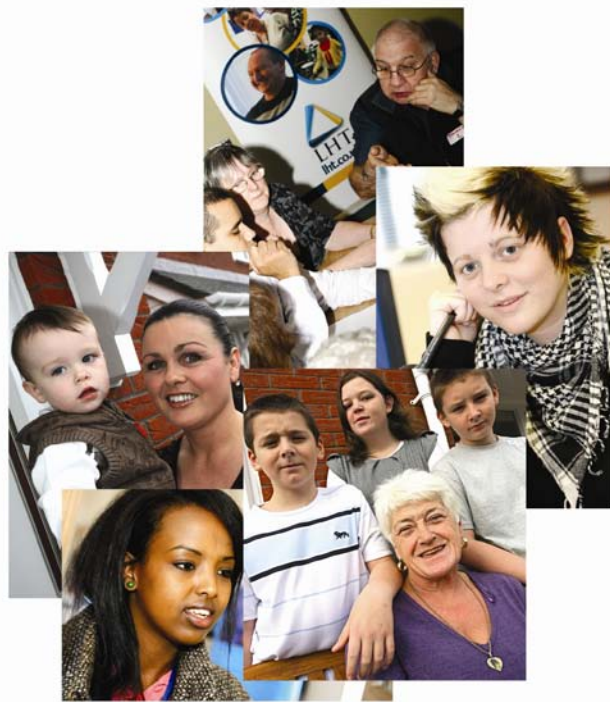


LIVERPOOL HOUSING TRUST

Business Plan 2009-14



Part of the Vicinity Group

LIVERPOOL HOUSING TRUST

Contents

- 1 Chair's Introduction
- 2 About Liverpool Housing Trust
- 3 Our Vision and Values
- 4 Delivering the Vision through LHT's Key Business Priorities
- 5 National and Regional Context
- 6 Operational Environment
- 7 Key Risks
- 8 Service Standards and Performance
- 9 Key Business Priorities, Objectives and Targets:
 - Stock
 - Services
 - Neighbourhood
 - Investment/Future growth
 - Financial Viability

Appendices:

- i Golden thread – overview of Performance Management Framework
- ii Golden thread – detail of Performance Management Framework
- iii Summary Plan (links to Vicinity Board)

Chair's Introduction

2008/9 has been an exciting and rewarding year for LHT, despite the challenges faced by the economic downturn. We are proud of our track record of delivering customer focused services and want to ensure that we continue to improve year on year.

Notable achievements for LHT have been the Customer Services Excellence Award which is awarded to companies offering the highest standard of customer services and our Customer Service Centre winning Call Centre of the Year 2008 (50 seat and under category) at the annual Call NorthWest Awards .

I said in my introduction to last year's Business Plan that Rodney Housing Association joining LHT in 2007 would help make us a stronger business. This has continued to be realised during 2008/9 when Rodney's Board of Management joined LHT's to enhance and streamline overall governance of the organisation.

The credit crunch has had and will continue to have an impact on our business. LHT is financially strong and performs well in the sector. Notwithstanding this a more prudent and cautious approach is necessary in these times of market volatility, increased risk associated with shared ownership and new development, and an increasing cost to borrowing. LHT is proud of its track record of being a financially high performing association and will ensure that the steps it takes will protect this position for the benefit of sustaining and improving services to customers and business longevity.

At the end of 2008 the Housing Corporation was disbanded and a new agency called the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) took on the role of regulation of landlords on behalf of tenants. Acting for tenants and their interests our work will be subjected to a new form of scrutiny which we welcome.

Due to our strong track record in involving and engaging with residents LHT was delighted to have been selected the Tenants Services Authority as one of the trailblazer landlords leading on consultation with residents.

The year was rounded off by excellent results from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which shows 86% of tenants are satisfied with our services over the last two years. This shows a further improvement compared to the previous survey and means that we retain our position of top quartile performance.

As Chair of LHTs Board I also sit on the Board of our parent organisation, Vicinity. LHT recognises the benefits it derives from being part of the group, seeks to support other subsidiaries within the group, and overall provides a significant contribution to the strength and development of Vicinity as an organisation.

LHT is proud of its achievements, continued commitment to customers, and excellent staff who deliver these services. We will continue to work hard to deliver high quality services, be transparent and accountable to our customers, take appropriate actions to mitigate major risk, understand our environment and take up new opportunities that benefit our customers and strengthen our business.

Andrew Thompson Smith

Chair

Liverpool Housing Trust

[About Liverpool Housing Trust](#)

LHT has, since 1965, been working in Liverpool and subsequently across Merseyside meeting housing need by investing in homes, neighbourhoods and communities. During this time we have seen our stock numbers grow to just under 10,000 units and extended the range and nature of our homes, and our activities. In April 2007 Rodney Housing Association, managing c.1,100 in the Merseyside area, joined LHT.

Stock figures for March 2008 (source: RSR 07/08):

General needs homes for rent	7997
Supported units / bedspaces / housing for older people	1312
Shared Ownership homes	311
Total	9620

LHT is a registered housing association (LH0250) and a charitable member of the Industrial and Provident Society. Since 2002 we have been a subsidiary within the Vicinity Housing Group and buy in a range of services from the Group such as ICT, Human resources and Business Assurance. Full details of our group structure can be found in the Vicinity Group's Corporate Plan.

Our Board of Management consists of four tenant members, seven independent members and two executive members. During 2008/9 the Boards of LHT and Rodney merged to strengthen overall governance.

LHT directly employs 262 staff across the functional areas of Housing and Neighbourhood Management, Asset Management, Housing and Support, Regeneration, Development, Finance, Planning and Strategy. We are based in our head office in Liverpool City Centre and have a further office in the City Centre where our Rodney division staff are based. We also have offices in North Liverpool, South Sefton and Runcorn.

Our Vision and Values

LHT's *Vision* is: To be a quality housing provider, making a positive difference to the communities we work in by looking beyond housing to meet the wider needs of all our customers

Value: LHT values reflect our commitment to ensure our customers choose us because we are a quality driven organisation with an established reputation for success. To achieve this aim we will endeavour at all times to:

- Provide excellent core housing services
- Listen, involve, and deliver, on needs
- Invest responsibly, delivering best value
- Be professional, fair, open, and honest
- Make ourselves visible and approachable
- Improve our performance through innovative strategies
- Provide equal opportunities for our diverse mix of customers and staff

Delivering the Vision through LHT's Key Business Priorities

The route to delivering our vision has to be clear and meaningful to our staff, tenants, other customers and partners. To help us achieve this we have distilled our vision down into five Key Business Priorities:

- **Stock** Ensure a sustainable well-balanced portfolio of stock that meets the needs and aspirations of our customers
- **Services** Provide and encourage the highest possible quality of services
- **Neighbourhoods** Make our neighbourhoods places where people want to stay and choose to live
- **Investment/Future Growth** Grow and strengthen the business in a positive way contributing to neighbourhood sustainability and improvements in the range of services and products we offer
- **Financial Viability** Ensure that we have recourse to adequate financial resources to meet current and future business commitments

These are LHT's fundamental priorities and everything we do links back to these priorities and therefore to delivering on our vision.

National and Regional Context

The last couple of years have been a time of significant change and challenge for the social housing sector. 2008/09 started with a reasonably new Prime Minister putting a positive focus on housing issues, a commitment to increase the supply of new homes, and proposals to reform aspects of the social and private housing sectors.

The credit crunch with the resultant impact on the economic downturn, financial markets, development opportunities, and the rented and private housing markets has and will have a significant impact on RSLs.

The dissolution of the Housing Corporation to be replaced with the Tenant Services Authority (new independent tenant focussed regulator) and the Homes and Communities Agency (a national role as investment vehicle for affordable housing and regeneration) will bring in a new regulatory framework and standards for service delivery and development during 2009/10.

During 2009/10 RSLs will therefore be operating in an environment where they are not only facing the challenges that they had anticipated, such as regulatory change through reform, but in addition a whole range of new, complex and high risk financial challenges.

Operational Environment

LHT owns stock across Merseyside, the majority of which is located in Liverpool and Runcorn with a significant proportion of our Liverpool stock situated within the city's Housing Market Renewal (HMR) boundary. In addition LHT is one of three Housing Management Contractors for Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH) managing c. 7,000 units.

The location and nature of the stock we own and manage will continue to present us with challenges and opportunities over the next few years. In addition the national context outlined above will require us to be more prudent to ensure we maintain our financial strength for the longevity of our business. These challenges and opportunities can be summarised as:

- Delivering our Decent Homes obligations by 2010 and investing in a Decent Homes plus standard
- Assisting in delivering sustainable regeneration in partnership with Liverpool City Council

- LHT’s responsibilities as one of three Housing Management Contractors (HMCs) to provide services on behalf of LMH
- Ongoing emphasis on efficiency and the need to introduce even more systematic approaches to securing continuous improvement and delivering value for money
- Demonstrating to the Tenant Services Authority our robust approach to service delivery and how we are transparent and accountable to customers
- LHT’s revised approach to Investment and Future Growth, contributing to the longer term sustainability and balance of our portfolio of stock particularly in light of the current economic downturn and impact on housing markets
- Impact on the Business Plan of the rent increase formula in light of RPI predictions

Key Risks

The key risks / mitigating actions for 2009/10 have not yet been agreed. A report will be submitted to Board in April 2009 to agree the Risk Map for 2009/10.

A proposed list of risks is set out below:

Stock:

- Condition of housing assets worse than expected (including failure to meet Decent Homes Standard)
- Breach of landlord’s duties for Health and Safety management

Services:

- Failure to achieve /demonstrate continuous improvement and service excellence consistently

Neighbourhoods:

- Collapse in the sustainability of neighbourhoods

Investment/Future Growth:

- Overambitious development and investment programme

Financial Viability:

- Insufficiently robust approach to financial monitoring, control and planning (in context of increasingly adverse economic circumstances)
- Rental Income receivable less than expected

Service Standards and Performance

We have a strong track record of improving performance and tenant satisfaction levels. The tables below provide direction of travel and a benchmark for our performance and tenant satisfaction results.

Performance	2009/10 Target Quartile	2009/10 Target Result	2008/09 Forecast	2007/08 Actual	2006/07 Actual
-------------	-------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------

Stock meeting the decent homes standard	1	100%	96%	94.2%	84.1%
Average SAP rating of general need homes (energy efficiency rating)	1	70	68*	75.6	63
Routine repairs completed within target time	1	99.5%	99.4%	99.3%	99.8%
*Rent lost on empty homes	tbc	tbc	3.2%	3.2%	3.5%
*Average days taken to relet homes	1	20	21	19	21
*Rent arrears of current tenants	3	5.3%	5.9%	6.5%	6.8%

Quartile positions measured from Housing Corporation 2008 data
tbc = to be confirmed

Tenant Survey Results	2008 Quartile	Trend	Nov 2008 Survey	Jan 2007 Survey
Taking everything into account how satisfied are you with the overall service provided by LHT?	1		86%	85%
How satisfied are you that your views are taken into account?*	1		75%	45%
How satisfied are you with the way landlord deals with repairs and maintenance	2 nd		80%	79%
How satisfied are with your accommodation	1		84%	83%
How satisfied are with the area / neighbourhood as a place to live in	n/a		79%	72%
Do you think the rent you pay represents value for money?	n/a		77%	71%

These results demonstrate our commitment to *be a quality housing provider, making a positive difference to the communities we work in by looking beyond housing to meet the wider needs of all our customers*

Key Business Priorities, Objectives and Targets

Our Key Business Priorities are supported by a range of strategies. Each strategy has an overall aim, objectives for where we want to be in five years and annual targets which set out what we will achieve during 2009/10.

Below is a list of the Key Business Priorities and the strategies they link to. (cross cutting strategies highlighted in italics)

- Stock : Asset Management

- Services: Anti-Social Behaviour; Income Management; Supporting Vulnerable Tenants; Homelessness, *Customer Access; Continuous Improvement Equality and Diversity, Resident Involvement*
- Neighbourhoods: Neighbourhood Regeneration, Financial Inclusion, Environmental Sustainability
- Investment/Future Growth: Development
- Financial Viability: *Value for Money*

Stock: To ensure a sustainable well-balanced portfolio of stock that meets the needs and aspirations of our customers

Our key focus is on achieving the Decent Homes Standard for all our properties. We have made real progress towards achieving the Standard moving from a Decent Homes failure rate of 27% in 2004/5 to just over 5% in 2008/9. We are confident that we will achieve the Decent Homes standard within the Government's timescale of April 2010 and this is reflected in one of our Annual Business Plan targets.

Residents remain at the heart of our Asset Management Service and we have strengthened our approach further through our Asset Management Panel.

We have continued to build on successful initiatives such as 2nd Generation partnering (maximising efficiencies through the supply chain) and worked with our contractors to develop this. We held our 2nd

contractors conference during 2008 and this allowed us to share good practice and highlights the priorities around improving services and working efficiently.

Five Year Objectives (2009 – 2014)

Our Asset Management Strategy will ensure we:

- We meet the Decent Homes Standard by April 2010, maintaining decency and our stock in a good state of repair, comply with statutory and regulatory requirements, and good practice
- Contribute positively to neighbourhood sustainability by targeting investment in existing stock and influencing the acquisition / development of new properties that are complementary to LHTs existing portfolio.
- Use resources effectively to maximise the impact on stock investment, work in partnership and procure products and services effectively to deliver greater value from our investment

What we will do in 2009/10 (Annual Targets)

- All homes will meet Decent Homes Standards
- Publish revised set of service standards
- Report on improvements made to service using customer profiling information
- Nominate a Board Champion

Services: To provide and encourage the highest possible quality of services

During 2008/9 LHT carried out its biennial Tenant Satisfaction Survey. The results demonstrate high levels of satisfaction from service users and provide us with valuable feedback. This information will be used alongside our customer profile to shape and improve services further during 2009/10.

LHT was recently selected, due to its track record of commitment to tenant involvement, as a trailblazer landlord leading in our area for the Tenant Services Authority massive consultation programme with tenants (the National Conversation). Feedback from residents will be used by LHT to ensure that we continually strive to improve standards of service across all areas of the business.

Whilst LHT acknowledges that its satisfaction results are very positive it recognises that there are opportunities to further improve services and as such is committed to aspiring to deliver the highest quality of service, comparing its services and learning from other providers, and using its resources effectively to deliver higher outputs.

Five Year Objectives (2009 – 2014)

Our Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy will ensure we:

- Reduce incidences of Anti-Social Behaviour through a combination of prevention, early intervention, support for victims, and robust enforcement action
- Work in partnership with other agencies to create neighbourhoods where tenants can live without fear

Our Income Management Strategy will ensure we:

- Set rents and service charges in accordance with good practice, take steps to recover rent arrears and other debts in a timely and transparent manner that allows for the provision of debt and welfare benefit advice

Our Supporting Vulnerable Tenants Strategy will ensure we:

- Work in partnership to support vulnerable tenants to maintain their tenancies and live independently

Our Homelessness Strategy will ensure we:

- Work with partners, and Local Authorities in particular, to prevent homelessness occurring, and where homelessness does occur move people into suitable accommodation offering choice and support to sustain tenancies

What we will do in 2009/10 (Annual Targets)

Anti-Social Behaviour

- Review our approach to community involvement and youth diversionary work to ensure we achieve value for money
- Investigate further the reasons for tenants feeling that this service needs improving

Income Management Strategy

- Review our approach to Income Management to ensure value for money

Supporting Vulnerable Tenants:

- Implement improved referral process for Tenancy Support Service
- Publish revised service standards for Aids and Adaptations

Homelessness:

- Develop a Service level Agreement with Liverpool City Council's Housing Options Team
- Agree a target for homeless applications accepted with Liverpool City Council

Cross cutting Service Strategies

Five Year Objectives (2009 – 2014)

Our Customer Access Strategy will ensure we:

- Deliver services that are easy to access with clear standards in place and provide information about those services that is easy to understand

Our Continuous Improvement Strategy will ensure we:

- Deliver services that improve year on year, measure the effectiveness of our approach and use our resources effectively to maximise opportunities to improve

Our Equality and Diversity Strategy will ensure we:

- Shape services around the needs of customers, staff and stakeholders across the communities in which we work and that all services are accessible, and discrimination and barriers to inclusion are pro-actively removed

Our Resident Involvement Strategy will ensure we:

- Use a variety of methods to engage with customers to obtain a wide and representative views ensuring customers obtain feedback on the impact and effectiveness of their involvement

What we will do in 2009/10 (Annual Targets)

Customer Access:

- Review LHT service standards, ensuring we consult, monitor, and publicise all standards and outcomes

Continuous Improvement:

- Produce an Annual Performance Report to tenants
- Feedback to tenants on results and impact of Tenant Satisfaction Survey and provide comparisons with other Associations

Equality and Diversity:

- Set 2009/10 target and report on progress for Customer Profiling Information
- Introduce revised Board reports on access and satisfaction

Resident Involvement:

- Produce our Resident involvement Statement
- Undertake our Impact Assessments

Neighbourhoods: To make our neighbourhoods places where people want to stay and choose to live

LHT has advocated a neighbourhood approach for some time. This has been crucial to the improvements we have made as much of our stock, in Liverpool in particular, is dispersed in neighbourhoods where there are different tenure, landlords and other stakeholders. Focusing on neighbourhoods and using tools such as neighbourhood tracking has allowed us to understand more about our key neighbourhoods and focus our resources. We intend to build on this approach next year by reviewing our approach to Neighbourhood Investment (tracking) to maximise the impact of how, what and where we invest. Evidence of the success of our approach is clear in neighbourhoods such as Lodge Lane, Liverpool 8, Linacre, Sefton, and Castlefields, Runcorn.

We have also had considerable success in attracting external funding into Neighbourhoods to deliver enhanced services for residents, attracting £440,000 of external funding during 2008/9/

Five Year Objectives (2009 – 2014)

Our Neighbourhood Regeneration Strategy will ensure we:

- Have robust plans and delivery mechanisms in place that support clear and transparent

investment decisions in neighbourhoods

- Work effectively engaging with communities and partners to make a positive difference in neighbourhoods

Our Financial Inclusion Strategy will ensure we:

- Work in partnership to support vulnerable people in particular to enable them to maximise income and manage debt by increasing access to welfare benefit, debt advice and financial services

Our Environmental Strategy will ensure we:

- Make a consistent and concerted contribution to reducing carbon emissions, thereby saving resources and reducing waste in our stock, our offices, and by raising staff and customer awareness

What we will do in 2009/10 (Annual Targets)

Neighbourhood Regeneration

- Introduce a revised and improved Neighbourhood Tracking (Investment??) planning process
- Maintain current levels of external funding

Financial Inclusion

- Carry out neighbourhood level financial exclusion surveys in 3 priority neighbourhoods, identified through Neighbourhood Tracking
- Deliver financial capability training targeted at Housing Officers working in priority neighbourhoods

Environmental Sustainability

- Achieve ISO14001 (Environmental Management System) accreditation for Asset Management

Investment/Future Growth: To grow and strengthen the business in a positive way contributing to neighbourhood sustainability and improvements in the range of services and products we offer

2008/9 was a challenging and volatile period for development and developers. The economic downturn impacted on land values, market stagnation and reduced access to borrowing for mortgages. This in turn meant that property developers/building contractors were severely constrained by market conditions and brought increasing levels of uncertainty.

During 2008/9 we have been prudent in our approach to developing properties for sale/shared ownership. We have regularly appraised all schemes in development and taken actions to mitigate risks as deemed reasonable.

In addition to growth through stock we have also seen growth through service delivery. This has been evident in the Housing and Support Team who have been successful in winning a tender to deliver services to Somali women with mental health problems. This was a new area of work for LHT and enabled us to diversify and respond to a broader neighbourhood aim around sustainability and health and well being.

Five Year Objectives (2009 – 2014)

Our Development Strategy will ensure we:

- Develop affordable homes for rent, shared equity, and sale in key locations that will help regenerate neighbourhoods by creating sustainable and well balanced communities
- Achieve high quality build standards within the available resources
- Specify the financial criteria for new developments which will not prejudice the long term viability of LHT

What we will do in 2009/10 (Annual Targets)

- Achieve forecast commitment of 213 new homes for 2009/10
- Agree customer choices for new build homes through a Tenant Development Panel
- Carry out a satisfaction survey for tenants who have moved into homes that are new build, refurbished or have been purchased by LHT

Financial Viability: To ensure that we have recourse to adequate financial resources to meet current and future business commitments.

LHT has a track record of strong financial performance and whilst this is forecast to continue the current economic climate brings new challenges for the foreseeable future.

During the last 12 months LHT has carried out a review of its funding requirements, regularly appraised its forecasted income from sales and carried out a Financial Viability review. These have been prudent and timely measures aimed at strengthening our position further in the current climate.

A full report on Financial Viability is set out in the next section of this Business Plan.

Five Year Objectives (2009 – 2014)

Our Value for Money Strategy will ensure we:

- Strengthen the role of Board, and effective measurement, comparisons, and reporting of VFM throughout the business
- Ensure resources are focused on priority areas and savings used to further improve front line services
- Procure goods and services at the optimum mix of price, quantity and quality using modern procurement methods

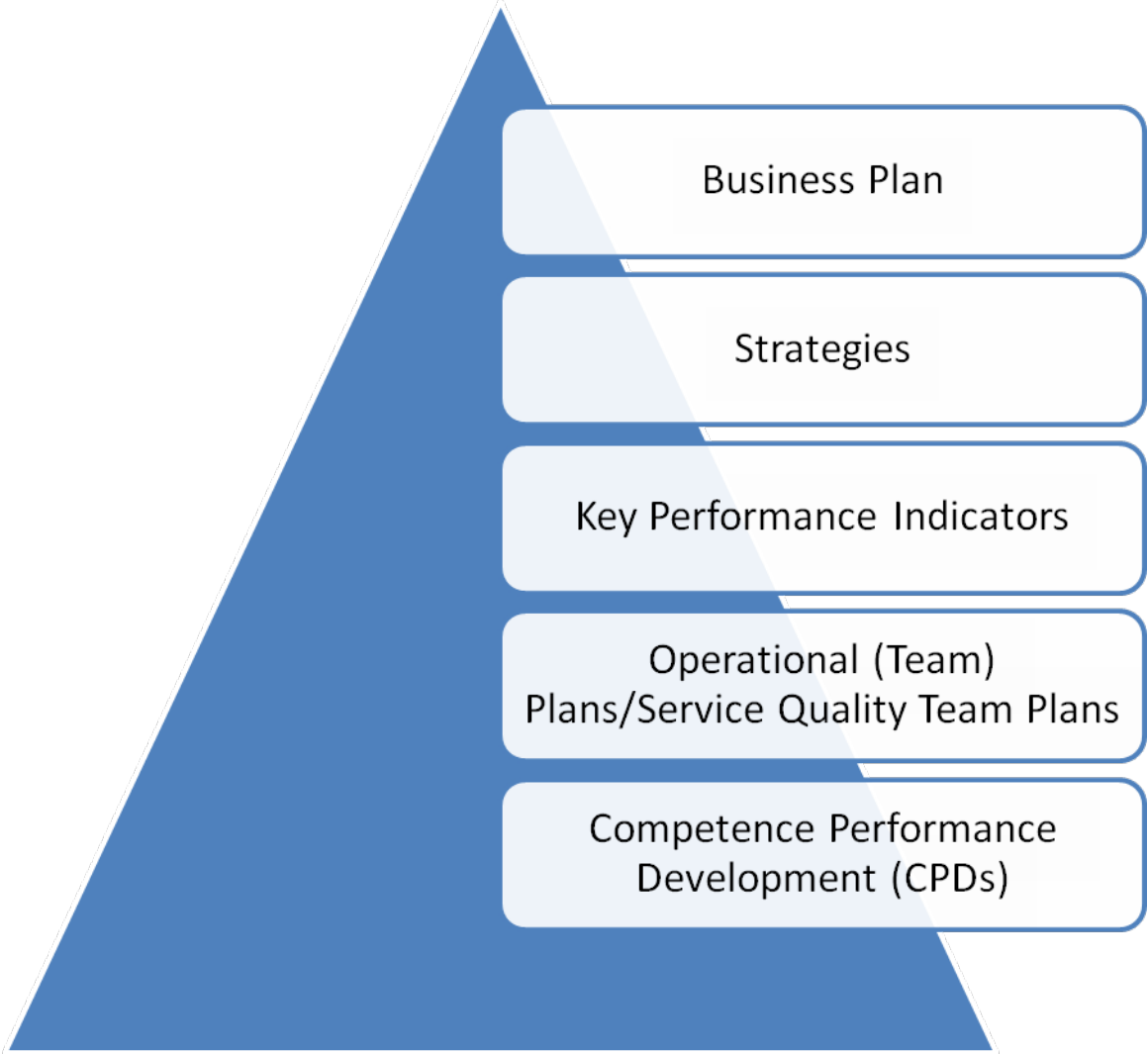
What we will do in 2009/10 (Annual Targets)

- Introduce a Board Champion for Value for Money
- Complete an annual review and challenge of our costs and performance, including position statements, and report outcomes to Board
- Include VFM impact statements in all SMT and Board reports
- Complete a consultation exercise with customers to determine priorities for reinvestment of savings to shape services

App i (Bus Plan)

LIVERPOOL HOUSING TRUST

Performance Management Framework (February 2009)



LIVERPOOL HOUSING TRUST
Performance Management Framework (February 2009)
Business Plan – CPDs (main elements)

Business Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • Key Business Priorities • Strategic Themes / Aim • Annual Business Plan Targets
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Aim • 5 Year Objectives • Annual Strategic Targets
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Performance Indicators • Targets • Historical trend data • Benchmarking data
Operational (Team) Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational Actions linked to Strategic Annual Targets • Actions that are specific to the team and delivery of day to day services • Actions linked to achieving targets for KPIs
Service Quality Team Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New initiatives • Recommendations as a result of mock inspection or service review • Self assessment against KLOEs • Policy / Procedure reviews (see Service Improvement Procedure for further information)
Competence and performance Development (CPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals Action Plan