties that require new energy measures to bring them up to the 2020 energy efficiency target. This certificate confirms the energy rating of each property and over recent yeara we have increased the property energy performance by installing new energy efficient boilers, increased loft insulation, new double glazed windows, and more recently internal and external wall insulation. We now report on this target to annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator and we provide details to our tenants in our Annual Report on the Social Housing Charter.

**Estate and Handyperson services:** as part of our review of services, and feedback from tenants, we are to give consideration to employing a handy person service to carry out basic low level repairs. We are still assessing the need to develop an estate based service to focus on things like estate litter, and refuse bin management across the estates. We will work with our Tenant Scrutiny Panel to develop this project further.

**Environmental services** – bulk uplifts, garden maintenance services, stair and window cleaning. We are using our complaints feedback to consider improvements in the way we deliver these services as they are really important to our customers and to the physical appearance of our properties. It is important that we get value for money and quality services from the contractors for these areas and we will continue to review these services. It remains a challenge to get good environmental services at a reasonable and competitive cost.

7.4 Be responsive by developing and improving all areas of our work

**Dedicated business and IT support services** – it is important that we adapt services for the future and we have invested significant resources into our dedicated IT system since 2014 and creating a one-stop shop for customers through our customers services team. We have a business objective that ensures that we invest in our digitial technology to increase the services choices to our customers and services users as well as our staff as we go forward through this new business plan. This will include mobile technology for staff to allow them to do their tasks more efficiently and for customers to have direct access to online services and housing apps to allow them to communicate better with us. We have made signficiant improvements through technology to improve our reporting framework and increase our ability to analyse data more effectively, particularly for updating our asset management strategy and gathering extensive historical data to help make decisions for the future.

**External application for funding**: we have been successful in looking at successful projects that through external funding make a difference to the wider economic regeneration of our communities. Such activities have included our successful arts-based projects, our employability projects, our cookery classes, and our dedicated welfare rights and energy efficiency projects. Only our welfare rights project has been mainstreamed such is the need to keep this service to assist tenants through the reform of welfare benefits and roll out of Universal Credit. We continue to work with our residents to look at improvements that consider employment, training, health, and improving services for our older population. Where we can, we will apply for external funding to further the aims of our Community Regeneration Strategy.

**Communications, engagement and participation:**  we encourage participation and engagement in all that we do. We carry out consultation on rent reviews, service policies, satisfaction surveys for repairs and other services, and have carried out focus groups on specific items including repairs, choices for planned maintenance works, and have also worked with our tenant’s organisations and our Tenant Scrutiny Panel. We work with our partners including Auchenback Resource Centre, Neilston Development Trust, and Voluntary Action-East Renfrewshire to help shape improvement in services where we can. However, often our Open Days and focus groups are not well attended but we encourage tenants to feed back to us whenever they have an issue or choose to get involved. In the past, we have held Tea Dances with music, dance, vintage tea, and bake offs, and invited a range of partners to attend the event – this was a great success and residents have asked for more events of this nature.

**Encourage feedback, compliments, suggestions and complaints to drive improvement:** we record all our complaints on service failures and use comprehensive feedback to re-shape services. We welcome feedback where these are compliments or improvements and we see this as a positive way to make change.

7.5 Strive for excellence across the organisation by being responsive to development and improvement across all areas of our work

**Performance driven improvement**: we use the Scottish Social Housing Charter to provide information on how we perform on a wide range of services and we also compare our achievements with other landlords within our sector. The first Annual Return on the Charter was completed in 2013/14 and is annually updated - in many areas we perform above the average across the sector – and for areas that require improvement, we have demonstrated that performance can be improved. Our overall satisfaction as a landlord remains very high at 94% and we are now due to complete a further comprehensive survey in 2019. We will use both the Charter information and survey results to work with our tenants to make further improvements.

**Deliver personal services to our customers in a ‘can do’ way:** we are committed to listening to our customers and our staff deliver a one-stop shop for customer services, providing a personal service. Our core values have been developed by staff and demonstrate their commitment to what we do. Adopting a ‘can do’ attitude to improving standards and services across the organisation, will continue to re-shape and improve services to meet the aspirations of our customers wherever possible.

**Affordable rents and service charges**: our feedback from tenants indicates that customers want value for money. We are reviewing our long term business plan to consider what rent increases we can afford as this relates to our costs. We embarked on a rent harmonisation exercise which will enter Year 5 on 1st April 2019. This has seen many rents re-aligned to our rent setting structure with some rents coming down and some rents increasing – we will review this during 2019/20 to make some further adjustments to our rent structure and cover a further 5-year period. We continue to benchmark and compare our rents with other landlords and issue a rent review questionnaire to every tenant every year – we use this information to report to our governing Board when setting the budget each year. We are committed to listening to our customers while reviewing all our costs. Through re-shaping services at the sheltered housing complex we have reduced service charges while maintaining high levels of services including support services and high standards required by the Care Inspectorate. However, further work is required over the new business plan period to improve the accommodation at the sheltered housing complex to ensure it is fit for purpose – this will include new digital services, new landscaping, mobility scooter storage and converting the office into a flat for rent.

**Our internal audit process to drive efficiency, performance and improved service delivery:** we have focused internal audit over recent years to drive organisational improvements and have used external consultants as a ‘critical friend’ to help us implement policy change, procedures and a new single contractor. The main reason for moving to a single term contractor was to drive down costs, while continuing to deliver a high quality repairs service. During 2018 we re-tendered this service contract and implemented a two year contract for repairs, while launching our own internal repair service. During 2018 we tendered for a more traditional approach to internal audit identifying 6 key risk areas that require review – this work is now underway with internal audit completed for both IT and internal repairs during 2018/19. We will continue to review business risk and work with our staff and Board and internal auditors to ensure improvements can be made in the way we work.

**Quality investment of our housing stock**: the government has set standards for housing associations to meet – these include maintiaining the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and working toward the 2020 target for the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. We have almost completed a comprehensive updated asset management strategy for investment to improve the quality of our stock and to ensure that we are investing in the right areas. The revised Strategy will be approved in March 2019 and we will continue to work on this to ensure that the conclusions and way forward meet the expectations of our customers now and in the future. While the SHQS standard has been met with a few exceptions, (mixed tenure tenements owners have not been willing to pay for improvements in new door entry systems), new fire safety standards will be required over the next two years from Feb 2019 – these follow the terrible tragic events in Grenfell Towers London and will mean improved smoke and heat sensors being installed in an integrated way in all of our properties. We also continue to work towards the 2020 EESSH target and have put in place an energy performance certificate for almost all our properties by March 2019 – this will ensure we continue to invest in the properties that need increased energy measures and ultimately make our properties more economical to heat and save tenants money on fuel consumption.

**High standards for repairs and maintenance for all homes both internally and external environment: W**e spend a great deal of money investing in the routine repairs as well as planned repairs for the future. We set targets for performance targets with our contractors and monitor performance regularly. We expect high standards of service in the quality, cost and in customer satisfaction from our contractors, and this includes both the internal property repairs and external environmental repairs including landscape maintenance and close cleaning. We continue to monitor and review these standards.

7.6 Grow our business, our communities, and our people

**Empower our people to lead the change we need to make:** our staff are keen to work to our values, to be trained to deliver our high standards, be fully involved and influence the strategic direction of the organisation. We aim to be a fair and equal employer, to recognise and reward excellence in the workplace, and to celebrate performance achievements. Though regular review of our business, we identify key targets for individual staff members to achieve.

**Be an employer of choice**: our staff have set out core values which state what is important to promote what we are, and also to promote the Association as an employer where staff can build a career in housing. We have been accredited through Investors in People since 2009 achieving the Silver Standard in 2015 and 2018. This standard measures our commitment to empowering our staff team to develop our business, by being fully part of celebrating the successes we have achieved, and allowing our staff team to collectively plan our future direction. We also achieved a good practice award for our recruitment and development of young people, under the Investors in Young People standard. We were award winners in 2014 under the East Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Performing Business award, and we also hold the Gold Award for Healthy Working Lives, which is updated every year.

**Use leadership and development programmes to train our managers, staff and future leaders:** we have a detailed appraisal system which allows staff to consider the future development of their housing career and we use our training and development budget to promote opportunities for training and qualifications where this is appropriate. While we are a small organisation, it is difficult to therefore allow progression within the staff team so we have promoted other opportunities for personal development including secondments and job shadowing.

**Invest in new technologies:** in order to deliver better services for our customers, we need to develop our technology, to achieve better reporting and analysis of data. We are striving to reduce the amount of paperwork we hold by investing in electronic storage, and have considered mobile technologies to make our governing Board more efficient. We need to continue this investment for staff and to include mobile technology which will improve the way we work when we are also out and about dealing with our customers. We also need to develop our online applications including the website, and digital platforms to make it easier for many of our tenants to communicate with us.

**Invest in our office accommodation ensuring it is big enough and has the right equipment**: we upgraded our office in 2008, and expanded the office accommodation following the purchase of a flat above the office in 2014. We integrated this first floor property into more office accommodation and provided a better/bigger staff room to accommodate our team. This has given us more flexible space throughout the office.

**Encourage participation in our services, our work, our governing Board**: being a voluntary governing Board member is a big ask, so we work with our new members to allow them time to develop as an effective member of the governing board team. We provide induction and training and now carry out annual appraisals to obtain feedback and plan ahead. We have a wide range of skills on our Board and this includes retired housing professional and local business professionals too. We have representation on our governing Board from East Renfrewshire Council. We also work in partnership with a range of third sector organisations, and consider appropriate partnerships. Over the last couple of years, we have completed a governance review to consider our plans for succession of Board members – this resulted in a review of our Board profile to match the skills and requirements needed to meet the business plan; to review our Remits for Office Bearer positions; and to have a succession plan that encourages development of our Board members and rotation of our Office Bearers every 5 years. This review however also resulted in our last tenant representative retiring from the governing Board and we currently have a vacancy on the Board – we are continuing to seek a representative from our tenant membership to take up this position.

Our Community Regeneraiton Strategy and appointment of a dedicated staff member, has seen continued focus and delivery of services which focus on our wider community responsibilities to create healthier, wealthier, safer places to live that are sustainable for the longer term. Our Community Regeneration Strategy is available on the website for further information.

**Future growth and investment**: we are committed to considering the delivery of new affordable homes where it is economically viable to do so – this will depend on site constraints, subsidy available, a risk assessment, and availability of private finance. We will keep abreast of opportunities for loan funding for the sector. We will invest in our properties to ensure they are well maintained and upgraded through a planned programme of improvements.

**Wider economic and government risks and challenges**: we will continue to provide advice and information on the changes that welfare reform brings including the introduction of Universal Credit, we will assess the risks to our business of these changes. We will look at opportunities for joint partnership work and sharing of services where this benefits our customers.

7.7 Be flexible and adaptable to our changing environment

**New challenges**: we will review the changes required of new legislation, of new Regulatory guidance and recognised good practice to ensure we keep up-to-date and can assess what steps we need to take internally to meet these new challenges. We will equip our staff through training and development to meet these new challenges.

**Future growth, investment and opportunity:** we want to continue to grow our business, so will consider partnership working, external funding and the requirements of regulation where required to make this possible. We will continue the purchase of subsidised properties via our Rent Off the Shelf scheme, mortgage to rent scheme and where practical and economic to consider open market sales where this fits with our business strategy and the objectives of East Renfrewshire Council through the Local Development Plan, Local Housing Strategy, and Strategic Housing Investment Plan. We will look at sector wide opportunities for improvement to services including energy efficiency, new funding for social housing, etc.

**Future growth and investment in our subsidiary** – we have reviewed our governance arrangements for our subsidiary and have expanded the Board membership to contain independence from Barrhead Housing Association. We continue to review the skills and expertise on the Board to ensure this fits with our business strategy. We will expand our factoring services to provide good quality information, advice and service opportunities to meet the needs and aspirations of our owners and future owners, providing that owners engage with us and agree to pay for additional services. We will continue to strive for value for money in our factoring services and widen the in-house repairs service to provide cost effective and quality repairs. We will continue to use our subsidiary to further the aims of the Association using employment and training opportunities to deliver services in a different and more cost effective way.

**Development of good practice**: we will use internal audit to improve our overall organisation, procure external consultants to develop our business where required, keep our policy framework under review and development of good practice. We will ensure our staff are equipeed to meet the needs of our future business strategy and aims. We will share projects and skills across FLAIR partners where this benefits the organisation and our customers.

1. Our Strategic Objectives – next five years
2. We will deliver our 5-year proposed investment as defined in our asset management strategy by March 2024
3. We will continue to develop our self-assessment governance framework to ensure high standards of leadership, updating two Regulatory Standards each year to complete a full review by March 2022
4. We will maintain our engagement and participation with our customers in delivery of our services including maximising the opportunities to improve the health and well-being of our customers’ lives (community regeneration strategy review due 2019)
5. We will support financial advice and service improvements to minimise the impact of Universal Credit
6. We will continue to develop enhanced digital services to meet the demands of all our customers
7. We will deliver 100 new social rented homes by March 2023 to exceed our ‘1000 homes’ target
8. We will continue to invest, support and reward our people to maximise staff empowerment and support personal development
9. We will continue to deliver efficiencies by understanding and reviewing our costs, our performance, our benchmarks against the housing sector and demands on our resources
10. We will continually review the opportunites to maximise growth through our subsidiary for the wider community, to grow our in-house repairs service over the next 5 years, for employment and training, and to maintain collaboration and partnership working
11. Expectations of the Scottish Housing Regulator

We are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator as a registered social landlord. We are required to submit annual returns to the Regulator on our financial performance and requirements to meet the Social Housing Charter, Scottish Housing Quality Standard, Energy Efficiency in Scottish Social Housing targets. Our returns are used to assess our performance to establish an engagement status – currently this is low engagement – and this is updated annually. This is also currently under review as the Regulator consults on its Regulatory Framework (Dec 2018-Feb 2019). We are required to comply with Regulatory guidance as well as legislation, good practice and we will be required to update our activities following completion of the Regulatory’s review and this will include a new provision to submit an annual governance assurance statement signed off by our Governing Board. In the meantime, we have assessed our business plan against current guidance produced by the Scottish Housing Regulator in 2015. This has included assessment of the following areas:

* Vision and Mission – recognising our future vision, actions and measures of success
* Informed consent – our strategy is supported by our Board and management team; provides direction
* Value for Money – to do the right things, in the right way, at the right cost
* Rent affordability – to consider tenants’ ability to keeping paying their rents over the longer term
* Risk management and mitigation – to be aware of our risks and have adequate measures to mitigate all risks, especially for the UK welfare reform, pension funding, covenant compliance, treasury management, diversication, development, maintiniang SHQS and achieving EESSH
* Asset Management – consistent approach between asset investment and business plan; ensure we use resources effectively and reduce the risk of long term inefficiencies
* Treasury Management – arrangements for good monitoring of investments and loans compliance; understand breaches in loan conditions and mitigate risk
* Stakeholder management – maintain strong relationship with our tenants and service users, our lenders, our regulator, our local authority and the Scottish Government
* Financial Planning – good up-to-date financial modelling, testing and planning to avoid uncertainties

We currently review our business against the 6 Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management, completing a self-assessment report to the Board and to review this report against the SFHA’s guidance. Our current business planning process also consider the strategic options appraisal guidance and succession planning as described within this document at section 5. We have also consider an environmental analysis as detailed in section 18 and we review these factors each year.

Following receipt of the Regulator’s Regulatory framework and associated statutory guidance issued in February 2019, we have commenced a review against the new guidance and will complete this during 2019.

1. Our Social Housing Charter performance 2017/18 and 2018/19

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | BHA  2017/18 | BHA  2018/19 | FLAIR AVERAGE 2018/19 | GWSF community based RSL  2017/18 | SCOTTISH AVERAGE 2017/18 |
| Rent increase | 2.9% | 2.4% | 3% | 3.2% | 3.2% |
| Average weekly rents  1 apt  2 apt  3 apt  4 apt  5 apt  Average overall | £61.75  £73.72  £86.46  £92.55  £112.90  £83.68 | £64.44  £76.32  £88.70  £95.47  £116.04  £86.22 | £56.79  £76.36  £84.26  £90.54  £105.24  £83.88 | 0050.31  72.90  80.61  84.87  101.08  £ | 67.44  73.33  74.94  81.37  90.39  £ |
| Meeting SHQS | 98.4% | 98.4% | 96% | 91.1% | 94.2% |
| Meeting EESSH | 77.5% | 88.32% | % | 83% | 80% |
| Emergency repairs | 2.29 hours | 1.91 hrs | 1.9 hours | 2.6 hours | 4.0 hours |
| Non-Emergency repairs | 5.15 days | 4.25 w days | 4.76 days | 4.3 | 6.4 |
| First time fix repairs | 81.7% | 82.96% | 85% | 92.3% | 92.2% |
| Repair appments kept | 91.8% | 97.7% | 95.76% (3) | 93.0% | 92.1% |
| Gas Safety | 100% | 100% | 100% | n/a | 99.8% |
| % rent collected | 100.3% | 99.75% | 100.09% | 99.6% | 99.4% |
| Rent loss | 0.37% | 0.25% | 0.53% | 0.6% | 0.7% |
| Time to re-let | 17.43 days | 15.6 days | 21.36 days | 23.5 days | 30.7 |
| Total rent arrears | 3.07% | 2.98% | 3.96% | 4.3% | 5.2% |
| Repairs satisfaction | 92% | 87.34% | 91% | 92.5% | 92.1% |
| Rent – good value for money | 94.3% | 94.3%. | 92% | n/a | 83% |

1. Our last survey results

## We carried out our last comprehensive survey in July 2016 with 349 customers. It is worth highlighting the main findings of the survey as highlighted by our Landlord Report in August 2016

* **94%** said they were satisfied with the **overall service** it provided, compared to the Scottish average of 88.1%.
* **99.1%** felt that your landlord was good at **keeping them informed** about its services and outcomes compared to the Scottish average of 89.3%.
* **95.7%** of tenants were satisfied with the **opportunities to participate** in your landlord􀂶s decision making, compared to the Scottish average of 79.6%. This decreased from 98% for BHA in our 2011 survey.
* **82.3%** of tenants were satisfied with our **repairs and maintenance services**, from repairs reported in the last 12 months – this is down from 93% in our last survey. Dissatisfaction from tenants in Neilston and Thornliebank was highest.
* **92.3%** of tenants were satisfied with the **quality of their home**
* **100%** of tenants were satisfied with the **quality of their new home**
* **94.3%** of tenants thought rents represented good or fairly good **value for money** – with 42% thought this was neither good nor bad
* **90.5%** of tenants were satisfied with **the management of their neighbourhood**
* **63%** of tenants have access to **internet**, although 54% accessed this using a mobile device, and 44% using the internet from home.
* **38%** of customers said they had a **disability or a long term illness**
* In relation to affordability of **heating bills**, more respondents said they found it very or fairly easy to afford electricity or gas bills for their home (20.8%) than found it very or fairly difficult to afford (26.6%). The remaining 52.6% said it was just about affordable.

1. Value for Money

We define value for money as ‘delivering maximum value whilst minimising costs’. It is ensuring we provide an effective, high quality service whilst making the best use of our limited resources.

To achieve value for money we will consider – affordable rnets, efficient procurement, improving services, maximising income, investing in the future, reducing our costs, generalting a surplus to make a wider social impact, and maintaining a minimum cash balance of £2m.

We will continue to produce an annual statement on value for money and this will set out what we have been focusing on over recent years. This will include the following:

* Information on the contracts tendered and the potential savings made, for example insurance, new kitchens and bathrooms, new boilers,
* Feasibility studies to improve services and properties, for example at our sheltered housing complex
* Preparing for new legislation and regulations, for example data protection
* Expanding in-house services through diversification, for example our in-house repairs service
* Added value projects like our welfare rights service, our employability projects, our projects for health and well-being with young people and our elderly residents
* Community benefit opportunities thorugh our tender process to bring additional benefits to local people

Through our Value for money statement we track financial performance to show changes and trends in the movement of our costs, our overheads, our arrears and void rent loss, and also our staff attendance figures and turnover. A full copy of our statement is available on our website.

1. Our Staff Structure

**Top Team**

Shirley Robison, Chief Executive (Sept 2005)

Helen Sutherland, Director of Corporate Services (May 2009)

Lorraine Dallas, Director of Customer Services (April 2016)

James Ward, Director of Asset Management (Nov 2015)

Team Structure

**Corporate Services Department** **Customer Services Department**

Corporate Services Manager, Iain MacLean (p/t) Customers Service Manager, Jen McCann

Corporate finance officer, Martin Devenny Customer Services Officers - Jackie McColl, Sandra Nelson and Julie Stewart

Corporate finance assistant, Karen Devon Customer Services Assistants – Maxine Dock, Siobhan Kelly (repairs)

Welfare Rights Officer – Vivien Beveridge

IT Business and Support Officer – Greta McPhail (p/t)

Customer Services Admin Assistant – Jade Byers

Receptionist – Nicola Roy

Housing Support Assistant, sheltered housing – Fiona McKenzie (Temp p/t)

**Property Services Department**

Property Manager, Janice Peters

Community Regneration Officer Bryan Dando (shared)

Project Co-ordinator, Tracey Quinn (Temp- Aspiring Communities/Dunterlie)

Property Assistant LPS, Emily Connell (p/t)

Repairs Operative, LPS, Richard Anderson

1. Our Governance Structure

**Barrhead Housing Association’s Governing Board members:**  **Our Subsidiary, Levern Property Services, Board members:**

David McCready, Chairperson, Aug 2018 (joined 2009) Tommy Reilly, Chairperson (elected Aug 2018)

John Hamilton, Vice Chair, Aug 2018 (joined 2015) Andy Dunlop (April 2017)

Tommy Reily, Convenor Staffing/Health and Safety (joined 2012) Joseph McGrebben (April 2017)

Drew McKinney, Convenor Audit + risk (joined 2015) Andy Dunlop, from April 2017

Chris Baird, Convenor Development (joined 2015) Alan Oliver, from December 2018

Michael Mukhtar, from June 2011 Neil McCluskey, from December 2018

Claire Boyd, (joined 2001)

Brian Connelly, MBE (joined 2002)

Rena McGuire (joined 2006)

Beth Welsh, (joined Aug 2017)

Councillor Annette Ireland, (co-optee Dec 2017)

**Board Structure**

Board members receive full induction, training and continuous development, annual appraisals are also carried out.

Full Governing Board, meets every 6 weeks Positions are voluntary and unpaid but expenses are provided. Meetings are generally in the evenings. Board members participate in our wider partnership meetings across FLAIR. A governance handbook is provided.

Audit and Risk Sub-Group, quarterly

Development Working Group, as required

Staff and Health and Safety Working Group, meets twice per year

Levern Property Services meets quarterly

1. Our Finances - summary

We operate by looking at our finances over the short-term (our annual budget), medium term (our 5-year plans) and the long term (our 30 year Plan). The budget is set in February each year, following rent consultation with our customers and discussion with our Tenant Scrutiny Panel. We update our 5-year plans every year also as this is submitted to the Regulator. The longer term Plan is updated normally every two years but given the uncertainty around Brexit this will be updated again by Nov 2019. We will go forward into 2019/20 to have our current Brixx 30-year Plan validated by an external consultant. The consultant will look at the assumptions we have used going forward, what we plan to spend on the investment in our stock, and how we plan to grow, and what the final figures look like 30 years down the line. This is obviously a bit more difficult to predict. As part of the reviewing our longer term plans, we look at testing the plan against certain changing assumptions, for example, what rent increase we apply, or what interest rate we apply for our private loans, etc. With the changes and economic uncertainty around things like Brexit, roll out of Universal Credit and rent affordability, we are completing further testing of our assumptions for this with increasing inflation, private finance loan costs, rent arrears, voids and bad debts, impact on our cashflow and consider the impact of Universal Credit. We have looked at some of these areas and would provide the following summary of what effect using different assumptions make. Ultimately our final corporate plan will be assessed to meet our loan covenants and compliance ratios **(stated below)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Financial Projections 2019-2049** | **2019-20**  **YR 1** | **2023-24**  **YR 5** | **2028-29**  **YR 10** | **2033-34**  **YR 15** | **2038-39**  **YR 20** | **2043-44**  **YR 25** | **2048-49**  **YR 30** |
|  | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s |
| **Projected Year- End Cash Balance, assuming 3% rent increase, years 2-4 and 2% from year 5 onwards** | £3752.8 | £6921.9 | £11,413.7 | £15,203.8 | £22,153.6 | £36,744.1 | £49,503.0 |
| Void loss - YR 1:0.73%; YR 2: 1.0%; and  YR 3 +: 1.2% | 30.2 | 60.0 | 72.1 | 79.6 | 87.9 | 97.1 | 107.2 |
| Bad debts - YR 1: 1.94%; YR 2: 2.0% and  YR 3 +: 2.2% | 80.9 | 106.2 | 128.1 | 141.4 | 156.1 | 172.4 | 190.3 |
| Loan Interest Paid -Libor rates:  Year 2 – 2.0%, Year 3 2.5%, Year 4 3.0%, Year 5 3.25% | 387.5 | 551.2 | 348.9 | 179.8 | 104.8 | 22.8 | 0 |
|  | **2019-20**  **YR 1** | **2023-24**  **YR 5** | **2028-29**  **YR 10** | **2033-34**  **YR 15** | **2038-39**  **YR 20** | **2043-44**  **YR 25** | **2048-49**  **YR 30** |
|  | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s |
| Operating surplus | 1345.7 | 2023.5 | 2182.4 | 2397.7 | 2383.3 | 2898.6 | 2849.0 |
| Surplus on Ordinary activities | 990.1 | 1531.3 | 1935.5 | 2341.5 | 2465.0 | 3191.6 | 3275.5 |
| Management and maintenance cost per unit | 1482 | 1436 | 1529 | 1688 | 1864 | 2058 | 2272 |
| Current ratio (ability to pay debtors) | 3.1 | 4.7 | 6.9 | 13.7 | 17.6 | 31.4 | 41.7 |
| Debt per unit | £10,791 | £11,258 | £6,709 | £3,288 | £1,773 | £195 | 0 |
| Repairs spend per unit | £423 | 481 | 532 | 586 | 648 | 715 | 789 |
| Major Repair spend per unit | £735 | 263 | 1029 | 48 | 555 | 612 | 965 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Loan covenant compliance** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interest Cover:  Santander/  BOS/ Triodos | 3.4 | 5.01 | 7.89 | 67.19 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Interest Cover:  Nationwide | 3.56 | 3.78 | 6.55 | 14.02 | 24.52 | N/A | N/A |
| Gearing:  Total indebtness/net worth  Santander/BOS <50%  RBS <50% | 23% | 15% | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

1. Our top risks updated 2019

It is really important that the Association can identify and control the risks we face now and potentially in the future. We do this by regularly reviewing our risk management strategy and up-dating a comprehensive risk matrix. This is then reviewed by our senior team and our governing Board regularly. We generally believe that we are a risk-averse organisation – this can be prudent and cautious but can also hold us back when considering new opportunities. We regularly review both internal risks of delivering our business plan and we keep abreast of our changing economic and financial climate, the legal framework within which we operate and the regulatory guidance we receive.

Over many years, we have been considered low engagement by the Regulator – they will review our engagement every year based on the performance data incuding the Charter indicators and most of our financial plans we provide to them. We will continue to monitor our overall strategy going forward and will update our Risk Management Strategy every three years.

Based on our environmental analysis and our comprehensive risk matrix, we have assessed our top risk as follows:

* Brexit – delays and uncertainty around increasing costs, inflation, supplies and materials, labour, and general uncertainty for tenants for food, medicines, etc.
* Freedom of Informaiton – while we have worked to implement the housing sector’s Publication scheme, final arrangements for FOI need to be determined for implementation on 11th November 2019.
* Notifiable event relating to the lack of an approved protocol with East Renfrewshire Council on homeless lets for 2018/19 and beyond.
* Development of new build – costs, delays in relation to private finance loan drawndown, assumptions, approvals, etc
* Universal Credit roll out and continuing welfare reform/social security – confusion to tenants; uncertainties around rental payments, arrears/voids/bad debts increasingand advice; uncertainty around payments to BHA and risk to our cashflows, etc.
* SHR’s new Regulatory guidance, implementation, and completion of new governance assurance statements
* Serious arrears for small number of factored owners – ability to pay, inability to complete further repairs, time and resources spend increasing the debts, etc.
* Corporate Finance plan – ensuring long term assumptions are robust especially inflation, can be delivered, with cost control and certainty, etc.
* Pension liability and uncertainty over continuing to offer ‘defined benefits’ – assessment of 3-year valuation awaited
* Delivering SHQS for new fire safety regulations within 2 years and delivering 2020 target for EESSH (energy efficiency)
* Waiting list information to influence Asset Management Strategy following transfer of data in-house – still unclear
* Lack of tenant representation and engagement – to ensure we have a tenants voice at Board level using TSP
* Sheltered housing complex – new staff, lack of decision on de-registration, significant spend on adaptations and impact on tenants
* Health and safety generally – to ensure we keep up-to-date with staff training, increased knowledge, improvements following audit, risk assessments, etc

1. Equal Opportunities, human rights and equality impact assessment and Action Plan

As a registered social landlord, BHA is required to meet equal opportunities legislation in the provison housing, as well as the recruitment of staff and the appointment of contractors and suppliers. The main provision for equality and diversity is contained within the Equality Act 2010 and this act describes the main protected characteristics relating to landlords’ services for the following areas – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

For tenants and service users, we use the commitment within the Scottish Social Housing charter to assess equality and diversity under the following statement: ‘every tenant and other customer, has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and received fair access to housing and housing services. This outcome describes what social landlords, by complying with equalities legislation, should achieve for all tenants and other customers regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. It includes landlords’ responsibility for finding ways of understanding the rights and needs of different customers and delivering services that recognise and meet these’. We report on this Standard by collating equal opportunities monitoring assessments for tenants, applicants, staff and Board members and report on how we meet the Charter in our Performance report.

The Scottish Housing Regulator expects registered social landlords to meet the requirements of all legislation incluidng equality and human rights.We have an obligation to ensure that we consider equality and human rights properly when making all of our decisions, in the design and review of internal and external policies, and in our day-to-day service delivery. To comply with this requirement, the Regulator states that landlords must collect data relating to each of the protected characteristics for existing tenants, new tenants, people on waiting lists, governing body members and staff.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is a way of improving services to ensure that they cater for people who share protected characteristics with reference to the Equality Act 2010. They are a specific duty in Scotland, where listed authorities must publish results of such assessments wih regards to policies, practices and decisions. BHA is not a listed authority but it important that we try to also assess how we can improve services using equality impact assessments and this is something we will develop over the period of this business plan.

**EQUALITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN MAY 2019 (updated 28 JUNE 2019)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Task** | **Deadline** | **Lead Officer** | **Comments/**  **progress** |
| 1. | Complete Equal and diversity policy review for service delivery and include EIA and consultation, new guidance | March 2020 | DCuS/CoSM |  |
| 2. | Ensure re-fresher training identified/programme in place for staff and Governing Board (BHA/LPS). Include Happy to Translate re-fresher. | March 2020 | CoSM |  |
| 3. | Review monitoring format for EO across all services to ensure data collection from April 2020 – eg complaints, repairs, medical adaptations, welfare rights services, community regeneration projects, all surveys. | March 2020 | CoSM |  |
| 4. | Using statistical information for Resident satisfaction survey and ARC and recent recruitment, discuss outcomes and agree targets for positive action where required to re-dress in-balances. | Oct 2019 | DCuS |  |
| 5. | Develop and complete equalities impact assessments for all key policies due for review, starting with allocations. | July 2019 | DCuS |  |
| 6. | Engage with local ethnic groups, disability forums etc. and ensure provision of materials in accessible formats. | March 2020 | DCuS |  |
| 7. | Assess outcomes from community engagement works for all externally funded projects for inclusion in our CS Strategy update | Oct 2019 | DAM |  |
| 8. | Review data collection and storage of data on QL | Sept 2019 | CoSM |  |
| 9. | Review Fair processing notices for residents, staff and Board members to reflect new data collection and | March 2020 | CoSM |  |
| 10. | Develop an approach to improving access to our information and services by BSL users. Identify resources to train our staff on how to use ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ and arrange appropriate publicity to raise awareness amongst service users | March 2020  March 2020 | CoSM  CoSM |  |
| 11 | Review recruitment practices to take account of agreed Disability Confident actions, including making reasonable adjustments | Dec 2019 | CoSM |  |
| 12 | Develop process to make our suppliers and partners to be aware of Disability Confident scheme and encourage them to become Disability Confident Employers | March 2020 | CoSM |  |
| 13 | Identify relevant organisations and media aimed particularly at disabled people, through which future vacancies could be advertised | Dec 2019 | CoSM |  |
| 14 | Provide human resource managers with specific Disability Confident training | Dec 2019 | CoSM |  |
| 15 | SCVO Digital Charter and inclusion project – ensure that we reach across our diverse range of tenants to offer digital support | Starts Nov 2019 for 12 months | DAM |  |
| 16 | Technology Enabled Care, TEC, Charter – to sign up to the Charter for our sheltered housing complex and agree 2-3 pledges | Aug 2019 | CoSM |  |
| 17 | Medical adaptations – to maximise the capital improvements to enhance the living experience in consultation with the residents at the sheltered housing complex | March 2020 | DAM |  |
| 18 | Medical adaptations – to review the policy to ensure we maximise the resources and equipment available as part of our allocations policy | March 2020 | DCuS |  |

1. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STRENGTHS**  **Leadership** – strong leadership with a clear vison and ability to identify and drive through change.  **Staff** -dedicated, adaptable and flexible staff with high degree of engagement and a strong working relationship with the Board; successful recruitment of experienced staff.  **Governance** - a skilled, experienced and committed Board.  **Reputation** – track record of achievements, strong identity with excellent reputation in local community.  **Performance** – high performing with low engagement with SHR and high level of tenant satisfaction.  **Partnership** – track record of effective partnership working in community, third sector and in business sector.  **Risk aware –** updated risk strategy and regular reviews  **Adaptable to change** – good progress on UC rollout information; good feedback on in-house repairs service; improved processes via IT system; | **WEAKNESSES**  **Succession planning** – various challenges including ability to retain staff due to size of RSL and opportunities across sector increasing, minimise turnover, access the skills we need, recruit new Board members ( eg tenants)  **Resources** – increasing workload, regulation and complexity with limited capacity and existing resources spread very thinly.  **Digital** – not being used fully to deliver enhanced services.  **Office accommodation** - need to reconfigure existing space for expansion.  **Relationships** – relationship with ERC’s core departments could improve further.  **Development growth** – continuing external delays with new build programme and loss of grant to area  **Staff resources** – technical experience isn’t sufficient |
| **OPPORTUNITIES**  **Local development** – partnerships, investment in infrastructure, improved transport links; delivery of masterplans  **Availability of funding** – eg attractive HAG rates, and private finance terms  **Availability of land** – for potential development  **Demographic changes -**eg. catering for the elderly**;** provision of more stock; consideration of mid-market renting in Eastwood;  **Demand for services** – increasing interest from commercial customers, growth of private sector; growth of current repairs service;  **Fairer Scotland**- and implications for community regeneration activities; maximise funding and partnerships.  **Internal communications** – review communications map and encourage feedback; enhanced digital services for staff and customers;  **New staff appointments** – refreshes thinking and encourages change and new skills | **THREATS**    **Economic changes** – impact of austerity, rising inflation, rising VAT, rising costs, availability of grant funding, lenders support and finance, Brexit  **Social changes** – impact of demographical changes (eg aging population, reducing household size, more complex needs, etc) and changing expectations.  **Rent affordability** - for tenants particularly single people, single pensioners, and those in supported accommodation  **Policy changes and resource/cost impact** – impact of Universal Credit, impact of fire safety regulations, EESSH2, compliance with Regulation.  **Stakeholder relationships** – ambivalence of key stakeholders (eg the local authority)  **Competitors** – RSLs competing for funding and actively seeking to takeover other RSLs. Private housebuilders seeking land and reducing land available for social housing; competition/demand for council house building sites  **Reputation of the sector** – how the public values “social housing” is changing.  **Cyber security** – increasing risk  **Pension deficits** – while there is a deficit funding plan in place, we need to review at least every 3 years the valuation trends and impact on our pension contributions |

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| LEGAL | ENVIRONMENTAL |
| Social Security Bill – devolved powers/universal credit  New Housing (s) Act 2014 – guidance has been slow  Social Security Bill  Housing (amendment) Scotland Bill – ONS re-classification  GDPR reform – complexity; capacity; resources; demand  FOI extension – complexity; resources; demand | Energy efficiency measures and targets -  Sourcing raw materials – can we maintain costs;  Using local trades – maintain competitive rates and quality  Sourcing electric vehicles – funding opportunities; savings  Office environmental policy – saving energy, recycling, |

# Links to other documents

* Asset management strategy updated March 2019
* Budget 2019/20 approved Feb 2019
* 5-year and 30-year financial forecasts, approved March 2019 (3 scenarios meantime)
* Value for Money Statement, Sept 2018
* Community Regeneration Strategy, approved 2017
* Risk Management Strategy approved 2017
* LPS Business Plan, updated Spring 2019
* Policy review timetable
* Governance Assurance Statement and internal audit report – to be updated October 2019









The Barrhead Housing Group Business Plan approved and adopted March 2019

Registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Society Act 2014

Scottish Housing Regulator Reg. No. HCB70

Financial Conduct Authority Reg. No. 2229R(S)

Scottish Charity No. SC036265

Levern Property Services is registered as a Property Factor 000096