



WHITE HORSE
HOUSING

Business Plan 2021-26



White Horse Housing is an ambitious, dynamic and innovative rural-focused organisation. Our mission is ***“to be a leading provider of high quality affordable homes in the rural communities of Wiltshire and its surrounding areas”***.

We continually strive to ***“provide excellent housing management and maintenance services to our customers and to help maintain vibrant and thriving communities.”***

White Horse Housing is proud to be a ‘top quartile’ performer and have achieved an overall Net Promoter Score of 75 — one of the highest satisfaction ratings in the sector.

Net Promoter
Score



75



Contents:

Page 2	Mission, Objectives and Values.
Page 3	Our Objectives
Page 4—8	Action Plan and Targets
Page 9	Financial Plan, Income & Expenditure Account 2021-2026.
Page 10	Capital programme 2021-2026.
Page 11	Staffing Structure

About White Horse Housing Association

White Horse Housing Association, was established in 1984 to provide homes in rural communities throughout the County of Wiltshire (including Swindon Borough) for local people in housing need. In 2016, the Association expanded its area of operation into Somerset through the acquisition of Kilmersdon Rural Housing Association and currently has **385** homes across **48** Parishes in **4** different local authority areas. The Association is fully compliant with the Regulator for Social Housing's 'Regulatory Framework' and operates within a robust 30-year financial plan.

Support is provided by a diverse Board of voluntary members who collectively have the qualities, experience and ability to provide skilled and professional leadership. The Association has adopted the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance 2020.

The Association works hard to meet its mission, objectives and values and address the key challenges of capital investment in the provision of affordable housing.

The Association operates in a risk-aware and risk-controlled manner in the current operating environment, by actively monitoring the political and economic climate and constantly assessing and mitigating against those risks throughout the year.

Mission, Objectives and Values

Mission:

"To be a leading provider of high quality affordable homes in the rural communities of Wiltshire and surrounding areas.

To provide excellent management and maintenance services to our customers and to help maintain vibrant and thriving communities."

Values:

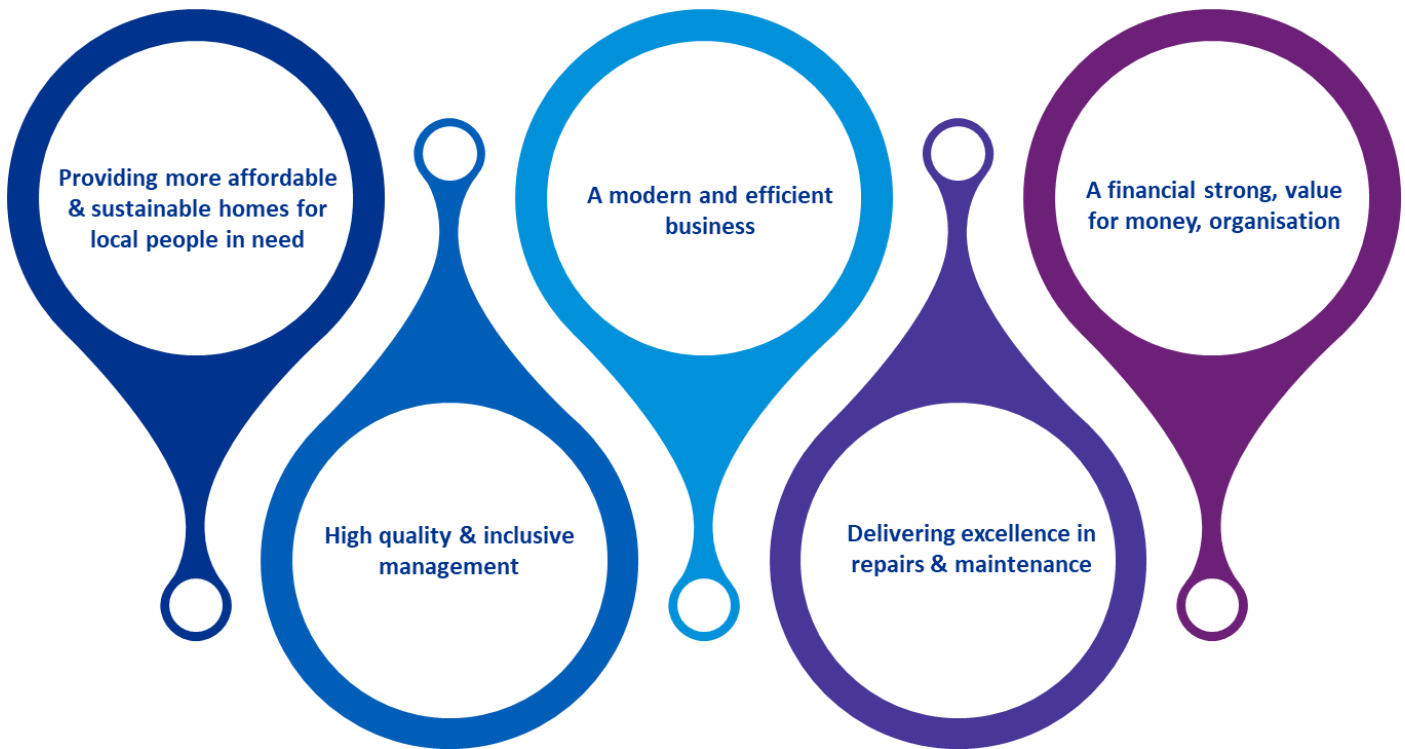
In achieving our objectives we will ***"act with integrity, openness, accountability, honesty, impartiality and respect"*** in everything we do.

How we do this:

- by keeping our commitments and promises and following through on our actions;
- by being consistent in all our activities, demonstrating an open minded and impartial approach;
- by promoting equality of opportunity, respecting each other and celebrating diversity so that everyone can give their best in every aspect of our business;
- by putting customers first: listening to them, understanding their needs, treating complaints as an opportunity to learn and recognising the impact our work has on both our customers and stakeholders;
- by valuing our staff and encouraging them to take individual responsibility for problems and find solutions to them;
- by continually striving to improve the service we provide.



Our Strategic Objectives:



The Association will continue to:

- Work closely with all of our Local Authority partners in order to ensure the provision of much needed rural accommodation.
- Ensure that our properties are managed and maintained to high standards and seek to support our tenants where appropriate.
- Contribute to the work of the National Housing Federation, and other similar organisations.
- Take an active role in the political environment, through lobbying and responding to consultations.
- Review and develop our systems and procedures to ensure we are effective, efficient and provide value for money.
- Remain viable, grow our business and maintain a first class service to our tenants.

Future Growth

- We are committed to providing high quality, sustainable homes, and will actively work with local developers, Community Land Trusts and Parish Councils to provide new affordable housing for local people.
- We will build and/or acquire a range of affordable housing and low cost home ownership solutions to meet the needs of local communities

Housing Management

- We will encourage tenant involvement and participation in our services.
- We will regularly visit each neighbourhood and actively work with residents to ensure they remain an attractive place to live.
- The Association will support tenants through the 'Tenancy Plus' scheme to help them sustain their tenancies, pay their rent and mitigate the effects of welfare reform.
- We will facilitate a "working together" approach with our customers by developing modern, efficient communication systems to enable them to effectively and easily interact with the Association.

Asset Management

- The Association will actively manage its stock to ensure that it is sustainable and efficient whilst providing the best return on our investment.
- We aim to provide an excellent repairs service to our tenants which in turn ensures that our assets maintain their value.

Community Involvement

- The Association will seek to play an active part in the communities we serve to help them remain sustainable and viable for the future.

Objective 1: Providing more sustainable homes for local people in need.

What have we done?	What will we do?
<p>The Association owns and manages 385 homes. Of these 328 are let on social rents; 45 are let on affordable rents and 12 are shared ownership.</p> <p>In the last 5 years the Association has completed 41 new homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 at Hullavington (including 1 x SO) • 5 at Urchfont (including 2 x SO) • 2 at Burton • 2 at North Newton • 5 at Winterslow (including 1 x SO) • 4 at Corston (all are SO) • 6 at Bruton • 6 at Chilton Foliat (including 2 x SO) • 2 at Urchfont (including 1 x SO) • 4 at Great Somerford (including 1 x SO) <p>In 2016, completed the Transfer of Engagements with the former Kilmersdon Rural Housing Association to add a further 96 properties to our portfolio.</p> <p>Arranged a new £3million loan facility with Triodos Bank, and a further £6million loan facility with Clydesdale Bank, to finance its future development pipeline. Offers were sought from across the sector and were independently assessed and 'tested' against the current market to ensure 'value for money'.</p> <p>The Association has sold 12 properties that failed a viability test and options appraisal, generating a capital receipt of £2.5million to invest in future developments and/or our existing stock.</p>	<p>Develop and/or acquire, at least a further 115 homes by March 2025. The Association currently has the following 27 homes 'on-site':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 at Ashton Keynes (including 3 x SO) • 6 homes at Sutton Benger (including 2 x SO) • 3 homes at Winterbourne Monkton (including 1 x SO) • 6 homes at Great Somerford (including 6 x SO) • 4 homes at Pewsey (including 2 x SO) <p>The Association has approved a further 12 homes at Chapmanslade (including 5 SO) and 2 homes at Box (including 1 SO).</p> <p>The Association is also developing 2 shared ownership homes in Kilmersdon.</p> <p>The Association is also the formal 'development partner' to four Community Land Trusts in Wiltshire, Dorset and Hampshire who collectively will provide a further 40 new homes. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad Chalke (providing an initial phase of 6 homes) • Seend (providing 10 homes) • Abbots Ann (providing 13 homes) • Sixpenny Handley (providing 11 homes) <p>Continue to seek new 'land-led' development opportunities within our rural communities.</p> <p>Submit an application to Homes England to become a formal 'development partner' allowing us to bid for (and receive) grant funding in our own right.</p> <p>Undertake a comprehensive review of the Association's 'Sustainability Policy', to ensure we achieve the highest environmental standards possible. Use the outcome of the review to update our Asset Management Strategy, including developing projects that ensure we embrace best practice in design and functionality, whilst seeking to reduce fuel costs and carbon emissions.</p>



Objective 2: A financially strong, value for money, organisation.

What have we done?	What will we do?
<p>Implemented the new 'Housing Brixx' 'Business Planning' software to provide accurate reporting on our long-term financial viability, whilst allowing economic changes to be modelled, multi-variant stress testing to be undertaken and new development appraisals to be integrated.</p> <p>Completed a comprehensive review of our loan portfolio resulting in a renegotiation with Triodos Bank to consolidate our existing loans into one new facility offering improved margins and minimum lending rates.</p> <p>Transferred all floating loans in our existing Triodos loan portfolio onto a new 9-year fix rate to protect the Association from future increases in interest rates.</p> <p>Finalised a new £6,000,000 loan agreement with Clydesdale Bank to provide future finance for the Association's development programme.</p> <p>Maintained net rent arrears and 'bad debt' below 2% of the rent debit, whilst average void turnover times remain below our target of 15 calendar days, thereby maximising income.</p> <p>Undertaken annual audits to ensure our internal controls remain robust, and financial accounts are accurate, to reduce the level of risk to the Association.</p> <p>Regularly reviewed our Risk Management Policy and overall level of 'risk appetite' taking account of the current operating environment.</p> <p>Developed a strategic Asset Management Tool to assess the 'value' of each property and identify those areas where additional investment maybe required.</p> <p>Completed a review of our Financial Regulations to ensure continuing compliance with best practice whilst developing new policies on Fraud, Money Laundering, Anti-Bribery and Corruption.</p> <p>Maintained an annual surplus on 'ordinary activities' that ensures compliance with our loan covenants, without restricting future growth.</p>	<p>Complete the final security arrangements on the new Clydesdale Bank loan facility to enable us to fully draw the facility over the next 5 years, as required.</p> <p>Undertake a consultation exercise with all staff on the revised SHPS pension arrangements and seek to implement the changes by April 2022.</p> <p>Continue to benchmark our services across the sector through our membership of Acuity Consultancy and Research. We will seek to achieve an outcome that meets or exceeds the reported median for small housing associations across a range of financial, operational and management indicators. These include the Sector Scorecard and the Regulator's 'value for money' metrics.</p> <p>Value for Money indicators will be published annually through the Audited Accounts, the Annual Review and the Annual Report to Tenants.</p> <p>Undertake a robust development appraisal of all proposed new schemes to ensure they meet the Association's development appraisal criteria.</p> <p>Maintain robust procurement procedures to ensure all future development and service contracts are based on current best practice and demonstrate the best value for money.</p> <p>Seek to apply for external grant funding for specific projects as and when they are made available, including the new Affordable Housing Programme and grants to improve the sustainability of our existing housing stock.</p>
 <p>Manor Farm, Urchfont</p>	 <p>Coundley Court, Redlynch</p>

Objective 3: Delivering Excellence in Repairs and Maintenance.

What have we done?	What will we do?
<p>Completed an 'options appraisal' of the repairs and maintenance service, re-packaged work into 2 separate contracts, re-procured both contracts using external consultants and entered into two new partnering contracts with 3 Solutions Ltd. (from April 2017).</p> <p>Negotiated a nil percentage increase on labour rates with 3 Solutions for the 2018, 2019 and 2020 financial years and a small 1% increase from April 2021.</p> <p>Increased tenant satisfaction realised across all R&M activities. Overall, customer service has improved at no extra cost to the Association.</p> <p>Invested in a 'strategic assessment tool' that measures the economic viability and long term sustainability of our housing stock whilst informing our long-term maintenance programme and helping to determine where our resources are best targeted.</p> <p>Over the past 5 years we completed the following capital works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 123 new bathrooms; • 11 new kitchens; • 8 properties had their doors replaced; • 56 gas and oil boilers replaced; • 120 properties had new doors and windows; • 37 complete new heating systems were installed; • 193 properties had external painting and repairs. <p>Completed an 'in-house' stock condition survey of all properties in Kilmersdon.</p> <p>Re-tendered the grounds maintenance contract and ensured continued 'value for money'.</p> <p>Implemented a new Asbestos Management Portal within the Home Master system to provide robust reporting and improved control of the asbestos management plan.</p>	<p>Complete an 'in depth' repairs and maintenance benchmarking exercise with our South West peer group to compare costs and processes and seek to use the outcome to make further cost improvements to our service.</p> <p>Undertake a comprehensive review of our two R&M contracts to determine if the additional 2 year contract extension should be applied.</p> <p>Work in partnership with our contractors to ensure all KPI's are met (or exceeded) and that efficiency savings are identified wherever possible. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 – 100% completed on time • P2 – 97% completed on time • Appointments made – 98% • Appointments kept – 96% • Overall Tenant Satisfaction – 96% • Planned work satisfaction – 96% <p>During 2021 – 2026 we will complete the following capital works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64 new bathrooms including second WC's • 54 new kitchens • 59 new heating systems complete • 52 new boilers • 43 properties with new windows and/or doors • 25 properties to have replacement roofs • 270 properties due external painting and repairs. <p>Continue to populate asset information onto the Home Master system to enable greater access to data and improved management reporting.</p> <p>Together with the Sustainability Review, we will update the Asset Management Strategy using the latest data and information to maximise the return on our investment and maintain sustainable and environmentally efficient homes.</p>



The 3 Solutions Team

Objective 4: Providing high quality, and inclusive management services

What have we done?	What will we do?
<p>Regularly reviewed our key housing management policies and procedures. This has resulted in the following improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular neighbourhood inspections across all schemes; An enhanced 'Tenancy Plus' service; The recruitment of the Residents' Scrutiny Panel with an agreed programme of service reviews; The introduction of Starter Tenancies and Tenancy Audits; More transparent service charge statements. <p>Introduced a system of telephone satisfaction surveys for all repairs and maintenance work, increasing the rate of return and accuracy of the results.</p> <p>Achieved significant improvements across all service areas in the 2018 tri-annual tenant satisfaction survey Results include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Satisfaction with White Horse Housing – 95% (up from 91%) Value for Money of Rent – 96% (up from 87%) WHHA listens to views and acts on them – 88% (up from 79%) Overall satisfaction with Repairs and Maintenance – 91% (up from 85%) Overall quality of the home – 96% (up from 94%) Neighbourhood as a place to live – 97% (same as 2014) <p>Achieved a Net Promoter Score of 75 — one of the highest across the housing sector.</p> <p>Introduced service charges at two separate schemes in Somerset to ensure tenants pay for the communal services they received.</p>	<p>Continue to follow the Welfare Reform Action Plan and ensure we provide comprehensive advice and guidance to all affected tenants. In particular, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assist tenants to withstand the long-term impact of the Coronavirus pandemic by ensuring they receive the right support to enable them to continue to pay their rent. support those tenants moving onto Universal Credit to ensure their applications are complete and that rent payments are made on time. <p>Undertake a review the Tenant Involvement Policy to incorporate the National Housing Federation's 'Tenant's Together' Charter, comply with the new Code of Governance 2020 and the Government's Social Housing White Paper.</p> <p>Sign up to, and implement, the Chartered Institute of Housing's "Make a Stand" pledge in order to support tenants who are experiencing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Work with the Resident's Scrutiny Panel to implement an agreed programme of service reviews. Meet at least 4 times per year. Seek to gain meaningful feedback and improve current policies and procedures.</p> <p>Maintain our comprehensive 'Tenancy Plus' service – providing 1-2-1 help and advice to vulnerable tenants who require additional support to sustain their tenancy.</p> <p>Use the Home Master system to introduce a more proactive method of measuring tenant satisfaction, encouraging tenant engagement in services and promoting community activities</p> <p>Continue to maximise the income to the Association by reviewing communal services and identifying further areas where service charges could be applied.</p>



Objective 5: A Modern and Efficient Business

What have we done?

Introduced a range of new policies and procedures to ensure the Association is compliant with data protection legislation. Reviewed, weeded and scanned all current and former tenant files and created a new structured electronic filing system.

Implemented the new Home Master Housing Management and Finance system in July 2020 and ensured all staff are fully trained. Activated new interactive features such as automatic texting and information requests are implemented to improve customer information and the overall service.

Recruited four new Board Members in line with our Board succession policy.

New staffing structure implemented in February 2018 to increase capacity. Housing Apprentice employed.

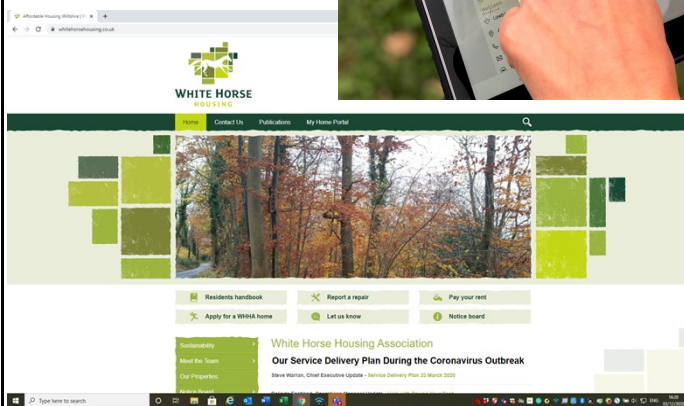
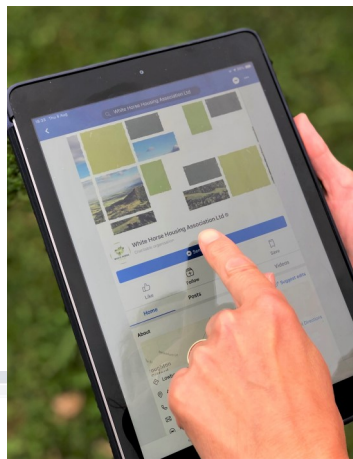
'Remote access' server installed and encrypted laptops provided, enabling remote access to office systems.

'Tenants Portal' implemented enabling tenants to access their rent accounts, repairs history, personal data etc.—24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

New name and re-branding project successfully completed.

Completed a review of our existing rules, code of governance and standing orders. Approved at the 2016 AGM. Governance Framework and implemented and reviewed in 2019.

New electronic Board Pack system implemented giving members remote access to Board and Committee papers.



What will we do?



Work with Designer Software to implement further modules of the Home Master system, improving inter-active services with tenants, expanding the Tenants' Portal and improving the reporting of management information.

Implement an amended staffing structure to increase capacity across the team and enable further service development work to be undertaken.

Continue to move towards digital storage, where possible, of all existing and historical documents to ensure they can be accessed remotely by staff at any time.

Set clear and realistic targets and actions for all staff (linked to the Association's strategic objectives) at each annual appraisal round and review progress through the bi-monthly 1-2-1's.

Provide opportunities for staff through the annual training plan to grow their knowledge and improve the Association's overall capacity.

Implement an additional Board Member training day each year (in response to member requirements) to build and refresh knowledge.

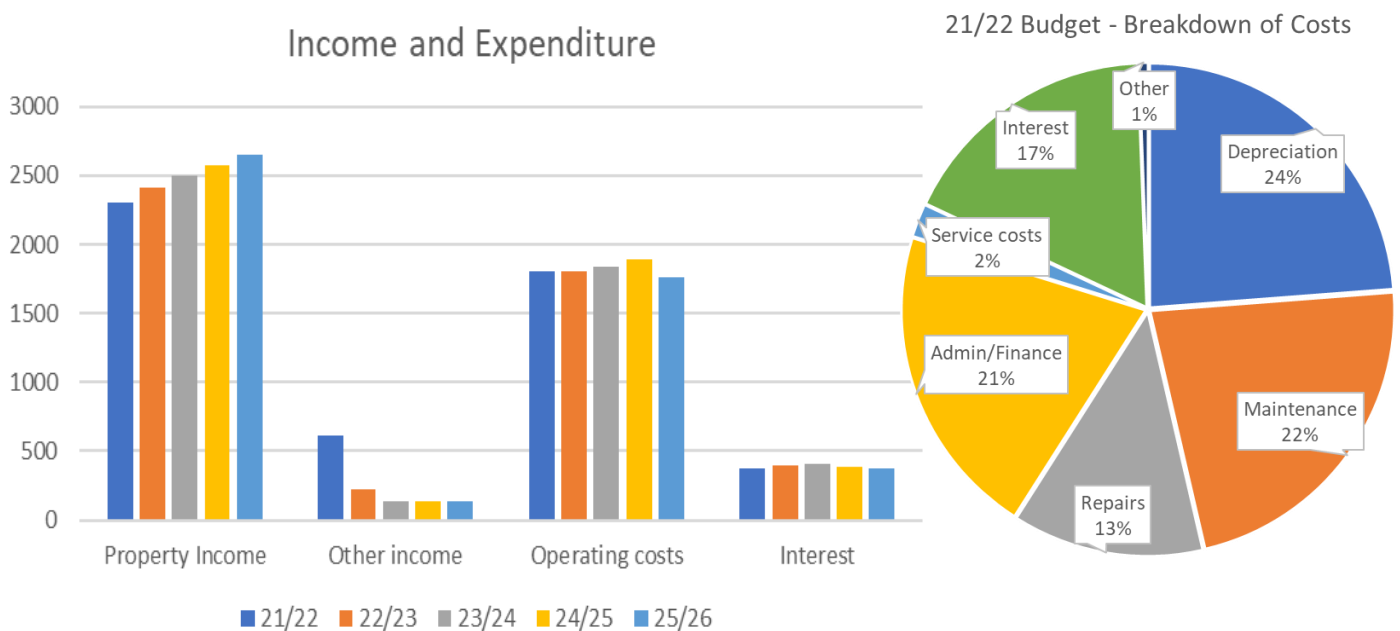
Implement the National Housing Federation's 'Code of Governance 2020' and ensure we are fully compliant by April 2022 by addressing the gaps identified in the self-assessment checklist. This includes:

- A review of the Board Members Induction Policy;
- A review of the Equality & Diversity Policy; and
- Agreeing a Board 'succession plan'.



The White Horse Housing Board

Income and Expenditure



Value for Money

To ensure we continue to provide 'value for money' across all our services, White Horse Housing seeks to maintain an appropriate balance between performance, costs and levels of tenant satisfaction. We regularly benchmark our results against a wide range of housing organisations, in particular, those with less than 1000 homes. We participate in annual reviews of performance, and submit data that includes the Regulator for Social Housing's 'Performance Metrics', and the approved 'Sector Scorecard' indicators.

The table below sets out our results for the 2020 financial year. It compares our performance against the South West 'peer group' of smaller associations, together with the sector-wide Housemark results. Overall, we compare favourably with other organisations, especially around tenant satisfaction and service performance. Many of our indicators fall into the 1st or 2nd quartile. However, where our results fall into lower quartiles we will use the results to further examine those areas of our business to ascertain if, and where, improvements could be made, or, if that level of performance is acceptable. One area of investigation being undertaken during the current plan is an in-depth review of our repairs and maintenance costs to see if further savings can be made.

		White Horse 2020 results	Quartile compared to South West peer group.	Peergroup median	Quartile compared to all HA's	HouseMark median
Business Health	Operating margin (overall)	28.62%	2	27.85%	1	21.50%
	Operating margin (social housing lettings)	30.51%	2	30.51%	1	23.60%
	Overhead costs as a % of Turnover	19.33%	2	18.50%	3	13.90%
	EBITDA MRI (as a percentage of interest)	169.42%	3	207.80%	3	196.10%
Development - capacity and supply	Units developed (as % of units owned)	1.08%	2	0.34%	2	1.30%
	Gearing	28.31%	2	33.80%	2	33.80%
Outcomes delivered	Customers satisfied with the service provided by their social housing landlord	95%	1	89%	1	86.90%
	Rent Collected as % of rent due	99%	1	100%	2	99.84%
Effective Asset Management	Return on Capital Employed (ROCE)	2.44%	2	2.48%	1	2.80%
	Occupancy - GN	100%	1	99.75%	1	99.28%
	Re-investment%	7.90%	1	3.47%	2	6.10%
	Ratio of responsive repairs to planned maintenance	0.92%	3	0.59%	3	0.64%
Operating Efficiency	Headline social housing cost per unit	£4,081	2	£3,352	2	£4,023
	Management cost per unit	£1,121	2	£1,087	2	£994

White Horse Housing Association—Capital Programme 2021-2026

Major Repairs/Planned Works	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Kitchen Refurbishment Complete	31,000	85,000	176,800	62,500	£25,000	£380,300
Bathroom Refurbishment Complete	140,000	80,000	60,500	36,000	£24,000	£340,500
New Roofs	0	0	0	200,000	£147,000	£347,000
Replacement Oil Tanks	6,000	6,500	7,000	7,500	£16,200	£43,200
Central Heating - Complete Systems	156,000	160,000	64,000	0	£37,500	£417,500
Central Heating Boilers Gas	20,000	20,000	25,000	25,000	£33,600	£123,600
Central Heating Boilers Oil	25,000	25,000	35,000	35,000	£29,500	£149,500
New External Doors	4,500	5,000	5,000	5,000	£10,000	£29,500
Windows - Whole House PVCu	11,000	0	10,000	0	£110,000	£131,000
Voids Work (capitalised)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	£30,000	£150,000
CONTINGENCY	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	£20,000	£100,000
Total Budget for Year	£443,500	£431,500	£433,300	£421,000	£482,800	£2,212,100

Capital Programme Summary:

Note: Replacement of individual components is based upon their age and condition. The capital programme for the Kilmersdon properties is based on the recent Stock Condition Survey and historic repairs records.

⇒ The small kitchen refurbishment programme is focussed mainly on the properties in Kilmersdon and surrounding villages. This aims to complete those properties that did not have new kitchens in the previous programme.



⇒ The Bathroom refurbishment programme will continue across all properties. Where the property has a second separate toilet this will be renewed at the same time, depending on its condition.

⇒ The programme to replace windows and doors was largely completed in 2020/21. Properties in Kilmersdon will either have new windows or their existing ones refurbished, as required.

⇒ A programme has been created to replace old and potentially failing gas and oil boilers. The programme is based on an assessment of recent repairs costs, the availability of spares and the overall condition and age of the boiler.

⇒ A fund has been established to install modern heating systems in those Kilmersdon properties still served by solid fuel appliances only. The Association has also commenced a programme to replace old electric storage heaters installed across our housing stock.

⇒ A budget line for capitalised 'void works' has been created to enable refurbishment of key components (kitchens, bathrooms, windows/doors, heating etc.) whilst the property is empty. This enables all the work to be completed at one time and is therefore more efficient and cost effective. It also ensures new tenants have a modernised home to move into with less disruption.

⇒ A 'contingency' fund has been established to provide funding for unexpected capital works during the year.



Staffing Structure

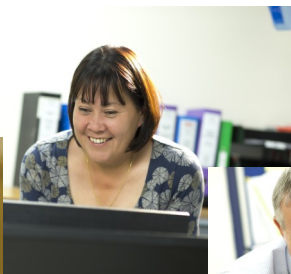
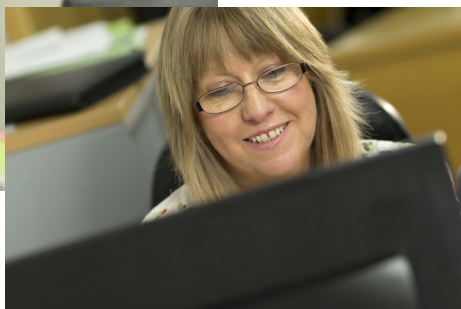
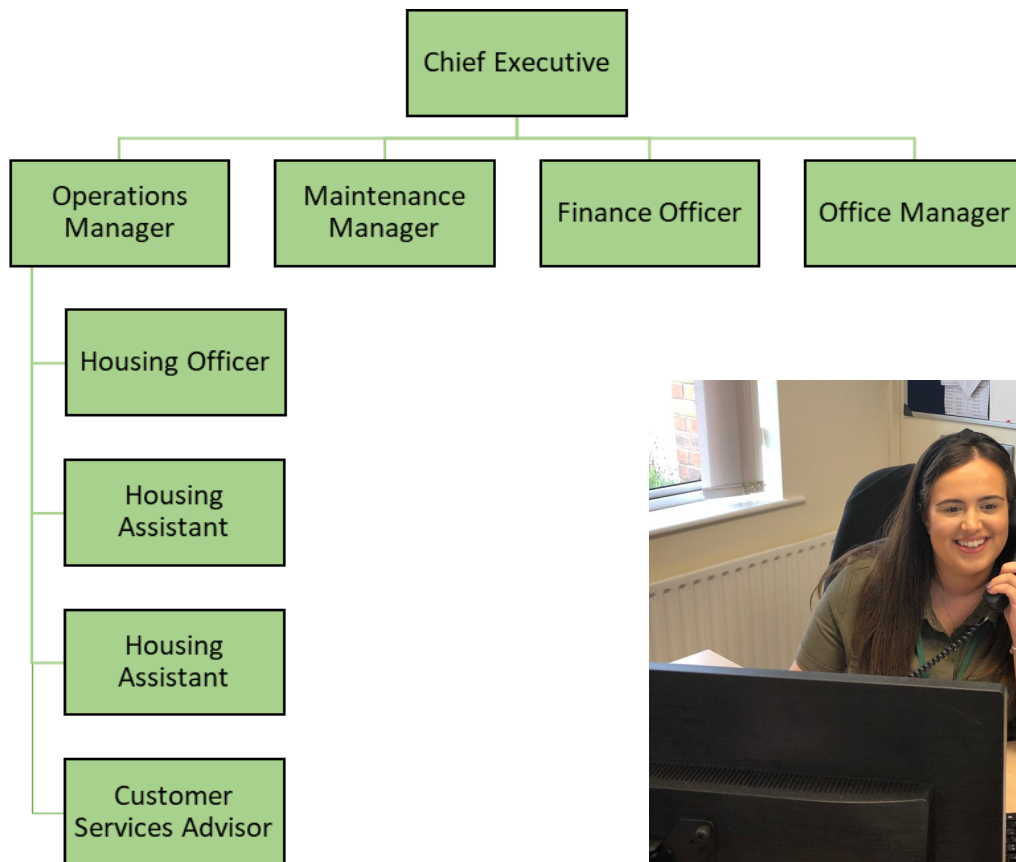
White Horse Housing employs nine members of staff. Of these, two staff members work part-time. The structure is shown in the chart below.

The structure is designed to focus on our customer facing services whilst ensuring we have sufficient staff resources to continue providing the high level of service our tenants have always enjoyed.

The Operations Team is responsible for all the daily housing management functions, including scheme management, rent and arrears, tenancy support services, void management and tenant involvement. The team is the first point of contact for all our customers.

The Maintenance Manager has overall responsibility for all day to day repairs and the successful completion of the capital programme each year.

Finally, the team is supported by the Office Manager and the Finance Officer. These two posts ensure the Association's finances are regularly monitored, and our viability maintained, whilst ensuring invoices are paid on time.



For more information about White Horse Housing Association, and particularly about the Board and Staff, governance arrangements and the location and size of homes owned, please see our website.



White Horse Housing Association Ltd
Lowbourne House
Lowbourne Road
Melksham
Wiltshire
SN12 7DZ

Tel: 01380 850916
info@whitehorsehousing.co.uk
www.whitehorsehousing.co.uk

