



“Supporting individuals to achieve their potential”

BUSINESS PLAN

2007 – 2009



BUSINESS PLAN 2007 - 2009

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Section 1

Executive Summary

St Johns Housing Trust is a small to medium sized registered charity with an annual turnover of £1.2 million working in the specialist environment of homelessness. The charitable, voluntary and community sector (the Third Sector) generally is expected to respond to the government's call for enhanced involvement in the delivery of public services. This will create a new operating environment and this business plan seeks to set out what steps the organisation must take to position itself to respond to local, regional, national and political developments which could provide challenges or opportunities over the life of the plan.

The planning process looks 3 years ahead and is based on existing knowledge and anticipated future developments. The plan will allow the Chief Executive, the management team and the Board of Trustees to take daily decisions based on the adopted strategic and policy framework of the plan. Over the life of the plan the Trust is seeking, not only to achieve growth and diversification within its existing services, but also to expand its business to embrace market opportunities within the sector, particularly in response to identified need.

The plan has been created with the increased involvement of staff and, in line with our policy to facilitate the greater involvement of our service users at a number of levels within the organisation, they will be enabled to participate in the planning process going forward.

The key objectives which have been set are informed by individual project objectives. Accordingly there is a clear linkage between the needs of service users, the requirements of and for staff and the ultimate goals of the organisation. The plan gives an account of the services delivered through these projects and sets out how the Trust is administered, which includes details of governance arrangements, regulatory frameworks, organisational structures, recruitment and training procedures and financial information. Over two-thirds of the Trust's income is derived from central government through the Supporting People (SP) Programme which may be subject to Treasury restrictions within the Comprehensive Spending Review which will be published during 2007. To reduce its exposure to and dependence on variable and pressured central government funding streams, the Trust has embarked on a fundraising initiative.

St Johns Housing Trust is committed to the Quality Assessment Framework, the quality tool of the SP programme. In attempting to achieve and exceed quality standard 'B' and good practice criteria for service users and staff, the Trust has identified deficits within the workforce infrastructure and capacity which must be overcome if we are to play a significant role within our sector. In addition the Trust has enrolled in the Investors in People programme and expects to achieve the award in 2007.

Section 2

Brief History

In the early 1970s during the decline of the fishing industry in Lowestoft public spirited citizens of the town took it upon themselves to lobby local politicians and businesses to respond to the growing amount of people sleeping rough in shop doorways, public conveniences and seafront shelters. In the face of much public opposition a semi-derelict church hall was acquired and Lowestoft Night Centre opened its doors in February 1975. A group of volunteers came together to manage the centre which could only deliver very basic night-time services in a damp and decaying physical environment. During the 70s and early 80s, the Night Centre stumbled from one financial crisis to another but still managed to maintain their determination to provide a decent shelter for some very vulnerable, socially excluded people.

The Centre received some financial assistance from time to time from the local authority but a landmark ruling at the high court in 1982 (Regina v. Waveney District Council – ex-parte Bowers) held that the local authority had not discharged its duty to a homeless person by virtue of him being accommodated at the Night Centre. This ruling not only significantly influenced subsequent homelessness acts but as importantly heralded a new co-operation and partnership between the Night Centre, then registered with the charity commission as St Johns Housing Trust, and Waveney District Council.

This partnership approach brought in Orwell Housing Association, a Registered Social Landlord who, with support from Waveney District Council and central government acquired funding to construct the Fyffe Centre, a purpose built direct access hostel for single homeless people. This project was hailed by some as probably the most advanced of its kind in Europe when it opened in 1985. St Johns Housing Trust still manages the Fyffe Centre on behalf of Orwell Housing Association with whom it now has an enhanced managing agent role across other projects. In 1989 the Trust purchased a building as “halfway house” accommodation to relieve the pressure on the growing numbers presenting as homeless to the Fyffe Centre.

Also in 1989, in response to a growing problem of youth homelessness, the Trust again in collaboration with Orwell Housing Association and Waveney District Council took on the management of a young persons hostel to be followed a year later by the opening of a hostel for young single mothers. In 2003 the young mothers’ project relocated to a high specification project in another part of the town, allowing the young persons hostel to expand its numbers.

Later in 2003, following an approach by Waveney District Council the Trust took on the management of a homeless families unit directly to reduce the numbers of families housed in temporary bed and breakfast accommodation.

In 2007, now managing five projects in Lowestoft, the Trust has built up over the years a great amount of experience and expertise in accommodating, supporting and resettling individuals who, for whatever reason, have found themselves to be homeless and often vulnerable.

Section 3

Inside St Johns – Introduction to the Business

3.1 Governance, management and administration

From its humble beginnings St Johns Housing Trust has grown into a medium sized charity with an annual turnover of £1.2 million and an establishment of 57 full time, part-time and relief staff.

The Trust's governing document is the Constitution of St Johns Housing Trust which is registered with the Charity Commission, the organisation's prime regulator. As a Managing Agent of a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) the Trust is subject to regulations and requirements laid down by the Housing Corporation. The Trust complies with the legal requirements and best practice guidance of other bodies by virtue of its duties as an employer and a recipient of government funds

The Trust is administered by a Board of Trustees, 12 in number, chaired by Robert Bracey, former Director of Housing and Environmental Health for Waveney District Council. Trustees are drawn from the wider community and bring a considerable range of experience and expertise to the administration of the Trust. An Officer and Member of Waveney District Council attend Board of Trustee meetings as observers.

The strategic management and direction of the business is vested in the Chief Executive, John O'Sullivan employed by the Trust since 1999. Day to day management is vested in the Operations Manager, Emma Loudon who leads a team of Project Managers and front-line staff.

3.2 The Projects

The Fyffe Centre

A purpose built hostel providing temporary accommodation, support and resettlement services for single people who are homeless – 27 bed-spaces with communal dining and lounge areas. Staff provide 24 hour 'waking' cover at the project.

The building is owned by Orwell Housing Association – the Trust acts as an agent of the Association within the terms of a management agreement.

Referrals to the project are received from a wide range of agencies as well as directly from potential service users themselves.

Bostock House

Former commercial premises, the building was purchased by the Trust in 1989 and refurbished to provide 15 units of self-contained accommodation with a communal laundry. The project acts as a 'half-way house' scheme to relieve pressure on accommodation at the Fyffe Centre and to give service users an experience of semi-supported living before moving on to independent accommodation in the wider community.

Referrals to the project are received from the Fyffe Centre only.

Phoenix House

Two adjacent, former guest houses originally converted and refurbished in 1989 to provide a hostel for young single people and a hostel for young single mothers. Following the relocation of the young single mothers' project in 2003, the two buildings were converted into one project for young single people aged 16-25. The project provides temporary accommodation, support and resettlement services and comprises 21 bed-spaces with communal lounge and dining areas. Staff provide 24 hour 'waking' cover at the project

The building is owned by Orwell Housing Association – the Trust acts as an agent of the Association under the terms of a management agreement. Referrals to the project are received from a wide range of agencies as well as directly from potential service users themselves.

Haven Court

Former local authority accommodation, the property was acquired by Orwell Housing Association with the support of Waveney District Council and a Housing Corporation grant in 2003 and converted into 12 self-contained flats and bed-sits. The project provides temporary accommodation, support and resettlement services for young single mothers aged 16-25. Staff provide 24 hour cover with a 'sleep-in'.

The project contains communal lounge space, training rooms and a kitchen for service user tuition in cooking skills.

The Trust acts as an agent for Orwell Housing Association under the terms of a management agreement.

Referrals to the project are through the local authority only.

Coppice Court

A former sheltered housing scheme owned by Waveney District Council designated for use as temporary accommodation primarily to meet the local authority's obligation to minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families

The project provides accommodation, support and resettlement services. Staff provide 24 hour 'waking' cover. There are 24 units of accommodation in a mix of self-contained one and two bedroom flats and bungalows. A large communal lounge and a life skills kitchen are available to service users together with a conservatory serving as a play area for toddlers.

The Trust manages the project on behalf of Waveney District Council under the terms of a Service Level Agreement. Referrals to the project are through the local authority only.

3.3 Service User Involvement

At the outset of their acceptance into any of the Trust's projects service users become involved in a joint assessment of the level and type of support they will require as well as the type of 'move-on' accommodation most appropriate for their needs.

During their stay in the projects service users are encouraged to take part in regular service user meetings and forums where their views, ideas and suggestions are taken account of when decisions are being taken about how the project is being managed. Each project has a service user committee which promotes the views and interests of their projects at the inter-project forum, whilst also actively welcoming new service users when they arrive and helping them to integrate into their new surroundings.

The involvement of service users as members of interview panels for staff recruitment has proved to be a positive and enabling experience for all concerned.

Risk assessments and weekly health and safety checks of the individual projects are carried out by both staff and service users' representatives. Health and safety issues are discussed at each service user meeting and all are aware of the process for reporting any concerns they may have.

Service users also actively take part in, and often participate in the organizing of activities such as sports, cookery, art and quiz nights. Both current and ex-service users who are involved in college or practical pursuits will often talk about their experiences to encourage others to engage in constructive activities.

Feedback from service users as to their experience of life at the project is sought both during their stay and when moving on by way of an 'exit' interview. At a recent AGM service users

spoke of their journey from homelessness, to the support from the Trust, on towards individual success and independent living.

3.4 Operational Policies and Strategies

St Johns Housing Trust retains employment law professionals who, as well as providing a round the clock advice service, maintain our Employee Handbook in respect of legal updates and procedures, provide a Personnel Guidance System and advise on Contracts of Employment and matters relating to discipline and grievance. Accordingly the Trust has well developed policies on Health and Safety, Complaints, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Child Protection and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

The Trust has developed a Human Resource (HR) strategy and a Fundraising Strategy.

Section 4

Our Operating Environment

In the local area St Johns Housing Trust is the principal provider of temporary supported housing for people who are homeless. There are larger regional providers with small scale projects in Lowestoft but the nearest organisations of a comparable size and structure are Herring House Trust in Great Yarmouth and St Martin's Housing Trust in Norwich.

Over the period of the business plan St Johns will be affected by external factors as a result of national, regional and local strategies and policy developments. The following are examples of key policy frameworks which will have an impact on the work of the Trust:

4.1 National influences

The future of the Supporting People (SP) Programme; the publication of the national strategy has been delayed for several months and could be delayed further in order that the strategy can be aligned with the determination of the national SP fund arising out of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The CSR has also been set back for some months and the accepted wisdom is that the settlement for SP nationally will be neutral at best with probable cuts of between 5% and 10% at worst. Furthermore it has been announced that by 2009 the 'ring-fence' around the present budget will be removed and funding will be drawn into the Local Area Agreement (LAA) framework.

The rise in single person households – latest statistics predict a 23% growth in total households by 2026, which equates to an average of 209,000 new households each year of which 72% will be single households.

Continued upward trends in homelessness generally affected by changes in benefit entitlement and more particularly by the growth in new EEC accession countries migrant communities.

Central government's intention to progressively devolve powers to local authorities and in turn to local communities - the concept of 'double devolution' as articulated in the recent White Paper on local government reform.

The merger of the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships and the resulting changes to regulatory frameworks and governance arrangements which may lead to the further rationalisation of the RSL sector which in turn will impact on the relationship between RSLs and Managing Agents

The collaboration between the national Learning and Skills Council, The Homeless Directorate at the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and national homelessness infrastructure bodies to create standardised training and qualification requirements within the sector.

The gradual decline in government grants to charitable and voluntary organisations in preference to a commissioning, procurement and contract culture. The pursuit of 'best value' will lead to increased competitiveness within the market-place, the likely outcome of which will be a rationalised, less diverse and ultimately weakened sector.

The expectation of central government, partly by its creation of the ministerial Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office, that charitable and voluntary and community organisations will increasingly become the vehicles for the delivery of public services.

Reforms and rationalisation of Health, Social Care and Childrens' services outlined in successive White Papers, including the formation of Primary Care Trusts, Foundation Trusts and Childrens' Trusts and their relationships with key stakeholders such as St Johns Housing

Trust and with local structures, namely LAAs and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). The latter mechanism will play a pivotal role in the local government reform agenda.

Reforms within the Criminal Justice System and in particular the formation of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). One of the planks of the NOMS strategy is the concept of 'contestability' whereby services will be actively commissioned from the charitable and voluntary sector.

4.2 Local influences

Waveney District Council (WDC) is the local authority responsible for its Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and is a partner in the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Sub-regional Housing Forum. WDC, in association with the latter and the Commissioning Bodies of SP in Suffolk and Norfolk, will co-ordinate any new developments of supported housing in the locality.

LSPs will have the prime focus of prioritising the delivery of services in the local community. However, it is widely accepted that, apart from some notable exceptions, LSP and LAA structures both nationally and locally are under-developed, not adequately representative and, as such, will not be fit for purpose for some time.

Great Yarmouth and Waveney Primary Care Trust has the responsibility for the health care of the local community including the Trust's service users who, as a largely marginalised and socially excluded minority, suffer deficits in the provision of primary and secondary health care, mental health services and substance misuse and 'dual diagnosis' services

The Compact in Suffolk outlines the code of practice and the rules of engagement for commissioning and procurement of services between the voluntary and statutory sectors. Key principles of the National Compact are enshrined locally and contractual relationships will come under the scrutiny of the Compact steering group which will be supported by the Compact Advocacy Service and ultimately the recently appointed national Compact Commissioner.

SP arrangements for contract monitoring following the removal of the requirement for service reviews, the enhancement of existing Trust services and the potential for new service development

Urban regeneration developments for the Lowestoft harbour area in the medium to long term – one of the Trusts projects is sited in a regeneration area and there will be an opportunity to negotiate for re-provision of that service with a potential for increased capacity.

4.3 Opportunities to influence national and local policy developments

St Johns Housing Trust seeks to influence national and local policies through its connections, primarily via the Chief Executive, to national and local bodies and networks:

Chair of the National Advisory Council of Homeless Link, a national homelessness sector infrastructure organisation

Membership of CLG's national SP Expert Reference Group which steers the development and roll-out of SP's national strategy

Additional contacts with Ministers and senior civil servants at the Cabinet Office and CLG, some facilitated through liaison with and assistance of the local Member of Parliament.

Membership of national representative bodies – NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations);

Membership of 'Focus on the Future', a regional network of Chief Executives and Directors of supported housing providers co-ordinated by Space-East, a regional infrastructure organisation.

Member of Suffolk's Compact Steering Group which seeks to achieve compliance with Code of Practice

Membership of local, county and sub-regional housing and health groups including the Local Area Agreement and the Local Strategic Partnership

Section 5 – Key Objectives

The key objectives set for the life of the Business Plan are based on the Trust's mission as follows:

“the professional development of staff enables improved service user engagement to meet support needs, thereby producing enhanced performance including the achievement of level ‘B’ on the Quality Assessment Framework.”

The value statement underpinning the mission is as follows:

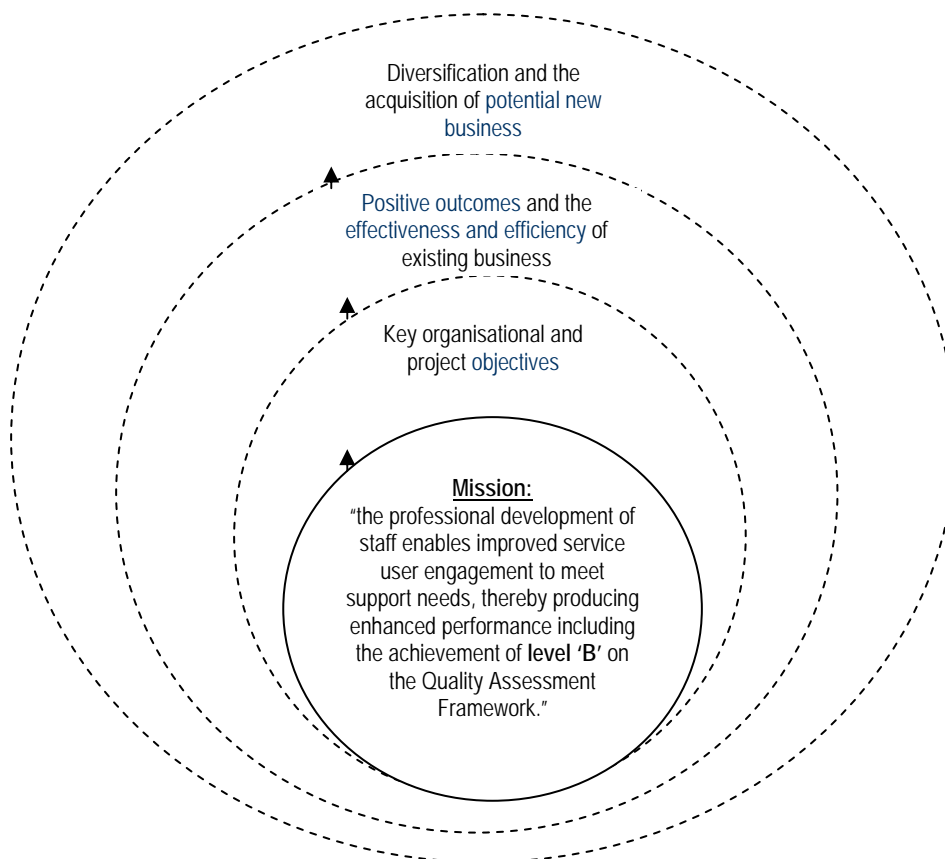
St Johns Housing Trust supports individuals to achieve their potential through:

A supportive living environment
Recognising the individual
Developing staff

A better understanding by staff of service users' circumstances, behaviours, attitude and potential through the best use of training, supervision and personal development will enable the organisation to meet service users' needs more effectively.

Objectives set at project level, informed by baseline measures, contribute to the organisation's objectives.

Achieving the organisations mission will improve operational effectiveness and efficiency not only in respect of the Trust's existing business but also will impact on the ability to attract and win new business. (See diagram below)



5.1 Existing business objectives:

Maximisation of income through current funding streams, namely Supporting People Grant, Housing Benefit, service user charges and fundraising activities. Income levels will be monitored and maintained within the framework of Rent Convergence requirements.

Engage consultants to undertake review of Housing Benefit income.

Review Supporting People income across the Trust's projects broken down against housing management costs

The development of a fundraising strategy, to achieve diverse income streams, thereby reducing the risk and exposure to one principal funding source.

The development of a 'role based competencies' approach in the recruitment and development of staff with links to a nationally recognised qualification when developed.

Improved support planning for service users.

Increased number of planned moves by service users.

Reduced number of service user evictions

Increased service user involvement within St Johns Housing Trust and the wider community

Improved data collection/statistical analysis of service user outcomes particularly in respect of resettlement and improved quality of life.

Develop a Trust website to raise the organisation's profile and act as resource for referring agencies, service users, recruitment and charitable giving

Maintain the standard for accreditation as a provider of Supporting People services in the region.

Increased focus on Trustee recruitment and development.

Achieve Investors in People award during August 2007 and subsequently maintain the required standard.

5.2 Potential new business objectives

Complete scoping exercise to determine viability of St Johns Housing trust becoming a wholly owned subsidiary and charitable arm of Orwell Housing Association.

Tender for Bretts Centre young persons project in Great Yarmouth currently being specified.

Negotiate the re-provisioning of Bostock House which occupies land identified for re-development in the master-plan of 1st East, the Urban Regeneration Company.

With the support of Waveney District Council engage with the prioritisation matrix processes of Supporting People to attract revenue funding for new move-on provision for Phoenix House.

In association with Orwell Housing Association via the Housing Corporation, Waveney District Council and Supporting People, engage with the established processes to attract capital and revenue funding for the development of 'wet-house' provision in the form of an extension to the Fyffe Centre.

In accordance with central government's vision for the enhanced role of the Third Sector in the delivery of public services and the development of local communities, explore and develop opportunities to create a diverse business base by:

- providing meaningful activities for service user possibly through a social enterprise model;
- recruiting a Business Development Manager as resources allow to lead on the acquisition of new business.

Section 6 – Finance

6.1 Financial implications

Five key elements remain essential to the future viability and success of the Trust: -

- the maximisation of Housing Benefit which requires the maintenance of close links and co-operation with Waveney District Council.
- the maximisation of rental income and the requirement for close monitoring of rent arrears and effective systems for collecting monies due from residents.
- the positioning of the Trust to achieve maximum influence in the continued provision of Supporting People funding upon which the Trust is heavily dependent.
- the positioning of the Trust to maintain income levels within the framework of Rent Convergence requirements.
- the development of a fund-raising strategy to achieve diverse income streams thereby reducing the exposure to one principal funding body.

Appendices A and B show the financial position and results of the Trust in 2005 and 2006 and project the income and expenditure figures and balance sheets for 2007 to 2009.

In common with all organisations the cash flow (liquidity) and an accumulation of cash-backed reserves is very important to the operation and future viability of the Trust.

6.2 Reserves

The Trust's reserves policy (last reviewed February 2006) sets out targets to be achieved in relation to cash reserves. Over recent years the Trust has built its cash reserves to a level consistent with the Reserves Policy. This provides a necessary safety cushion to protect the Trust from the volatility of its income stream, which is almost entirely based on occupancy levels, which can fluctuate for many reasons. Having achieved those targeted cash levels in 2006, the Trust faces a challenging period ahead, with deficit budgets forecast, caused through the lack of inflationary increases in Supporting People Grant over the last few years and only remedied in the current financial year. This is the main driver behind the development of a fund-raising strategy, identified above.

APPENDIX A

Business Plan for St Johns Housing Trust

ST. JOHNS HOUSING TRUST SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	£	£	£	£	£
Fyffe Centre - net surplus / deficit (-)	8,248	3,019	-32,000	-45,000	-45,000
Phoenix House - net surplus / deficit (-)	9,067	19,678	1,300	1,500	1,500
Haven Court - net surplus / deficit (-)	-13,553	-6,933	-2,000	-13,500	-13,500
Coppice Court - net surplus / deficit (-)	6,206	44,081	-300	0	0
Bostock House - net surplus / deficit (-)	23,831	22,738	15,000	9,000	9,000
Trading surplus / deficit (-) for year	33,799	82,583	-18,000	-48,000	-48,000
Bank interest received	3,524	4,786	5,000	4,000	3,000
Net Surplus / deficit (-) for Year	<u>37,323</u>	<u>87,369</u>	<u>-13,000</u>	<u>-44,000</u>	<u>-45,000</u>
Accumulated Funds 1 January	160,102	197,426	284,795	271,795	227,795
Net Surplus / deficit (-) for Year	37,323	87,369	-13,000	-44,000	-45,000
Accumulated Funds 31 December	197,426	284,795	271,795	227,795	182,795

APPENDIX B

Business Plan for St
Johns Housing Trust

ST. JOHNS HOUSING
TRUST

BALANCE SHEET

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	£	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Bostock House	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors & Prepayments	22,512	29,323	30,000	30,000	30,000
Cash in Bank - Net	124,887	224,378	210,795	166,795	121,795
Cash in Hand	450	1,341	1,000	1,000	1,000
	147,849	255,042	241,795	197,795	152,795
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Other Creditors	50,423	70,248	70,000	70,000	70,000
	50,423	70,248	70,000	70,000	70,000
NET CURRENT ASSETS	97,426	184,795	171,795	127,795	82,795
NET ASSETS	197,426	284,795	271,795	227,795	182,795
REPRESENTED BY:-					
Accumulated Funds	197,426	284,795	271,795	227,795	182,795
	197,426	284,795	271,795	227,795	182,795

APPENDIX C

Notes

Balance Sheet

- Fixed Assets - Value reflects prudent estimate of market valuation
- Debtors and Creditors - Best Estimate
- Cash - Reflecting expected outturn in 2007, based on June 2007 actuals and six months budget.
- Results beyond 2007 will depend on many factors such as occupancy levels, Supporting People grant, etc.
- Accumulated Fund - Balance incremented by net deficit & interest received each year.

Summary Income and Expenditure Account

- 2005 Figures - Actual figures as per Published Accounts
- 2006 Figures - Actual figures as per Published Accounts
- 2007 Figures - Best estimate - based on latest budget and six months actuals
- 2008 & 2009 Figures - Best estimate only - assumed similar budget to 2007

APPENDIX D

HR Strategy

The development of staff is a key theme of our business plan, evidenced by its inclusion in our mission statement:

“the professional development of staff enables improved service user engagement to meet support needs, thereby producing enhanced performance including the achievement of level ‘B’ on the Quality Assessment Framework.”

This strategy links our business strategy and our HR policies to promote continuous professional development. It also highlights our organisation’s strengths and areas for development, and promotes our individual responsibility for communicating effectively and developing a performance culture of fundraising and efficiency – essential to the future success of the organisation given the financial climate in which we operate.

This document reflects the best practice standards within the Investors in People (IIP) framework.

1. Strengths and policy links

We have established arrangements for performance appraisal and supervision, recruitment and induction and staff involvement supported by the policies and procedures contained in the Employee Handbook including:

Equal Opportunities Policy
 Supervision Policy
 Performance Appraisal guidelines
 Recruitment and Induction guidance
 Training Policy

The table below highlights our current practices and achievements which strengthen and support or business strategy:

Leadership Strengths	<p>Bi-weekly operational management meeting to share best practice and policy developments and share experiences (senior project workers, project managers, Operations Manager and Personnel Officer. On a rotational basis, all project workers and resettlement workers also attend as part of their professional development and to assist with communication of operational objectives)</p> <p>Commenced role re-design to gear up workforce for changes in the organisation and the sector more widely</p> <p>Expert HR and employment mentor service from Natwest</p> <p>Embryonic fundraising culture – actively being encouraged at all levels including service user. Ideas to attract staff conference sponsor.</p>
Training Strengths	<p>Training plan and structured feedback</p> <p>Senior project workers and managers undertaking accredited ILM and NVQ4 programmes and ongoing programme for new staff to achieve this level. Operations Manager doing MBA.</p> <p>Training budget £14K excluding peoples time (Estimated total cost of training including staff time is around 2% of turnover)</p>
Performance Strengths	<p>Established appraisal system and supervision policy (but see areas for improvement below)</p> <p>Sickness monitoring (Bradford factor) - major improvement area in 2006 and continuing to improve.</p>
Career Development Strengths	<p>Culture of “growing our own” promotion, e.g. promotion from senior project worker to project manager and all senior project worker vacancies have been filled internally over the last 3 years.</p> <p>Introduction of group peer supervision for project managers to facilitate personal development objectives</p>

Recruitment Strengths	<p>Good database of recruitment information - good how we recruit people including service user views; diverse interview panel at times includes service user</p> <p>Use of feedback tool – survey of candidates in respect of application form</p> <p>Ability tests are often part of the selection process, e.g. IT and operational scenario tests</p>
Induction Strengths	<p>Each new recruit has a 2 week induction programme including job shadowing, one to one support, meeting with operations manager for organisation overview and detailed induction by project manager of all operational policies and procedures and a tour of all Trust projects. Each person also receives a folder of information about the Trust and their role.</p>
Equality & Diversity Strengths	<p>Good age/gender workforce mix – changed age profile considerable over the last few years to a more balanced profile.</p> <p>Rota/flexible shift system arrange for many staff who have a strong say on how they work with service users in keyworking although standard paperwork to follow. Progressive working practices. Trust – no clocking in/out.</p>
Communications Strengths	<p>Involving service users and staff – wider involvement – service user forum developed – service users writing articles for Trust newsletter; resettlement policy to formalise keeping in contact with ex-service users (objective to recruit service user as a Trustee).</p> <p>HR role expanding – reporting to managers and seniors, attitude questionnaire – results sent with wage slips.</p> <p>Staff involvement – suggestions, feedback, conference, AGM.</p> <p>Positive communications development and additional channels – emails, face to face, meetings, one to one, newsletters, staff conference. Newsletter editorial group is 3 project workers, 2 managers and operations manager working as a team – people expressed an interest in being involved. Staff and service user articles, managers and Trustee slots too.</p> <p>Opportunity for staff to feed into business plan and good response.</p> <p>Project team meetings occur bi-weekly fixed at time to suit majority of staff shift patterns; aligned to feedback from operations management meetings.</p> <p>Quarterly Trust-wide ancillary staff meeting introduced to improve their involvement in organisation objectives.</p>
Working Environment Strengths	<p>Good relationship with service users – despite working with challenging client groups.</p> <p>Coppice and Haven have modern physical environment</p>

	<p>Good IT infrastructure and access – internet access at all projects for staff and monitored access for service users.</p> <p>Smoke-free policy development included staff involvement. 'Stop smoking' resources applied.</p> <p>Fyfe and Phoenix provide duty meals for staff and tea & coffee paid for centrally across projects</p> <p>2007 pay increase at a time of deficit budget and non-growth of income.</p>
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2. Areas for improvement

Whilst we are very proud of the Trust's strengths in HR issues, there are a number of progressive developments which are required if we are to deliver on our organisation's objectives and be an employer of choice within our sector. Many of these developments are being actively pursued to turn them into strengths within the next 12 months, e.g. appraisals, cross-project communications and promoting an innovative fundraising culture at all levels in the organisation.

Leadership improvements	<p>Senior management visibility via operations meetings, AGM, Newsletter and half yearly info with payslips.</p> <p>Fundraising – sharing ideas and thinking about raising money - everyone</p>
Training improvements	<p>Retention following training needs to improve (currently high turnover)</p> <p>Engaging all staff to participate in training programmes and getting them to take the initiative in sourcing appropriate courses.</p>
Performance improvements	<p>Appraisal process not consistently applied – some staff employed for 2 years have not had appraisal yet, although probation reports are done and regular feedback through supervision occurs. Part of this is due to manager turnover but part is the reluctance of manager and staff to implement the process.</p> <p>Plan to give individual project managers targets for appraisal completion.</p> <p>Key: “personal support and development sessions” to improve feedback and value of annual appraisal and consistency of project manager facilitation and recording of appraisal meetings, identifying training needs more effectively – individuals take responsibility for their own training and development more – maybe understanding individual learning styles and abilities (e.g. written English, IT skills). Adaptable for individuals. Ownership of personal development is key.</p> <p>Appraisal – back up if managers leave – 6 sessions consistently applied to result in positive impact on training, induction, recruitment, retention, pay and non-pay benefits, individual and organisational performance – EAPs?</p>
Career Development improvements	<p>Retention issue common to others in our sector</p> <p>Role changes – role redesign – project workers and assessment process - some work been done re focus on competences –this needs to be applied to other roles</p> <p>Many staff content with their current roles and not seeking career progression</p>
Recruitment improvements	<p>Reviewing how and where we advertise for best response – e.g. careers fair representation being considered.</p>

	Use of positive equality statements in advertising
Induction improvements	Key area of staff support, guidance and involvement and kept under continuous review
Equality & Diversity improvements	<p>Need to better reflect ethnic origin diversity of staff and Trustees.</p> <p>Seeking better links with local community groups to recruit from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>'Positive about disabled' two ticks in progress of being applied.</p> <p>Formal process for recruiting Trustees under consideration.</p>
Communications improvements	<p>Ongoing improvement of communications with project manager relationship with Personnel Officer slot at staff meetings re imminent training courses and explain HR role to improve information exchange (e.g. training feedback forms).</p> <p>People need to take more responsibility for communications and personal development – professional trust – leadership and management tensions – as organisation grows – some good examples within projects</p>
Working environment improvements	<p>Pay and grading package to be assessed against others in sector.</p> <p>Balance of rota flexibility with organisational needs and contracted hours – has been an issue for project workers in the past but addressed as much as possible given the organisational needs and will be kept under review.</p> <p>Fyffe and Phoenix smoking environment and physical buildings (Phoenix) and demands of service users (Fyffe). 1 July deadline to be applied, and smoke-free single rooms to be trialled.</p>

3. Values

The business plan outlines the need for:

providing quality services and management to the Trust's services and those organisations with which the Trust works;

encouraging consultation with the Trust's service users;

promoting staff development in providing the services outlined above;

collaborating and co-operating with appropriate statutory and voluntary bodies in identifying and delivering services for homeless people.

maximising income by reducing exposure to the Trust's principal funders and create other income streams through the development of a fund-raising strategy.

The plan also includes specific objectives to develop our management and administration structure to enhance service delivery and governance arrangements. The plan identifies increased training opportunities for staff in addition to the core training programme and explores potential to enhance staff development through the acquisition of relevant qualifications.

Additionally, the Employee Handbook outlines the expected standards of conduct in terms of performance, co-operation, flexibility, use of financial resources, confidentiality and conflicts of interests.

The following values underpin these aims, objectives and standards:

Professionalism

Collaboration

Support

What staff can expect from the organisation:

Because we work with the most vulnerable and challenging individuals with multiple and complex needs we are determined to support, train and motivate staff to give them the best opportunity for success with service users.

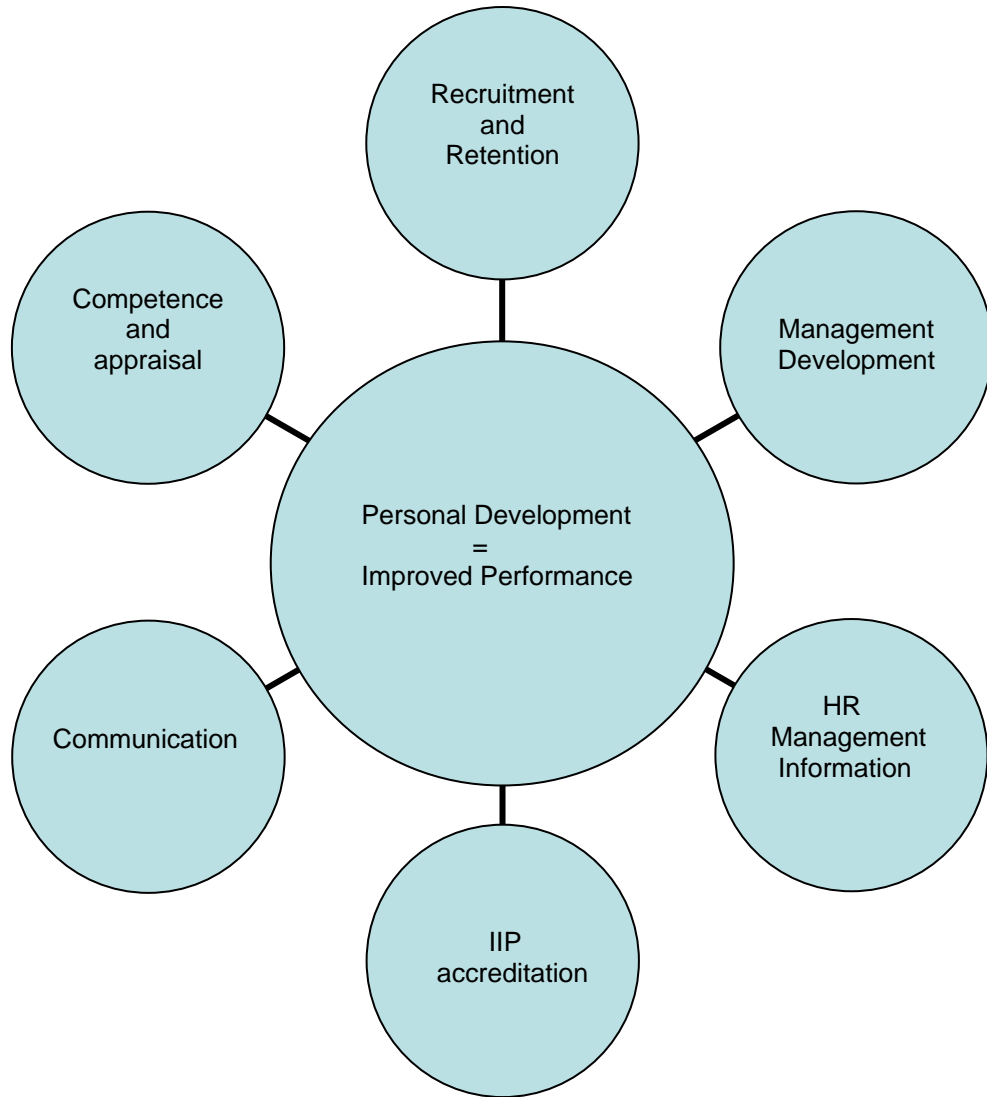
What the organisation can expect from the staff:

We have achieved a great deal together, but can only achieve the challenge ahead by every individual taking responsibility for their own professional practice and development, using their initiative to utilise opportunities and channels available to them to deliver services at level 'B' of the QAF standard.

4. Key themes

The central message of this HR strategy is for individuals to take ownership of their own personal development in order for us to collectively achieve and maintain the best performance possible in the environment we operate in.

The diagram below outlines the key themes and support mechanisms in place to achieve this.



5. Key questions and actions

These questions are adapted from the CIPD HR Strategy toolkit and are designed to assist with the understanding of how the HR strategy links to the business aims and objectives, and how we take forward the key HR issues highlighted in the previous sections.

How should the HR Strategy support the achievement of the business strategy?

Integral to its achievement recognised by managers and trustees.

What are the operational influences on the business? (SWOT, PESTLE etc)

HR specific approach is attracting and retaining motivated, talented people. To improve our pool of applicants, we will seek to promote our organisation generally (as part of our fundraising strategy) and will specifically promote to potential applicants our positive working environment and development opportunities.

What is the corporate culture and how might it need to change?

Mixed good examples and poor. Needs to be more positive to take people with us on changes ahead. Not always good understanding of organisation and future needs from Trustees. Trustee team ethos needs to be reinforced with ongoing development programme.

How do we better involve staff in the development of the organisation?

Ongoing - look for ways to improve.

What kind of skills and behaviours do we need now and in the future?

Covered

Are performance levels high enough to reach the efficiency and quality goals of the organisation?

Linked to appraisal and QAF – improved management of poor performers and willingness to give honest feedback. A review of job descriptions and work objectives will assist in the process.

Will the organisation's structure and systems be able to cope with future challenges in their present form?

Probably not – we are improving but QAF B principles and focus needs improving. The sector and the operating environment changes rapidly which introduces changes in practice e.g. competitive tendering – flexibility needed in structure and individual response to change; responsive HR function with good communications to support these changes. Themes of affordability and survival will be pre-eminent.

Are we making the best use of the skills and capabilities of our employees?

How to measure – a national competences based approach is being developed; embedding of appraisals will assist the process.

Are we investing enough (and/or prioritising the investment appropriately) in those skills and capabilities?

We think so – but retention issue makes this subject of constant review.

Are there any potential constraints in the form of skills shortages or employee relations problems?

Only retention.

How should we involve people in developing the strategy?

Do already to some extent via team meetings and AGM and will need to develop to some degree.

6. HR Governance Arrangements

Trustees input governance for HR – existing quarterly operational reports.

Chief Executive, Personnel Officer and Operations Manager input

Dissemination approach.

Endorsement by Trustees

Essence communicated via operational meetings and newsletter

Yearly review. Anticipated 3 year lifespan or review on merger with Orwell but not lose the major components/benefits of this.