



**LEEDS FEDERATED HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

**2008 – 2013 CORPORATE PLAN**

*“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 recent staff lunch

# **Leeds Federated Housing Association**

## **Corporate Plan 2008-2013**

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**Leeds Federated Housing Association  
Corporate Plan 2008-2013  
Overview**

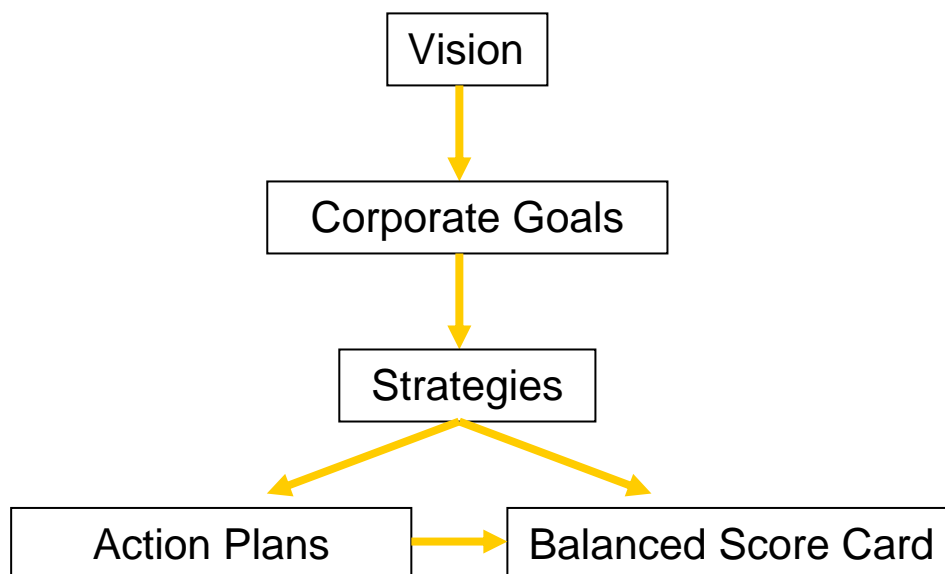
**1.1 Introduction**

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.** Our vision is:

*"To deliver outstanding homes and services*

This plan sets out how we intend to achieve that vision. It has been produced through detailed consultation with our customers, other stakeholders, and with staff involvement. 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.

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. Finally, targets have been set for all key indicators for the organisation using the Balanced Score Card. 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 4,300 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. 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 improved environment,
- from a social perspective through promoting opportunities for individuals in education, training and
- from an economic perspective through helping people into employment.

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**2.1 Key issues faced by Leeds Fed**

**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.

Government expansion in provision

The government has put housing high on its agenda, with an ambitious growth plans for additional new affordable homes. Two factors in particular affect Leeds Fed from this development. The first is the reduced grant rate per property that has accompanied the extra total expenditure. The second is the movement in Government policy and investment emphasis away from investment in existing housing, either for refurbishment or conversion, to simply building new properties.

Leeds Fed wishes to develop new properties to maintain its current stock size, and refurbish existing properties as part of ongoing regeneration plans. Both these factors will need to be addressed over the life of this corporate plan.

Sector reviews

Two major reviews have been commissioned recently by the government. Each considered different aspects of housing:

- The Cave Review: the general themes in this report was more empowerment for tenants, reduced burden of regulation and the creation of a single regulatory body for the whole social housing sector (including private sector).
- Hills – The report covered affordability; quality and satisfaction, mixed communities; worklessness and mobility and the housing ladder.

Hills summarises that housing policy should follow four directions:

1. Increasing the attention given to the existing stock and tenant population.
2. Supporting mixed-incomes within existing communities.
3. Supporting livelihoods.

4. A 'more varied menu' for both prospective and existing tenants.

The thrust of these reviews reflect the approach Leeds Fed has toward the communities in which it works, namely increased choice and empowerment for customers, and a focus on existing stock with support going beyond pure housing management functions.

#### Changes in regulation

##### *Homes and Communities Agency*

This agency will be responsible for the delivery of new housing and regeneration and brings together the work of English Partnerships and the development side of the Housing Corporation. The Agency was created by the Housing and Regeneration Bill and one of its main duties will be to ensure a greater supply of affordable social and private homes.

##### *OfTenant*

This is the new regulator for the social housing sector as recommended by the Cave Review. Again this regulatory body was created by the Housing and Regeneration Bill. It is set to be created in 2009 and in the first instance will take over the regulatory function of the Housing Corporation. Over the next two years a panel is looking at how local authority housing can be included under OfTenant. Tenants are given greater regulatory power as they will be able to report poor performance directly to the regulator. The regulator will have the power to impose a wider range of penalties including fines and in the worst cases transferring the management of the housing stock.

It is not clear what impact these new organisations will have on organisations like Leeds Fed. The challenge will be to remain flexible in order to respond to the likely changing demands of the new organisations.

#### **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 city in the Leeds city region has its own targets. In Leeds Fed's primary area of operation, Leeds, the council's annual growth target per the Regional Spatial Strategy is 4,500 new homes per year, 1,100 of which will be affordable homes. In part this will be delivered through Housing Corporation grant funded development on council owned land. The grant provided by the Housing Corporation in Leeds has been halved for the 2008 bid round compared to previous bid rounds and as a consequence Leeds Fed did not bid. Part of the Associations challenge is to find a way to make development 'stack up' in the future. Attempts to address this issue will be made through a combination of lobbying the Housing Corporation to increase grant rates and altering

the mix of developments to improve their viability. There remains the likelihood that ADP development for some time will only be possible as loss making venture.

The other means of delivery is in partnership with private developers through section 106 requirements, the targets for which are likely to increase in Leeds from 15%-25% of new developments being social housing to 33%. Two PFI schemes, in Little London and Holbeck may also offer section 106 opportunities. Leeds Fed will need to develop relationships with the parties involved to ensure we take advantage of opportunities available. The challenge for Leeds Fed is to work within the environment above, and still deliver a development programme which maintains our current stock size.

### Local Market Conditions

For a variety of reasons, not least of which the general increase in house prices, there has been a slowdown in the housing market in Leeds. This has been particularly noticeable in the city centre.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment in Leeds highlighted the need for 'intermediate' housing in the city, with a lack of options for households on low incomes in work.

There is also a growing issue in Leeds 6 over the general 'migration' of students from their traditional locations in that area to the large multi storey purpose built accommodation.

All the above issues are addressed through the strategies accompanying this Corporation Plan, particularly through the Business Development and Asset Management strategies.

### 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 need to develop its relationship with the ALMO's in order to ensure the interests of the communities where we work are delivered. This could for example involve the development of joint services where appropriate.

### 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.

## **SWOT Analysis**

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

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Tenant involvement	Performance in some areas, e.g. arrears
'Can Do' culture	High costs
Working with Diverse communities	Size/context
Small & nimble/flexible	
Improving Performance	
Financial viability	
Choices	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Financial	Board & management succession
Choices	Low level of grant
Performance improvements	Supporting people (reducing funding/fragmentation)
Profile/ influence	Regulatory constraints
Involving tenants	
To 'link up' with others/network	
Social Enterprise	

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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.

- Part of this is achieved through setting a clear **standard for the property above the minimum requirements** and undertaking improvements to the property where this standard is not reached for example to improve the insulation of a property. New properties will be build/purchased as part of the strategy to ‘lift’ the average standard of housing in an area.
- A second part of our activity will be to **improve the environment** surrounding the house, the ‘neighbourhood’, so that it fosters a sense of pride in an area and encourages a more sustainable community.
- The final part of our approach will be to 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 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 five years, offering homes 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.

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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 summary 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*

**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.

**Monitoring action plans**

The action plans will be monitored through the year by the Leadership Team member responsible for each action. Reports will also be provided for each Committee meeting, including both an update to the action plans available on Connect, and a report by exception within each Committee Report as appropriate. Progress against the action plans will also be reported to customers through the different tenants forums meeting 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 each Committee meeting.

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

### **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 surveys undertaken. In total it is estimated that around 400 customers contributed in some way to this Corporate Plan. 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.

### **Accountability**

Ultimately the Corporate Plan belongs to the Board, who have considered the issues within the Plan at various Board meetings and 2 recent Strategic Away days. Responsibility for its delivery is delegated to the Chief Executive, who works with 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.