



LEEDS FEDERATED HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**2008 – 2013 CORPORATE PLAN
SUMMARY**

Year 2 – 2009-2010

“To deliver outstanding homes and services”

...driven by Customers.



The Tenants Federation considering the Corporate Plan

.....delivered by Colleagues.....



Staff discussing the Corporate Plan at a staff lunch

Leeds Federated Housing Association

Corporate Plan 2009-2010

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Leeds Federated Housing Association

Corporate Plan 2009-2010

Overview

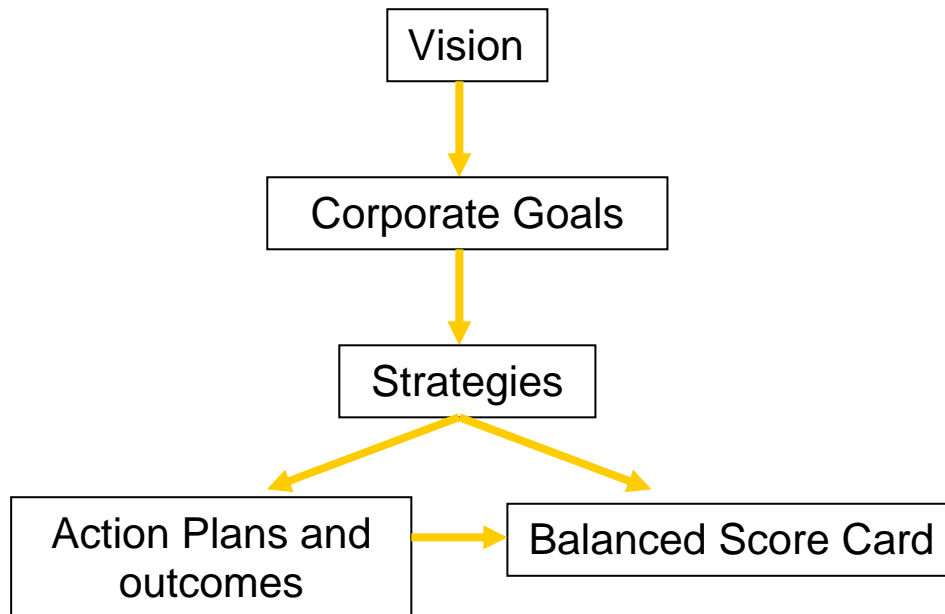
1.1 Introduction

Leeds Federated HA ('Leeds Fed') is a 'people' organisation. Our role is to support people, primarily through the provision of housing, but also through a range of other support mechanisms. The aim is to make the **places people live, become places they want to stay in, and places other people will want to move to.** The Corporate Plan sets out how we intend to achieve our vision:

"To deliver outstanding homes and services

The 2009/10 plan is the second year of a 5 year Corporate Plan, which was approved by Board in March 2008 and followed detailed consultation with our customers, staff and other stakeholders. A number of the key customer facing strategies have been reviewed with customers during the 2008/09 year and changes made where necessary. The remaining strategies have also been reviewed by staff with a few minor changes being made. The contributions of all parties has been invaluable in ensuring that the views of the people who are 'closest' to our services, either receiving it or delivering it, are fully taken into account. Customers were also engaged in suggesting the 'key' areas which Leeds Fed should focus on as part of the preparation for this document.

There is a clear "golden thread" running through this Corporate Plan, starting with the Vision, which is then broken down into four Corporate Goals. The strategies necessary to achieve those Goals are set out, followed by action plans detailing the actions that will be completed and recording the outcomes expected from each action. Finally, targets have been set for all key indicators for the organisation using the Balanced Score Card. All staff will be delivering those actions and helping achieve the targets set, and are aware that what they do directly contributes towards the Association achieving its vision.



1.2 History

Leeds Fed was formed in 1974 by a number of smaller Associations coming together to form a 'federation', for the benefit of the community. The idea was that by working together they could achieve more than as separate organisations. That philosophy has prevailed throughout Leeds Fed's history, with partnerships and joint working arrangements being a common feature of our operations over the years.

The Association grew quickly through the 1970's and early 1980's with a lot of pre 1919 stock. New build development was undertaken through Leeds Partnership Homes during the early 1990's, leading to the present day where our 4,100 homes are roughly half pre 1919 stock and half new build stock.

Most of our homes are in Leeds, but through the 1990's the Association started developing outside Leeds and now has around 400 homes in Harrogate and 100 in Wakefield.

1.3 Service Provided

Leeds Fed's primary service is **the provision of general needs housing for families, couples and single people**, enabling access to housing for those in low paid work unable to access market housing. It also has a significant supported housing function through which some 1000 homes are supported, either directly or through a partner agency. The Association supports older people, people with disabilities (physical or mental), refugees and women fleeing domestic violence plus a range of other needs within communities.

In addition to the above, we are keen to help communities improve;

- from a physical perspective through an improved environment,
- from a social perspective through promoting opportunities for individuals in education, training and
- from an economic perspective through helping people into employment.

1.4 Review of 2008-2009

Given this is the second year of the Associations five year Corporate Plan, it is appropriate to summarise achievements from the first year of that plan at this stage.

Goal 1 – CUSTOMER - Provide high quality, accessible, customer focussed services which put all customers at the heart of everything we do and promote equality and diversity throughout the organisation.

- Improving our knowledge of customers needs. **Customer profile** data across all six diversity strands is now available for over 94% of our customers, enabling services to be tailored accordingly e.g. communication preferences, identifying vulnerable tenants on the IT system via flags, and highlighting any specific needs to Contractors, on repair orders.
- **Youth work** – diversionary activities across the city resulting in reducing levels of ASB as part of a **Community Cohesion approach** linking Neighbourhood Planning and external agencies. Also representation of younger customers improved via informal consultation
- An increase in the level of **resident involvement** for example, constituted residents groups have increased from 3 to 8 in just under 2 years, the methods by which customers can get involved have grown, and customers have made significant contributions to service review programmes resulting in more customer focussed services.
- Service specific surveys indicate **improving satisfaction** in a range of areas, for example, responsive repairs, adaptations and planned improvement programmes
- Our **Supported Housing services** have achieved level B scores during quality inspections, and our **Domiciliary Care services** have achieved a two star rating during an unannounced CSCI inspection

Goal 2 – HOMES – To ensure all the Associations homes, including the planned provision of more homes, are designed, constructed, refurbished and maintained to the best affordable standard.

- Improvement in **void re-let times** from 35.5 (2007/8) to 29 days (2008/9) resulting in reductions in void rent loss enabling additional investment in improvement programmes

- Increasing the percentage of homes achieving **decent homes** to 99.16% by 31 March 2009.
- Current **Gas certificates** for 99.67% of our homes against a target of 99.25%, representing 12 certificates outstanding at March 2009 all of which met procedural compliance.
- **Energy efficiency** – attracted over £300k matched funds towards insulation programmes and boiler upgrades
- **Responsive repairs** - improvements in performance on completion times, satisfaction and appointments

Goal 3 – COMMUNITIES - To improve the quality of life for our customers through having a role in regenerating communities. This is to be achieved through direct support or by facilitating the involvement of other agencies in order that the places people live become places they want to stay in, and places other people will want to move to.

- **Financial inclusion** – involving partners to deliver credit union bank accounts, delivering debt advice and general financial awareness training to customers, part funding a Citizen's Advice member of staff to be based at Leeds Fed and undertaking welfare benefit maximisation sessions for customers over 55
- **ESOL** - As part of the Association's approach to Community Cohesion, we are providing training for customers wishing to learn English
- **Worklessness** - we have adopted a range of approaches to assist customers back into work, including investment in a social enterprise scheme to provide cleaning services to customers, and partnerships with specialist agencies
- The **Beeston Hill and Holbeck Regeneration project** in partnership with the local authority continues to address a number of regeneration projects, for example the Beverley's and the Garnet's
- Our customer led **Disability Forum** has promoted disability and mobility issues and services across Leeds by arranging a multi agency 'disability awareness day' for customers.

Goal 4 – EFFICIENT - To ensure the association is effectively governed and provides efficient and value for money services which protect the viability of the organisation. That we respond to the competitive environment by setting targets to achieve top half performance in all key performance indicator areas, and have a staffing structure that reflects the aspirations of the business with staff that are motivated and properly trained to deliver customer focussed services.

- A **reduction in the core costs** of service delivery whilst improving core performance

- Successful **re-accreditation** as an Investor in People following re-assessment in June 2008.
- Improved staff awareness of **customer needs** when delivering services, highlighted from the staff opinion survey
- **Procurement savings** in planned improvement works, insurance, and Value for Money from matched funding secured for energy efficiency works
- Retained '**green**' **traffic light for viability** following recent Annual Viability Review by the Housing Corporation
- Embedded a comprehensive **performance framework** including balanced scorecard which has enabled the Association to track its performance and direct resources where appropriate

**Leeds Federated Housing Association
Corporate Plan 2009-2010
The Way Forward**

2.1 Key issues faced by Leeds Fed

Inspection and regulation

The Association was placed under supervision by the Housing Corporation in February 2008, following the publication of an Audit Commission Inspection report which concluded that Leeds Fed provided a 'poor' ('0' star) service and had 'uncertain' prospects for improvement. The Housing Corporation also made three statutory appointments to the Association's Board. Since that time, the Board has undergone a strategic review of governance, resulting in a number of changes at Board level. Through its Performance Committee the Board has scrutinised the Association's delivery of the Action Plan agreed with the Housing Corporation principally made up of the recommendations within the Audit Commission's report. This activity, which is solely aimed at improving the services provided for customers by Leeds Fed, is closely linked to the Association's preparations for its re-inspection by the Audit Commission commencing 30 March 2009.

The report from the Audit Commission following the re-inspection, expected in July 2009, will have a fundamental impact on the Association's future strategic direction. The Board will meet in April 2009 to start considering its future, reaching a conclusion after the final Audit Commission's report has been published. This Corporate Plan will be reviewed in the light of that decision and amendments made as appropriate at that time.

A key part of the Association's focus in 2009/10, following inspection, will be to continue to deliver the necessary changes and improvements to services which will lead to the Association being taken out of supervision.

The External Environment

This section sets out the main factors externally which will affect the association over the life of this Corporate Plan.

The external environment – national issues

On a national level there are a number of issues affecting the association.

Changes in regulation

The major change during 2008 was the creation as a result of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 of the Tenant Services Authority and the Homes and Communities Agency. These organisations have

taken over the role of the Housing Corporation, which ceased to exist on 30 November 2008.

Tenants Services Authority

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) has taken over the role of social housing regulator. Its powers have been increased within the Act, but these will not be effective until the conclusion of a consultation exercise on the new regulatory framework. The consultation exercise will be with both tenants and landlords, and is expected to be concluded in late 2009. Until then, the TSA will operate using the old powers used by the Housing Corporation.

The goal of the TSA is to raise the standard of services for tenants. As part of the TSA's role in achieving that goal, the Association can expect to be challenged to be financially viable and well governed. The TSA will also work to reduce the gap between excellent and mediocre affordable housing services – so Leeds Fed will need to work to raise its game in areas where its performance is below average.

Homes and Communities Agency

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) brings together responsibility for both the land and the money to deliver new housing, community facilities and infrastructure. The HCA's ambition is to deliver high-quality attractive and affordable places for people to live – whether creating new communities from scratch, or transforming existing ones. The HCA are investing £8.4 billion between 2008 and 2011 to fund at least 180,000 new affordable homes. By 2010-11 the ambition is to see a building rate of 70,000 homes per year, with at least 45,000 for social rent and 25,000 for affordable sale.

There is an opportunity for Leeds Fed to engage in both the development of new homes and refurbishment of existing homes, as part of the regeneration of the areas in which the Association works. Whilst under supervision, the Association is unable to receive any grant for development from the HCA, although given the timescales involved in development, discussions with the local authority, TSA and HCA will need to take place during 2009-10 to explore future development opportunities.

Credit Crunch

The credit crunch has had a major impact on the UK economy. This in turn is having an impact on many of our customers, through an increase in redundancies and a 'tightening' of people's finances generally following substantial price increases in a number of areas, e.g. energy costs. The Association has commenced a number of

activities both as part of its Financial Inclusion and Worklessness Strategies, and in response to the credit crunch specifically. It has also given priority to work in its support for customers facing fuel poverty. This activity will need to continue in 2009/10 to help our customers continue to address issues as they arise,

There has also been an impact corporately within Leeds Fed from the credit crunch, through the reduced availability of private finance. The Association's Treasury Management Strategy has set out the approach being taken, which will be kept under review over the next year or so as the requirement for additional finance gets closer. The primary consideration in this area will be to ensure the ongoing financial viability of the Association. It is worth noting that there is also a reduction in the availability of mortgage finance for customers seeking to acquire shared ownership, equity stake and Homebuy products.

Possibility of a change in government

Commentators in the press are discussing the potential of a change in government within the next 18 months. Such a change may alter the approach to building new properties, the balance between home ownership and renting, and the renovation of existing housing and bringing empty properties back into use. Re'new is tracking emerging policy in these areas, and Leeds Fed will need to engage with Re'new in order to help understand the implications for the Association.

The external environment - regional and local issues.

There are a range of issues affecting Leeds Fed on a regional and local level.

Housing targets

In response to the governments' challenging growth aspirations, each local authority in the areas Leeds Fed works has its own target. In Leeds Fed's primary area of operation, Leeds, the council's three year target for net additional homes provided is 10,200 new homes by March 2011, 1,800 of which will be affordable homes. Harrogate have a growth target of 400 new properties per year, and Wakefield are looking to add 3,200 homes by 2001, 807 of which are intended to be affordable housing.

There are plenty of opportunities for development within Leeds Fed's areas of operation, either through Social Housing Grant provided by the HCA or through S106 agreements with private developers. Given the Association's limited capacity for development, the focus will be on opportunities within the Association's primary area of operation, Leeds. Where this approach cannot be delivered, opportunities will be sought in Harrogate and Wakefield.

It appears likely that there will be some move towards strategic development and resource allocation to a City Region level. Leeds Federated, both individually and through the Leeds Housing

Partnership needs to position itself as a key provider within the Leeds City Region able to provide housing that can improve the housing offer to households on low to average incomes and thus help support economic growth

ALMO's

The ALMO's in Leeds were re-organised in 2007, reducing in number from 6 to 3. Each is now a significant organisation in its own right, exercising influence over housing and related issues in its area of operation. Leeds Fed will continue to develop its relationship with the ALMO's in order to ensure the interests of the communities where we work are delivered.

It is worth noting the forthcoming review of the Leeds ALMO's which holds both opportunities and threats. While there is the opportunity of partnerships, joint working and joint services, the potential creation of one or three LSVT's could also provide a significant competitive risk.

Supporting People

Challenges in Supported Housing continue, with funding forecast to reduce in real terms over successive years. Each local authority has a different approach to funding, although the approach of all, to review the schemes being provided on a regular basis, places an emphasis on the need to offer services which are considered value for money. In addition, the 'Personalisation Agenda' is forecast to be implemented in 2010/11, where funding is channelled through the service *user* rather than the commissioning local authority. Preparations for this fundamental change will need to be started during 2009/10.

SWOT Analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Leeds Fed have been summarised in the table below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Tenant involvement	Performance in some areas, e.g. arrears
'Can Do' culture	Size/context
Working with Diverse communities	Location of stock
Small & nimble/flexible	
Improving Performance	
Financial viability	
Choices	
Board & management succession	
Opportunities	Threats
Financial	Availability of private finance
Choices	Low level of grant
Performance improvements	Supporting people (reducing

	funding/personalisation agenda)
Profile/ influence	Regulatory changes
Involving tenants	Other credit crunch effects on third parties, e.g. key suppliers
To 'link up' with others/network	Changing market conditions
Social Enterprise	Results of review of ALMO's
Changing market conditions	
'Renaissance' of renting	
Review of Leeds ALMO's	

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2.2 Vision

“To deliver outstanding homes and services”

Leeds Fed was formed for the benefit of the community. **The Association works to make the places people live, become places they want to stay in, and places other people will want to move to.** It does this through working with all parts of our diverse community and with other agencies to improve the living experience customers have in their homes.

Leeds Fed will provide **good basic services**, from the letting of the property, to engaging with customers through their dealings with the Association, including a first rate repairs service, to the arrangements for them leaving our homes to move on elsewhere.

We will also seek to provide a range of **services which go beyond** our mandatory obligations, including support for dealing with issues of anti-social behaviour, improving the standard of homes through the decent homes *plus* standard, and by improving the environment in which our customers live.

In addition to the above, we will provide **support to customers**, and others in the area where appropriate, to help them make the best of their lives, through training opportunities or links to employment, as well as a range of advice services.

Where necessary we will form partnerships with other organisations to jointly address common issues.

The Association will continue with its improving trend on performance and aim to achieve first quartile performance over the life of this Corporate Plan when compared to a representative sample of other Housing Associations using the latest available data. Where delivering a quality service requires additional expenditure which conflicts with achieving first quartile performance, an appropriate balance between the two competing interests will be decided upon by the Board.

The organisation will look to acquire at least 100 new units over the life of the Corporate Plan, in order to replace homes lost through demolitions or property sales. New homes will be offered through a variety of tenures and rent levels. This will contribute to our desire to maintain the number of units within the Association at the current levels.

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2.3 Corporate Goals

The vision has been broken down into four Corporate Goals, each covering an element of Leeds Fed's operations. These in turn are delivered through a range of strategies.

Goal 1 - CUSTOMER

- Provide high quality, accessible, customer focussed services which put all customers at the heart of everything we do and promote equality and diversity throughout the organisation.

Goal 2 – HOMES

- To ensure all the Associations homes, including the planned provision of more homes, are designed, constructed, refurbished and maintained to the best affordable standard.

Goal 3 – COMMUNITIES

- To improve the quality of life for our customers through having a role in regenerating communities. This is to be achieved through direct support or by facilitating the involvement of other agencies in order that the places people live become places they want to stay in, and places other people will want to move to.

Goal 4 – EFFICIENT

- To ensure the Association is effectively governed and provides efficient and value for money services which protect the viability of the organisation. That we respond to the competitive environment by setting targets to achieve top half performance in all key performance indicator areas, and have a staffing structure that reflects the aspirations of the business with staff that are motivated and properly trained to deliver customer focussed services.

The above goals are broken down into strategies, as set out in the next section. Part of each strategy includes an action plan, which details the actions to be undertaken during the next year to help achieve that particular strategy. Each action is linked to a 'critical success factor' (CSF) within the balanced scorecard (BSC). The BSC has been used to set targets (annual and three year targets) for each CSF.

In essence therefore, by completing the actions for each strategy, and achieving the targets within the BSC, we will be delivering the goals to which each strategy relate, and ultimately achieve the Associations vision.

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**2.4 Strategy
Introduction**

There are a number of strategies which set out our long term aims (5+ years) and medium term strategic priorities (1-5 years) for each of the Corporate Goals listed above. An action plan (1-2 years) has been produced detailing the actions necessary to deliver each strategy.

Strategies

There are a number of issues which are common to all strategies, and rather than repeat the same paragraphs in each, these have been set out in this introduction to the strategies. The comments below therefore apply to all strategies:

Equality and Diversity – the importance of treating people equally and recognising and accepting differences between them runs through everything Leeds Fed does. In addition to a specific strategy covering this issue, all other strategies will have to consider E&D whenever people are involved. Where specific actions are needed, they will be recorded in the action plan for that strategy.

Value for Money – the concept of ensuring the Association delivers services to customers which represent ‘value for money’ is enshrined within the strategy of that name. All other strategies are linked to VFM in that they involve decisions being taken on how to best deliver and improve services to customers. Price, efficiency and effectiveness will all be taken into account as actions are completed.

Access and Customer Care – our aim is to develop and improve access to services by putting all customers at the heart of everything we do. The A&CC strategy sets out how we will achieve this, but there is also a link to the other strategies. All actions need to have the interests of customers in mind when being undertaken. Where specific actions are required to achieve this, the action plan will stipulate what needs to be done.

Whilst some strategies affect all the goals within the Association, others are primarily concerned with one particular goal. A list of the strategies and the goal(s) to which they relate has been provided below:

Goal 1 - CUSTOMER

Neighbourhood strategy

Customer involvement strategy

Supported housing strategy (including older persons services)

Goal 2 – HOMES

Asset management strategy

Business development strategy

Energy efficiency strategy

Goal 3 – COMMUNITIES

Community cohesion strategy

Financial inclusion strategy

Goal 4 – EFFICIENT

Procurement strategy

Finance strategy

Risk strategy

Information systems strategy

Communication strategy

Human resource management strategy

2.5 Action Plans

The action plans do not include 'day to day' activity which is already completed through the association. Rather they include additional activity and improvements, which will take the organisation forward in delivering each strategy, and ultimately contribute to achieving our vision.

The action plans will include actions for the foreseeable future, which may well include actions to complete over the next few years. As the Corporate Plan is reviewed each year, the action plans will be updated, and any necessary new actions added to each action plan.

2.6 Monitoring Monitoring action plans

The action plans will be monitored through the year by the Leadership Team member responsible for each action. Reports by exception will also be provided quarterly for each Board meeting. Progress against the action plans will also be reported to customers through the Tenant's Federation meetings held over the year.

Balanced Score Card

The Corporate Plan includes the Corporate Balanced Score Card (BSC), setting out the Critical Success Factors (CSF) within Leeds Fed for current day to day activity. Every CSF has its own measure, an annual target and a three year target. Each department also has its own Team BSC, setting out the CSF's for each particular department.

Where actions completed within the Action Plan improve an area, the CSF target will take the resulting improvement into account when being set at the start of each year.

PI Reporting Framework

The Association has targets for all key performance indicators. These are set out within the BSC. Monthly Leadership Team meetings will monitor progress on the Corporate BSC, and receive a summary exception report for each Team BSC. The Corporate BSC will be reported to quarterly to Board.

Where appropriate, some PI's are monitored more frequently. The number and reporting frequency of these will vary dependant on circumstances through the year.

2.7 Customer and Stakeholder Involvement

All customers were given the opportunity to contribute to the Corporate Plan in some way through a series of focus groups, discussions at various Tenant Forums as well as through an invitation to respond to an article within the tenant newsletter, Talking Tenants. As a principal, the Association will involve customers in all decisions affecting services wherever practicable to do so, for example being a part of a selection panel for choosing suppliers. The precise method of involvement will vary dependant on the nature of the decision in question, as will the means by which decisions are fed back to customers.

Other stakeholders have been involved including; staff at a quarterly lunch meeting, Leeds City Council, external consultants and Re'New in Leeds. All parties brought a different element of expertise or specialist knowledge.

2.8 Accountability

Ultimately the Corporate Plan belongs to the Board, who have considered the strategies which were reviewed over the year. They also considered the Corporate Plan as a whole at the February 2009 Board. Responsibility for the Plan's delivery is delegated to the Chief Executive, who works with the Deputy Chief Executive, the Operations Directors and the Leadership Team to ensure all actions are completed and targets achieved.

Although not a statutory requirement, the Association chooses to make itself accountable to customers through a variety of mechanisms. One of these is 3 places being reserved for residents on the Associations Board, elected by the Tenants Federation on an annual basis. Another is engaging with and reporting to the various tenant forums, all of which are attended by a senior member of staff.

Sections 3-5 are separately bound

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6. Summary

In summary, the Association has a clear vision, with goals and strategies setting out how the vision will be achieved. Action plans detail the activity to be undertaken each year in delivering the strategies. A clear 'golden thread' exists from the Associations vision through to the outcomes delivered to customers from the action plans being implemented by staff. The plans of the Association will continue to be monitored by senior staff and the Board to ensure that the vision "to deliver outstanding homes and services" is achieved and that customers get the service they have asked for and deserve.