

**KEY**

**HOUSING STRATEGIC PLAN  
2016/17 – 2019/20**



**CONTENTS**

**Context of Key's Housing Services**

**Overview of Current Themes, Risks and Objectives**

**Risk Map (Appendix 1)**

**Strategic Objectives (Appendix 2)**

**Housing Revenue Projections (Appendix 3)**

**Asset Management Strategy (Appendix 4)**

**Tenant Engagement Strategy (Appendix 5)**

**Performance Management Framework (Appendix 6)**

## **Introduction**

Key's overall Strategic Plan outlines the principal objectives and risks for the whole group, covering all its activities.

In relation to Key's housing function the relevant strategies and targets are outlined within this document and related appendices.

The Plan covers the period to 2020, with interim annual reviews taking place during its lifespan.

## **Context of Key's Housing Services**

Key has been a housing provider since 1982, with a new build programme in 15 local authority areas and now owns over 700 housing units.

The majority of this housing was developed as supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities (and registered with care home status). This care home status has now been removed for some time and from that date Key has provided distinct housing and support services, characterised by the separation in the delivery of these functions. In the area of support provision this has been characterised by the continued movement towards individualised, personalised services (a trend which continues to develop through the adoption of self directed support).

As part of this general developmental pathway, as a housing provider, Key commenced a programme of remodelling and sub-dividing shared housing to meet the needs of existing tenants. With the changing aspirations of tenants to have their own homes, and the need for the Key to consider the longer term use of its housing, a programme of remodelling was developed, producing one and two bedroom flats from the original shared housing.

Over the period 2002 to 2016, through this programme, Key has created 162 new units of remodelled housing at 30 locations (with a further two units programmed for 2016/17). There remain a small number of locations (four in total) where remodelling has yet to be undertaken but due to a variety of constraints no active plans are being taken forward during the lifespan of the Plan.

In addition Key lets some of its housing (around 200 units) to tenants who are supported and to tenants where support is provided by another organisation (most prevalently where the support service was passed to another organisation following a local authority procurement exercise, but also in reflection of individual choosing an alternative support provider)

## **Overview of Current Themes, Risks and Objectives**

A number of changes in Key's operating environment and management approach have come together recently which inform both the nature of risks faced by Key as a landlord and, in turn, inform the objectives of Key as a housing provider. These risks are analysed in greater detail later in the Plan and the themes appear within the detailed housing objectives which again appear later in the Plan.

In overview, these themes include

1. The continued orientation of Key's housing services to **engage with tenants** on all relevant aspects of the provision of services. This approach features a number of specific strands of activity as well as the embedding of an approach where responsive and positive customer engagement forms the approach for all communication and activity.

An emerging facet of this engagement will be to ensure value for money (doing the right things, in the right way, at the right cost) and continuing consideration of rent level affordability. Key's tenant engagement strategy outlines further details of our approaches in this area. Further developments over the life of the Plan will see the introduction of a scrutiny based evaluation of our work.

2. The requirement to work to the **regulatory framework** and associated guidance as issued by the Scottish Housing Regulator. Recent relevant updates here have included updated requirements to report 'notifiable events' and the introduction of the codes of conduct.
3. The impact of the Social **Housing Charter** on the provision of Key's services. The Charter (which has been in place from April 2012 and is to be re-evaluated during the early period of the lifespan of this Plan). Specifically all Registered Social Landlords are required to evidence their compliance in the service areas outlined in the Charter in the form of an annual return. Landlords are also required to promote and make available to tenants their performance in relation to the indicators contained within the Charter.
4. As encouraged within the Charter, Key will continue to promote and develop its **communication with tenants** which is inextricably linked to the above theme of engagement. Over the last two years series of developments have been taken forward, including the publication of regular newsletters (three per year), an annual satisfaction survey (every second year this focuses solely on maintenance/property services), formal rent consultations and the establishment and consolidation of a tenant engagement forum (The My Home Group). Work is currently nearing completion on a revised web presence for Key and the housing function is an integral component of this.
5. Another significant theme is the impact of **welfare reform**. While the detail of some of these proposals has yet to be finalised by Government many of these changes are likely to have major consequences for people who are tenants of Key.

In retrospect the impact of size criteria ('bedroom tax') as applicable to housing benefit payments had limited impact due to the exemption of 'Supported Accommodation' from these restrictions.

The current main risk factor facing Key is the proposal to introduce a cap on future (housing) benefit payments to the level of the Local Housing Allowance. This has already been put in place for unsupported tenancies from April 2018 for all new tenancies commencing from April 2016. Currently the implementation date for 'supported accommodation' has been deferred to April 2017 to allow a fuller review of the definition of this form of provision by the Department of Work and Pensions. It is understood that either this entire category of 'supported accommodation' (or at least the additional costs of its provision) will not be subject to the LHA cap but this has yet to be formally

confirmed and this is of particular relevance to Key given that its current rent levels with the application of intensive housing management services exceed LHA levels.

6. The approaches taken to securing the condition of Key's physical housing stock is outlined within an **asset management strategy** which incorporates a series of recent changes to the operating environment. The requirement to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (by April 2015) has been enhanced the new requirements associated with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing which come into place by 2020. The importance of meeting health and safety requirements has been further developed by the introduction of measures to meet compliance with the Construction Design Management Regulations 2015. The impact of the implementation of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 is also a feature of this activity.
7. An operational priority for the period of this Plan will be the continued redevelopment (being taken forward in-house with relevant IT staff) of a **replacement IT system** which will build on the new system developed in 2014/15 to provide a housing/tenant and rent accounting system. The new functionality will focus on the property/asset management systems. This is a major piece of work and represents a significant objective and risk control mechanism for Key over this period.
8. In parallel Key's **internal control systems** will continue to be reviewed and re-developed. Of particular importance in a financial context are our systems and processes for both arrears and voids control. It is anticipated that the process of internal audit will continue over the period of the Plan.
9. A new **complaints handling procedure** which is compliant with the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is now embedded, although further awareness raising amongst staff will be taken forward as part of the general approach of adopting a customer focused approach.
10. A revised set of **performance indicators** and associated management framework will be formulated and incorporated. This reporting will have relevance at a number of levels including reporting to the management committee, as an internal management tool and in reporting performance to tenants (this latter aspect will require consultation with tenants).
11. Finally, Key will continue to take forward its **housing development** activity during the period of the Plan. As noted earlier Key's programme of remodelling its shared housing has been extensive in scale and is now approaching its latter stages. In addition Key continues to explore the options for the development of small scale new build development (most likely located in Glasgow) to meet the identified housing needs.

### **Risk Map (Appendix 1)**

The Plan incorporates a Risk Map which outlines the main risks faced by Key's housing services and to a large extent these reflect the commentary above. This is included as appendix 1.

The Risk Map has been 'scored' by relevant housing/maintenance staff to reflect the severity of the risk and to examine the extent of the risk once suitable control mechanisms have been introduced. This Risk Map will be reviewed annually.

### **Strategic Objectives (Appendix 2)**

The Plan also incorporates the Strategic Objectives of Key as a landlord and again these reflect the context above and again these will be reviewed annually. This is included as appendix 2

### **Housing Revenue Projections (Appendix 3)**

Key reviews financial position on an annual basis to inform its annual rent increase. This process and associated rent policy considerations are outlined in the appendix 3.

### **Asset Management Strategy (Appendix 4)**

This Strategy outlines Key's plans to maintain the quality of its housing stock. The Strategy also outlines our approach to engaging with tenants over the nature and quality of work and Key's approach to the themes of energy efficiency and sustainability.

### **Tenant Engagement Strategy (Appendix 5)**

This outlines the range of approaches adopted by Key in engaging with its tenants and has a particular focus on communication and gauging level of tenant satisfaction with Key's housing and maintenance services.

### **Performance Management Framework (Appendix 6)**

This outlines the range of reporting mechanisms in place to Committee, as management information and in reporting performance to tenants.