



Corporate Plan 2017-20

20/20 vision



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Chair's introduction

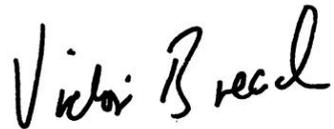
Every housing association has money and bricks. It's the people that make Soha different.

As Soha enters its twentieth year, we can be proud of what we've achieved. We are a well-respected, community based association. We provide excellent services and have a nationally recognised model of Co-regulation and resident involvement. I feel confident in saying that Soha has had a strong and positive impact in its local communities.

Our vision for the next 20 years is to remain a locally based, community association. We recognise the

many benefits of knowing our area, residents and partner organisations well and of reinvesting surpluses into the local area. We do this through service provision and developing more homes for people who need them.

We live and work in interesting times for housing associations. This plan aims to set Soha on a course that will steer it through the uncertainties and challenges ahead. More than this, it sets an ambitious programme to be a stable influence for thriving communities and for working with residents to forge a sustainable future.



Vic Breach, Chair
April 2017

Where we are now

Soha's performance across all measures is excellent.

- We provide great services, with delivery and satisfaction measures amongst the best in the sector (Housemark, 2016)
- We provide homes for people in housing need and are a top developing association (in terms of growth) (HCA Global Accounts 2016)
- We are an efficient business (HCA analysis of cost per unit)
- We invest in our staff, who deliver the success stories above, (we hold IIP Gold and have great staff satisfaction) and
- We invest in involvement, working in partnership with residents to achieve the best we can (more than 8/10 tenants feel we listen and act on their views).

As we look to the future, we see opportunities to improve the systems we work with and to develop the structure that underpins our organisation.



Where we want to be

Soha's vision

Soha's vision is to be a leading community housing association where residents and staff shape a sustainable future.

Soha's values

We:

Put people first

We listen to what people have to say and speak and act with respect. We recognise people's needs and aspirations in how we work.

Achieve more together

We know we achieve more when we work in partnership with residents, with other organisations and with colleagues across the company.

Look for opportunities

We look for opportunities and seek positive solutions. We work together to put things right and we always look for better ways of doing things.

Have high standards

We take pride in our work and responsibility for what we do. We recognise and celebrate the achievements of others. We are honest and transparent in how we work.

Over the next four years, we aim to:



Operating environment

A PESTEL analysis revealed some of the main challenges and opportunities for Soha. These are given in summary below.

Political

The NHF has identified a difficult relationship for housing associations with politicians of all parties, but has a focus on improving this.

Recent political events, particularly Brexit, may have a huge impact on the political and social landscape, as well as access to labour. The longer term implications are uncertain.

Some commentators note a growing disconnect between people and the political establishment. For housing associations, with lines of accountability to central and local government, and to local communities and individuals, there is an opportunity to encourage a stronger connection and to build on

the partnership with residents that already exists.

Economic

Austerity measures continue to impact on residents both through cuts to local authority services and to individual income. Changes to benefits remain a risk for residents affected by them and for Soha.

The impact of Brexit on the economy longer term is uncertain, but there are likely implications for construction (in terms of accessing labour and materials) and for social care (in terms of accessing labour).

The housing market has slowed, but continued to increase in value in Soha's area of operation.

Social

We live in an ever more distant society, according to research, which shows increasing distance between

generations and growing disparities in income.

The population of Oxfordshire is growing and projections show the biggest percentage growth will be in the age group 65+.

The growth areas in Oxfordshire present opportunities, but also challenges around future community cohesion.

Technological

Advances in household technology present opportunities for more responsive and accessible services online, as well as the ability to engage with people who have not traditionally got involved with Soha. Using online resources, residents can access cheaper utilities and other services.

However, these opportunities also present an ever greater risk of a digital divide, where those not online are excluded

from better value services, job opportunities and essentials such as benefit claims.

Environmental

We face the challenges of responding to extreme weather conditions and of engaging proactively with an environmental agenda.

Modern construction techniques, improvements to existing homes and behavioural changes all give the opportunities for the housing sector to make a difference.

Legal / Regulatory

Deregulation measures are likely to result in a reclassification of housing associations as private sector organisations. The impact of these measures presents some risks and opportunities to housing association Boards, including decisions around disposal of assets and mergers / acquisitions.

How we operate

Soha has a well-respected model of co-regulation. This means that our Board sets the direction of the business and makes strategic and financial decisions. They are legally responsible for the organisation. They delegate day to day management to Soha's staff.

The Board includes up to five resident members who are nominated by the Tenants' Forum – a group of resident representatives who hold the Board to account.

The Tenant Scrutiny Group acts as a 'critical friend' – challenging Soha from the strategic level right through to operational detail.

The Tenant Auditors check 'we do what it says on the tin', looking at Soha's performance against service standards.

We are currently consulting on opening up shareholding membership to all residents.

These groups build on the involvement of many other residents whose volunteering makes a difference to service delivery and improvements, to the development of social capital and to how Soha demonstrates accountability.

We measure the impact of this involvement each year through an Investing in Involvement statement.

Developing this plan

The Board has led the development of this plan, with significant input from **residents involved in Co-regulation and staff**.

The views of more than **1,000 residents, shared owners and leaseholders** helped to shape the Corporate Plan. They were involved through surveys, discussion groups and follow up conversations about the plan.

Delivering our plan

To deliver our plan, we have developed a set of two year objectives.

Listen to, involve and empower residents

To help us meet this aim, over two years to 2019 we will:

1. Involve 500 residents as members of Soha
2. Involve 60 shared owners

How will we know we're achieving this aim?

- High resident satisfaction that membership and involvement make a difference
- High resident satisfaction that Soha listens to their views and acts on them
- High shared ownership satisfaction
- Involved residents give a strong, constructive challenge to Soha

Do the basics brilliantly

To help us meet this aim, over two years to 2019 we will:

1. Use a new IT system to work efficiently and provide services that residents tell us are great
2. Offer services online that 30% of residents choose to use
3. Use mobile technology to gather residents' feedback when out and about – and demonstrate how this makes a difference.

How will we know we're achieving this aim?

- At least 90% of residents satisfied with our services overall
- High satisfaction that services are easy to access
- High measures of performance (among the top 25% compared with other housing associations)
- Customer Service Excellence re-accreditation

Provide the homes that are needed now and in the future

To help us meet this aim, over two years to 2019 we will:

1. Provide 450 new homes for people in housing need
2. Develop the right accommodation and services for targeted groups, so that:
 - we can support single people under 35 who are affected by changes to benefits, and
 - we can support people with learning difficulties to live independently
3. Review the affordability of the housing we provide

How will we know we're achieving this aim?

Measures around helping to meet housing need will be agreed following the Board Away Day in May, which will focus around this issue. Measures may include:

- Targets for meeting specific housing need (e.g. number of supported units, shared ownership, affordable rent, target rent etc)
- A measure for how we help the local authority to meet housing need
- A measure for how development supports the business overall



Support residents and communities to thrive

To help us meet this aim, over two years to 2019 we will:

1. Establish and deliver an Independent Living Strategy for older and vulnerable residents
2. Gain accreditation as a dementia friendly organisation
3. Help residents to maximise their income through:
 - Supporting 200 people towards employment through our Launchpad project
 - Supporting residents through the roll-out of Universal Credit
 - Reviewing our tenancy support service
 - Offering training and support to unlock better deals on services and goods online
4. Support good community cohesion in new build developments, so that new and existing residents feel part of a community

How will we know we're achieving this aim?

An increase in the number of residents who feel:

- Part of their local community
- Soha is making a positive difference to their local community
- Positive about their life satisfaction

We will measure these through a survey.

In addition, we will check that older and vulnerable residents feel:

- they have independence, choice and control, and
- safe at home

Have the right staff, right training, right tools

To help us meet this aim, over two years to 2019 we will:

1. Improve our approach to mobile working and support staff to maximise use of the new IT system, so that staff feel they have the right tools and training to do their jobs.
2. Support and upskill staff to maximise the use of the new IT system
3. Consider registration as a Living Wage accredited employer
4. Produce a Skills Fit for the Future framework – ensuring staff continue to have the right skills and develop their learning ethos

How will we know we're achieving this aim?

- More than 90% of staff feel proud to work for Soha
- Achieve IIP Gold
- Overall resident satisfaction with Soha is more than 90%

Have sustainable financial strength and independence

To help us meet this aim, over two years to 2019 we will:

1. Take part in the sector pilot of efficiency measures and play an active part in developing these measures
2. Continue to develop a strong reputation based on our vision and values
3. Map and extend the range and quality of partnerships to stretch and improve our services

How will we know we're achieving this aim?

- Retain G1 V1 regulatory judgement
- Evidence of a good reputation locally and throughout the sector

Values in action

Soha's values can be seen in everything we do. They drive the behaviours that we expect of colleagues and are at the centre of our plans and actions.





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Soha Housing is registered with the Homes & Communities Agency (No. L4130) and is a charitable registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (No. 28410R).

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