



HIGH PEAK COMMUNITY HOUSING

Business Plan 2010 – 2015

1 Executive Summary

This business plan sets out the direction and vision for High Peak Community Housing over the next five years. Since completion of the Decent Homes Programme in 2007, we continue to strive to maintain decency in our homes but look beyond that to seek out new partnership and business opportunities and empower our tenants and customers to work in partnership with us to improve the communities in which they live. To that end, our Board and executive team set our vision as:

BETTER HOMES, BETTER COMMUNITIES, BETTER LIVES

Our Business Plan for 2010-2015 focuses on four main themes to ensure we can deliver our vision:

“Delivering homes, neighbourhoods and sustainable communities to be proud of by”:

- Making better places for people to live
- Improving availability of and increasing choice of housing
- Putting the needs of tenants and customers first
- Being a successful and progressive organisation

They reflect and build upon our progress and achievements to further developing our decent neighbourhoods and delivering sustainable communities in partnership with the key stakeholders in those communities - especially the people who live there. During 2009 our successful ‘Xpress Yourself’ Tour meant that we spoke to over a third of all our tenants and using the information gathered we will work with our tenants, customers and all stakeholders to identify local priorities for action and empower them to take a lead in delivering effective solutions.

We willingly embrace the new challenges and opportunities currently being set by National Government to put the needs of tenants and customers first and to work in partnership to deliver more affordable housing in the future. Our delivery plan sets out how we aim to ensure that we champion the role of the tenants within our business at every level, that tenants have the opportunity for choice about how the services are delivered, and can challenge when this is not happening.

We will emphasise the importance of choice in creating sustainable communities. The launch of our sub-regional choice based lettings scheme in 2007 saw us move away from our ‘gatekeeper’ role to one of facilitating customers taking informed decisions about where they would like to live. This extends to focusing on providing people with ‘options’ when they are faced with homelessness and ensuring that wherever possible we help to prevent them becoming homeless through the help, advice and mediation services provided. We were awarded ‘Trailblazers’ funds in 2008 to work across the sub-regional partnership to further enhance the services and choice available to our customers, and shall continue to work to ensure that the development of the Home Options partnership gives customers more choice and assistance in finding somewhere to live.

Our aim will be to maximise our limited resources by becoming even more efficient and effective. We cannot achieve this unless we have a strong partnership with our team of talented and very dedicated staff. Building on the strong team at High Peak we will aim to achieve even more outstanding results for our customers and key stakeholders and celebrate our successes with them.

We recognise the challenges that these economically turbulent times bring us with increased pressure on our waiting list, Homelessness Prevention service and our arrear; however, we also

recognise the opportunities as well. We are well-placed to assist in meeting the demand for more affordable housing through our close partnership with High Peak Borough Council and we aim to continue to build on the work in developing new, affordable homes that took place in 2009. Our ambition to be one of the top performing Arms Length Management Organisation will ensure that we will continue to stretch ourselves by setting challenging, aspirational but realistic targets.

We recognise the need to ensure that we have a strong, viable and effective company to take us forward into the future and we will build on our reputation for being flexible and innovative.

Our plan recognises that we cannot deliver all of this in isolation. The key to our success will be to build on the strong partnerships that we have with the other key stakeholders in our communities. We recognise the importance of our key partnership with our sole shareholder High Peak Borough Council and aims to build upon the number of successful partnership initiatives that we are involved in. One of the key new joint initiatives will be our partnership work with them to deliver more affordable housing across the High Peak.

Last but not least it emphasises the importance of strong leadership to drive us through this challenging and exciting period in the life of the company and to make High Peak Community Housing renowned as an excellent organisation proud of it's workings within the local communities and beyond.

Mark Ford
Chief Executive

2 Business Overview

High Peak Community Housing Ltd (HPCH) was launched on 1st March 2004 as an Arms Length Management Organisation to manage over 4,200 homes on behalf of High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) and to unleash an extra £9.5 million of additional investment to ensure all council properties achieve the decent homes standard by 2008. We are pleased that we achieved our challenging target to reach the Decent Homes Standard by the end of 2007– this is ahead of our own local target and also two years ahead of the national target.

Customers are the key drivers of HPCH and they continue to be at the heart of everything we do. This is reflected in our Board of Management, which is made up of 5 tenants, 5 borough councillors and 5 independent members. Their role is to ensure that we remain focused and responsive to the needs of the people and communities we serve whilst setting the strategic direction for the company in the future.

We are working in partnership with the Council and other key stakeholders to ensure that we can deliver effective solutions and improvements in the communities in which we work. At the same time we will continue to focus on our core business of providing excellent services to all our customers. To this end we have set ourselves a number of challenging but realistic targets to ensure that we deliver in all of our key business areas.

One of key aims is to ensure that we put our customers first and they have been key partners in the development of this business plan, sharing their ideas to ensure that this plan reflects their needs and aspirations, together with the Corporate objectives of our only shareholder, High Peak Borough Council.

Profile of the Borough of High Peak

The High Peak is one of the most attractive areas in the country. It is situated within the Peak District at the north-western tip of Derbyshire and the East Midlands region. Its stunning Dark Peak and White Peak landscapes and its distinctive townscapes, together with its close proximity to Manchester and Sheffield, make it a highly popular visitor destination and a sought after place in which to live. Two thirds of the High Peak lies within the Peak District National Park. However, 93% of the population live outside the Park, mainly along the western fringes of the Borough in the communities of Glossopdale (32,500), New Mills (9,500), Chapel-en-le-Frith (8,800), Whaley Bridge (6,200), Buxton (21,500) and in a number of smaller villages. Pressures to increase the supply of housing and to secure a better balance of local jobs and housing can conflict with the need to protect the sensitive environment. Compared with many areas deprivation is not high but there are pockets of significant deprivation such as Gamesley, Stone Bench and New Mills East wards. There are concerns around health & life expectancy in these areas, and these communities have been the targets of specific regeneration programmes. HPCH continues to work within these deprived areas in partnership with High Peak Borough Council. Unique to the High Peak is its position surrounded by five counties (Cheshire, Staffordshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester) and within a sixth – Derbyshire itself. For Government purposes, the High Peak lies within the East Midlands, whilst having links with Greater Manchester, Yorkshire and West Midlands Regions.

The population is 90,600 (1.3% ethnic minorities) and is projected to rise to 96,000 by 2010. We have 39,171 households in the Borough. Some 77.1% of households own their own property, higher than the figure for England (68.7%). We have a relatively healthy and well-educated population. Crime rates in the High Peak are low, although fear of crime is on the increase. Affordable housing, particularly for young people, is also an increasing concern and is something we are attempting to address in partnership with High Peak Borough Council. There is also an

issue in the area with a rising elderly population, and our strategic priorities must acknowledge these concerns and ways of combating potential future problems.

Our Business

The business of HPCH is quite complex involving a wide range of business areas. We undertake the following services, with support services providing the financial and performance monitoring functions:

- ✓ Property Maintenance and investment
- ✓ Housing management
- ✓ Housing allocation
- ✓ Community Empowerment
- ✓ Customer Support team
- ✓ Homelessness prevention and advice
- ✓ Warden service
- ✓ CCTV monitoring

We currently employ 158 people (131 full-time equivalents) and provide tenancy services to over 10,000 customers and a repairs service to all of our customers and carry out repairs for some other registered social landlords who operate within the Borough.

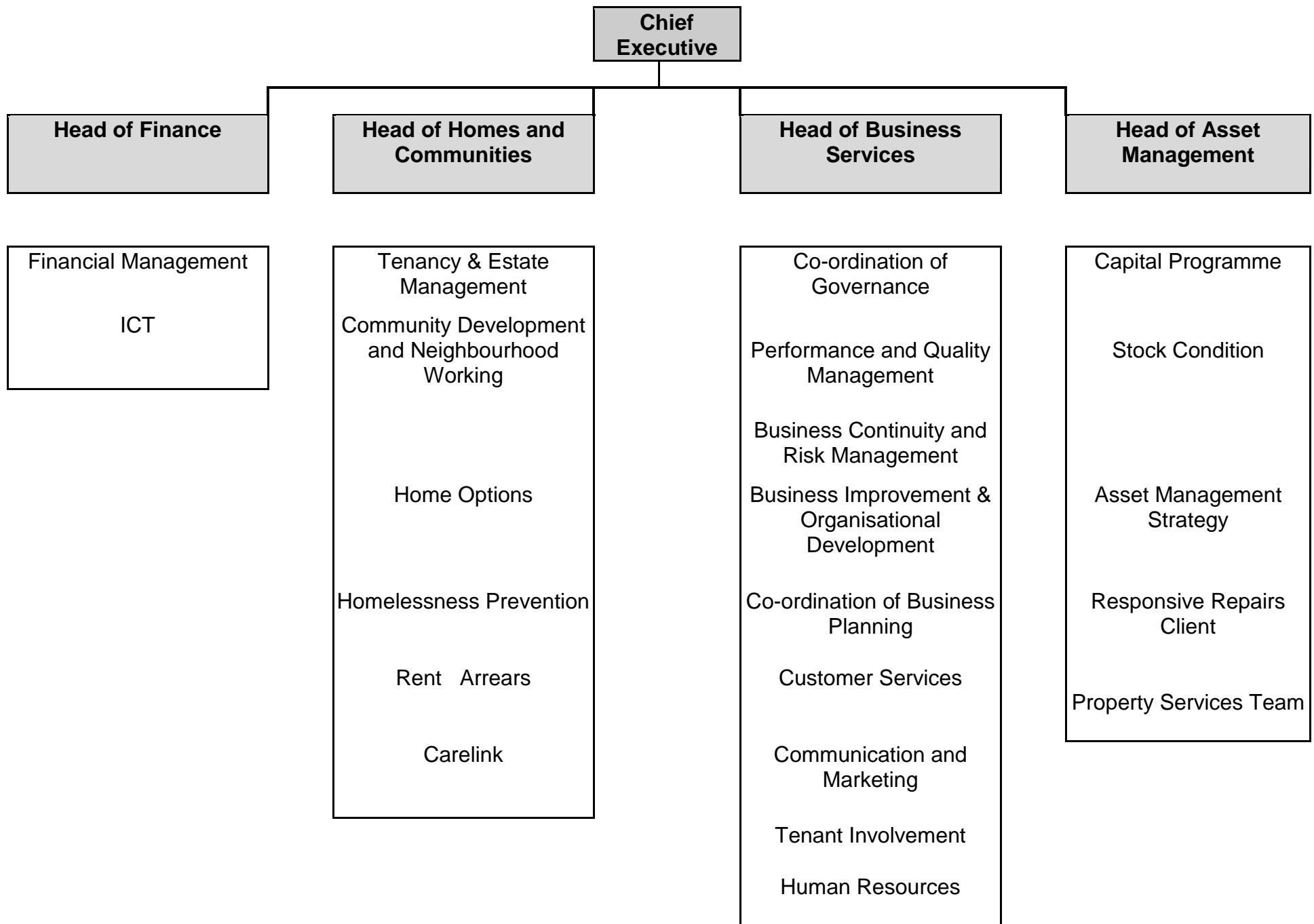
In 2008/9 we saw 20700 customers at our receptions and dealt with over 1000 letter and emails. Some of our services are delivered through Service Level Agreements with High Peak Borough Council, including the customer contact centre, and they handled 39900 contacts on our behalf.

We have 1990 Carelink customers connected to our support services.

We also have 134 leaseholders for which we provide services.

In 2008/09 we saw 133 homelessness applicants and accepted that we had a statutory duty to 43% of those cases.

Recent changes to the structure of the company mean we feel we have the necessary skills and talents within our team to meet the objectives as set out by the Board. The overall structure is shown below, together with areas of responsibility for delivering the company objectives.



Putting the needs of tenants and customers first

Working in partnership with our customers and other members of the communities in which they live is a fundamental part of this organisation. We have worked to ensure that our customers are not just at the heart of everything we do but are the driving force, empowered to influence the decision-making processes at every level. We are currently working with our tenants to agree the structure to ensure tenants can scrutinize the company's decisions and performance so that the focus continues to remain on delivering the best possible service for all our customers.

Business Planning, Risk Analysis and Management

The Board at HPCH are keen to ensure that the objectives of the company meet the aspirations of, primarily our tenants and customers, but also those of our stakeholders and the national housing agenda. The views of all the stakeholders are presented to Board and they utilise this information to develop the key themes and actions contained within this business plan. The Board and Executive team have also reviewed the financial plan and, whilst acknowledging that this is influenced by the current review of the Housing Revenue Account nationally, are utilising the information currently available to ensure that the key themes and actions can be delivered.

The executive team ensure that the strategies in place reflect the key themes and actions. The delivery plan illustrates how the company aims to deliver these themes and actions, together with the key success measures, the strategic risks identified and where additional resources may be required to ensure delivery of these actions. This is shown as an appendix within this document.

HPCH aims to have a risk management strategy that proactively identifies, manages and therefore minimises the risks to the effective operation and future viability of the business. At the same time we intend to manage our risks in a way that does not stifle innovation and continuous improvement. The strategic risk map is reviewed by Board, having completed a SWOT and PESTI analysis, and the agreed map is then monitored through the Audit & Resources committee. A copy of this risk map, agreed after reviewing the risks in line with the business objectives is shown as an appendix.

Monitoring and Review

Good governance is key to ensuring the monitoring of this Business Plan, and the accountability of the executive team for delivery. Full Board meetings are currently held 9 times per year and reports are linked to the strategic priorities and include assessment of risk, customer consultation, financial implications and the impact on equalities & diversity – all key to our strategic priorities.

Monitoring arrangements of the Company are in place that reflect the partnership culture between HPBC and HPCH, to ensure a transparent and trust based relationship and to have due regard for HPCH's independence and autonomy. However, as part of HPBC's strategic landlord liability, robust monitoring arrangements are required, to ensure our customers are receiving 'best value' and that the partnership promotes improved quality of life for all our customers.

Quality and Celebration

HPCH is committed to excellence in quality and, in order to utilise all methods of delivering this we have involved the company in the assessment of several quality awards. We currently hold:

- Customer Service Excellence
- ISO 9901:2008
- Investors in People
- Telecare Services Award for our warden services

We are proud of our achievements and aim to seek and share best practice with other organisations to continue to learn and develop as a Company.

Conclusion

As part of this plan we have made a clear commitment to go beyond decent homes, which was the original reason for the company being established. This business plan sets out our key strategic direction for the next five years showing emphasis on the need to develop and empower our communities and increase access to affordable housing whilst still improving and exceeding expectation in our core business areas.

We will strive to go further, and deliver an excellent service across the full range of customers needs in each business area, adapting to improve, and deliver a service that reflects changing needs. With the support of all our stakeholders we believe this means that:

- Our customers needs are put first in what we do.
- People will live in decent homes, decent communities and decent neighbourhoods. It will mean that people can be proud of where they live. It will mean that not only will they be consulted but also they will be listened to and they will know how what they have told us has been used to improve what we do.
- It means that our customers will get the services, improvements and be treated in a way they want rather than what we think.
- We will work in partnership to deliver all of these improvements in a cohesive, sustainable way. Working together to deliver *Better homes. Better Communities, Better Lives.*



High Peak Community Housing

Annual Delivery Plan 2010 –2015

Delivering homes, Neighbourhoods and Sustainable Communities to be Proud of

By:

1. Making better places for people to live
2. Improving Availability of and Increasing Choice of Housing
3. Putting the needs of tenants and customers first
4. Being a successful and progressive organisation

Theme 1 - Making better places for people to live

- Working towards **CLEANER** neighbourhoods and communities
- Working towards **GREENER** neighbourhoods and communities
- Working towards **SAFER** neighbourhoods and communities
- Working towards **HEALTHIER** neighbourhoods and communities
- Working towards **WEALTHIER** neighbourhoods and communities

| Key Actions 20010/11 | Success Measures | Strategic Risk | Additional resources required (£) |
|--|---|---|--|
| Work in partnership with HPBC to agree how to take forward the community partnership agenda within all our local communities | 2% in tenants satisfaction with neighbourhoods (<i>baseline from STATUS survey 08/09</i>) | Breakdown in relationship with key stakeholders | Seek additional funding for community initiatives to assist with funding community partnerships team. |
| Commission repairs in timely manner to maintain the security and health and safety of the occupant or property. Ensure specified items are fit for purpose. | 2% increase in tenants satisfaction with repairs service (<i>baseline from STATUS survey 08/09</i>) 98% of repairs completed on time 96% repairs appointments kept 96% repairs completed right first time | Financially Unsustainable business plan | |
| Offer an excellent repairs and maintenance service by ensuring repairs completed on time, ensuring tenants homes are safe | 98% of repairs completed on time 96% repairs appointments kept 96% repairs completed right first time | Inadequate resources to meet investment requirements of stock condition survey | |
| Proactively tackling antisocial behaviour & the fear of crime in partnership with police | % reduction in ASB reports 95% satisfied with ASB handling % feel safe living in their neighbourhoods (<i>PLACE survey 2008/09 to provide baseline</i>) | Breakdown in relationship with key stakeholders | |
| Ensure management of CCTV system is effective to ensure the safety of residents across High Peak & Staffordshire Moorlands | No. of police requests to view evidence | Breakdown in relationship with key stakeholders | |
| Utilise the Trailblazers monies to expand the Choice Based Lettings service to make Home Options the 'one-stop shop' for all housing options in High Peak and beyond | Baseline to be established as part of project. Agreed that measures will include: Upgraded IT to provide holistic approach to social needs including working with DWP Homelessness IT module up and running Advertising private rented accommodation | Breakdown in relationship with key stakeholders Impact of the credit crunch on the company | CLG awarded £220K for the sub-regional project over 2 years |
| Use the information from the Xpress yourself Tour to develop Local neighbourhood plans/ Local Action groups to identify and deliver improvements in local areas | 100% neighbourhood budget spent % Increase in satisfaction in neighbourhoods (<i>baseline from STATUS 2008/09</i>) % takeup in community fund applications | Downturn in customer satisfaction | |

Theme 2 - Improving Availability of and Increasing Choice of Housing

- Ensure tenants continue to live in Decent Homes
- Aspire to develop our own standard in excess of decent homes
- Work with communities post Decent Homes
- Be pro-active in preventing homelessness
- Work in partnership to explore all options to increase the supply of affordable homes in the Borough

| Key Actions 20010/11 | Success Measures | Strategic Risk | Additional resources required (£) |
|--|---|---|--|
| Agree capital programme investment and deliver in line with tenants' aspirations | 100% of agreed programme delivered on time and budget | Financially Unsustainable business plan | |
| Offer an excellent repairs and maintenance service by ensuring repairs completed on time, ensuring tenants homes are safe | 98% of repairs completed on time 96% repairs appointments kept 96% repairs completed right first time | Downturn in customer satisfaction | |
| Utilise information from the Xpress Yourself Tour to develop a local standard for our homes & neighbourhoods in excess of 'Decent Homes' standard | Development of local standards in line with TSA regulatory guidelines | Downturn in customer satisfaction Impact of the credit crunch on the company | |
| Work in partnership with HPBC to agree how to take forward the community partnership agenda within all our local communities | 2% in tenants satisfaction with neighbourhoods (<i>baseline from STATUS survey 08/09</i>) | Breakdown in relationship with key stakeholders | Seek additional funding for community initiatives to assist with funding community partnerships team. |
| Continue to reduce families living in temporary accommodation | <40 families living in temporary accommodation | | Funded through General Fund |
| Continue to offer support and advice to people to prevent them becoming homeless | 15% Increase in number of BV213 prevented homeless cases, number of evictions | Impact of the credit crunch on the company | Funded through General Fund |
| Utilise the Trailblazers monies to expand the Choice Based Lettings service to make Home Options the 'one-stop shop' for all housing options in High Peak and beyond | Baseline to be established as part of project with meetings being held Feb 09 to agree measures but will include: Upgraded IT to provide holistic approach to social needs including working with DWP Homelessness IT module up and running Advertising private rented accommodation | | CLG awarded £220K for the sub-regional project over 2 years |
| Continue to work with High Peak Borough Council in the development of a building programme for new affordable homes in the Borough | 5 new homes successfully completed in Tintwistle Have engaged with HPBC and the HCA regarding investment in, and development, new socially rented homes in High Peak. | Impact of central government policies Financially Unsustainable business plan Breakdown in relationship with key stakeholders | Funding to be applied for through HCA |

Theme 3 - Putting the needs of tenants and customers first

- Promote tenant-led decision making and challenge
- Continue to provide excellent customer service
- Improve communications with our Customers and partners
- Recognise, understand and work with our wider customer base
- Recognise that young people matter by engaging with them
- Promote Equality and Value Diversity

| Key Actions 20010/11 | Success Measures | Strategic Risk | Additional resources required (£) |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Have clear, flexible, effective mechanisms in place to ensure tenants are at heart of decision making progress & demonstrate the changes made following customer consultation | 100% of consultation plan implemented 5% satisfaction increase in opportunities to participate (using STATUS survey 08/09 as baseline) | | |
| Ensure that our services are inspected by tenants and scrutiny is key to the decision making process of both tenants and Board | 4 tenant inspector roles identified and training given Scrutiny panel set up and reviewing all information | Impact of central government policies | |
| Maintain the Customer Service Excellence accreditation | Award maintained through external 'health check' | Downturn in customer satisfaction | Contained within current budget provision |
| Achieve high levels of customer satisfaction with our customers | 2% overall increase in customer satisfaction (<i>baseline STATUS 2008/09 to be established</i>) 98% of repairs completed on time 96% repairs appointments kept 96% repairs completed right first time 5% reduction in number of complaints | Downturn in customer satisfaction | |
| Ensure effective communications are in place for all customers & stakeholders | 10% increase in satisfaction with stakeholder communication <i>baseline to be established through survey in 09/10</i> 90% customer satisfaction with communications (<i>baseline to be established through survey in 09/10</i>) | Downturn in customer satisfaction | |
| Continue to review our service standards with the Customer Service Review group and develop local standards where appropriate | 100% standards reviewed % tenants satisfied with the way their homes are managed (<i>baseline from STATUS 08/09</i>) | Downturn in customer satisfaction | |
| Develop and implement our "Young People Matter" project | 50 young people actively involved with HPCH 5 young people employed as apprentices by HPCH | | To be partly funded through community partnership initiatives |
| Embed the Equalities & Diversity group to ensure services are assessed by, and tailored to meet the needs of all customers | Develop new strategy to reflect the Single Equality Bill 4 meetings held during year with E & D group 100% planned impact assessments achieved | Downturn in customer satisfaction | |

Theme 4 - Being a successful and progressive organisation

- Be a top performing organisation
- Look for opportunities to add value
- Excellent reputation with everyone
- Value and develop our brilliant team
- Promote Equality and Value Diversity
- Reduce our environmental impact

| Key Actions 2010/11 | Success Measures | Strategic Risk | Additional resources required (£) |
|--|---|---|--|
| Consistently strive to ensure performance is upper quartile in all areas by setting clear performance targets to drive improvement and regularly monitor service delivery | 90% of all indicators upper quartile 98% of repairs completed on time 96% repairs appointments kept 96% repairs completed right first time | Failure to raise our profile Downturn in customer satisfaction | |
| Ensure current and former rent arrears continue to be effectively controlled to increase resources available to spend on tenants priorities | 98.5% current rent collected | Impact of the credit crunch on the company | |
| Deliver cash efficiencies by constantly reviewing our services for value for money and seeking to increase opportunities for promoting our services and attracting outside funding streams | 3% cash efficiencies achieved 100% SLA's reviewed for VFM Post investment appraisals carried out for all new investments within HPCH. | Failure to assess, develop and post appraise new business opportunities | |
| Promote the work of the company through national awards and celebrating the work being undertaken across the company | 1 national award one 75% positive press within local press | Failure to raise our profile | |
| Develop an organisational development strategy to ensure the company, it's staff and Board are equipped to ensure the company maintains and meets the challenges ahead | 3 training opportunities per member of staff/Board Management development programme agreed and delivered to all managers/supervisors Partnership working monitoring introduced and reported Percentage of service areas enhanced by community engagement % of strategic decisions approved at Board and implemented | Failure to retain key staff and Board members | To be costed |
| Actively promote and deliver our Equality & Diversity strategy both internally and externally by carrying out E & D impact assessments across all areas of the business | 100% of planned impact assessments carried out and 100% of front line services completed 10% increase in job applications received from different ethnic backgrounds Obtain excellence rating under the Equality Framework for Local Government in partnership with HPBC | | Maintained within training budget |
| Carry out environmental impact assessments across all areas of the business involving our tenant 'green group' | 100% of environmental assessments carried out | | Maintained within training budget |