



Making a Difference

Looking Ahead

Corporate Plan
2014 - 2017



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Chair's message



Following transfer in 2011 NPT Homes committed to delivering the promises made to tenants in the Offer Document. One hundred and eighteen Offer Document promises were made to our residents, over 80% of them have been met and we are well on our way to deliver the remainder. While we have made excellent progress in delivering those promises and will continue to do so, it is now time to set out our aspirations to move forward as your organisation over the next three years. This is known as our Corporate Plan.

The Plan identifies the kind of organisation we want to be.

It outlines the contribution that NPT Homes can make to building thriving communities and sets out the top priorities that NPT Homes will focus on over the next three years. These are referred to as our strategic objectives.

NPT Homes' tenants, members, Board members, staff and other partners developed the priorities set out in this plan. The start of this exercise, known as the 'Making a Difference' project, involved the development of a set of local outcomes which describe the desired impact of our activities on tenants and other stakeholders. This was followed by an assessment of performance against these outcomes which has given us a real flavour of how far we have come to date.

This information was used initially by staff at workshops to determine our future priorities and then by the Executive Team and the Board to set our strategic direction over the next three years. Further work was then carried out to determine how we can implement the strategic priorities at an operational level through the delivery of the remaining Offer Document promises, top 10 corporate projects and other important operational activities. References in this plan made to the offer document promises and top 10 projects will be linked to the following respective icons.



By listening and working together with all our residents, staff and partners we will continue to ensure that we make a difference to our homes and communities.

Roger Williams

Chair of the Board, NPT Homes

A word from the Chief Executive

NPT Homes is one of the leading providers of social housing in Wales.

Playing our part in meeting the demand for good quality affordable homes is one of the most visible signs of our success. The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme has created large scale investment and regeneration across the Neath Port Talbot Borough, improving the quality of our homes and communities.



The new kitchens, bathrooms, central heating and other improvements, such as cladding to improve energy efficiency of the homes we own, are only part of this continuous development and success.

We have also ensured tenants are at the heart of our decision making. A third of our Board is made up of tenants while our members and the wider community are encouraged to get involved and have their say in the way that we deliver and improve our services. Their opinions have been used to shape this plan.

Our first Corporate Plan stands on our strong platform of delivery, achievement and innovation. Moving forward we know we need to make sure that the foundations we have in place as an organisation are strong. This is in order to address key risks to the organisation including:

- The uncertain economic outlook, creating a climate of continued austerity;
- Welfare Reform – particularly around managing the impact of direct payments and the 'bedroom tax'; and
- Changes in regulation with a stronger focus on risk as well as financial viability and governance, including particular emphasis on greater transparency and management of cost.

Importantly, the plan recognises the need to deliver the remaining promises we made to tenants in the Offer Document. It also sets out a range of top priority projects and activities which will make the best use of our resources, in particular the skills and knowledge of our staff, to deliver services that our tenants want.

Linda Whittaker

Chief Executive, NPT Homes


About us

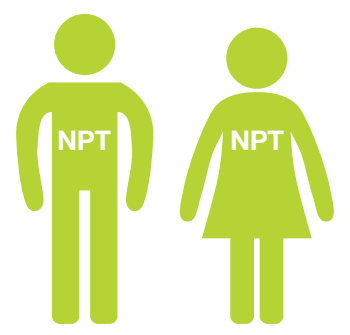
Established in March 2011, NPT Homes took over the ownership and management of homes from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council under a large-scale voluntary stock transfer (LSVT). As the second largest registered social landlord in Wales we own and manage 9,181 homes which include 507 units of sheltered accommodation.


We are a not-for-profit industrial and provident society based on the community housing mutual model which gives us charitable status and are regulated by the Welsh Government (WG).


Key facts as at March 2014


2011
Established in 2011 as part of a large-scale voluntary stock transfer (LSVT)


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government
Regulated by the Welsh Government (WG)


Number of employees – 471


Own and manage 9,181 homes including 604 leasehold properties plus 17 shops and 787 garages


Current loan facility £135m


Annual turnover £40m

Key Achievements as at March 2014

- 81% of the 118 promises made to tenants in the Offer Document have been achieved, 18% are in progress and only 1% are yet to commence;
- We are on track to reach our target of bringing 100% of our homes up to WHQS by 2017. Tenant satisfaction with the quality of work so far is high with 97% of tenants rating the improvements as good or very good;
- We have forged partnerships with schools, the police and other local agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour. During the last year, we have successfully obtained four anti-social behaviour injunctions to prevent incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB);
- We received our first allocation of Social Housing Grant in 2013 to build 11 new two bedroom houses and four new one bedroom flats on the site of Old Furnace House, a vacant sheltered scheme in Melin, Neath;
- We have introduced a comprehensive range of support services for our tenants, some delivered directly and some through working in partnership with other local statutory and voluntary agencies. In particular our Financial Inclusion Team helped 487 tenants claim over £1.6m in unclaimed benefits during 2013/14;
- We have reviewed key services including repairs, the application system, voids, re-lets and our call centre to ensure that we are delivering “what matters” to our tenants;
- For every £1.00 spent on the WHQS programme we have created a further £1.99 in the local economy; and
- Since transfer, 123 additional jobs have been created by NPT Homes. Additional training and work placements opportunities have also been created. The recently awarded external wall insulation framework agreement for £20m over three years includes social benefit clauses to encourage local employment training and sourcing of materials.



Welsh Housing Quality Standard kitchen

About Our People

Our success is largely due to the people that work for us. NPT Homes has 471 employees, all with different areas of expertise, knowledge and experience. The majority of staff transferred from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and since transfer they have worked hard to adapt to a new organisational culture, one that has improved the way that we engage with our customers effectively across all areas of the business.

We strive to attract, retain and develop high calibre, motivated staff to ensure that we are offering excellent standards of service to our customers. Working for NPT Homes offers excellent training and career prospects which is reflected in our low absence levels. For 2013/14, absence levels were 2.55% per full time employee compared to an average of 4.2% for the housing sector.



Investment and Regeneration Team staff member

Our Values – The way we work

We strongly believe that our values determine our behaviour. They affect and are reflected in how we deliver all of our activities. The values were identified by all staff at our first Annual Staff Conference in 2013. Since then a cross section of staff have developed a behaviours framework which describes what the values look like in practice.

Teamwork – working together by sharing information and supporting each other to achieve our goals.

Commitment – working with enthusiasm and dedication to deliver high quality services.

Honesty – being truthful, clear and transparent.

Respect – treating others as you expect to be treated yourself.

Professionalism – making a positive impression through skills, behaviours and appearance.

About Our Customers and Communities

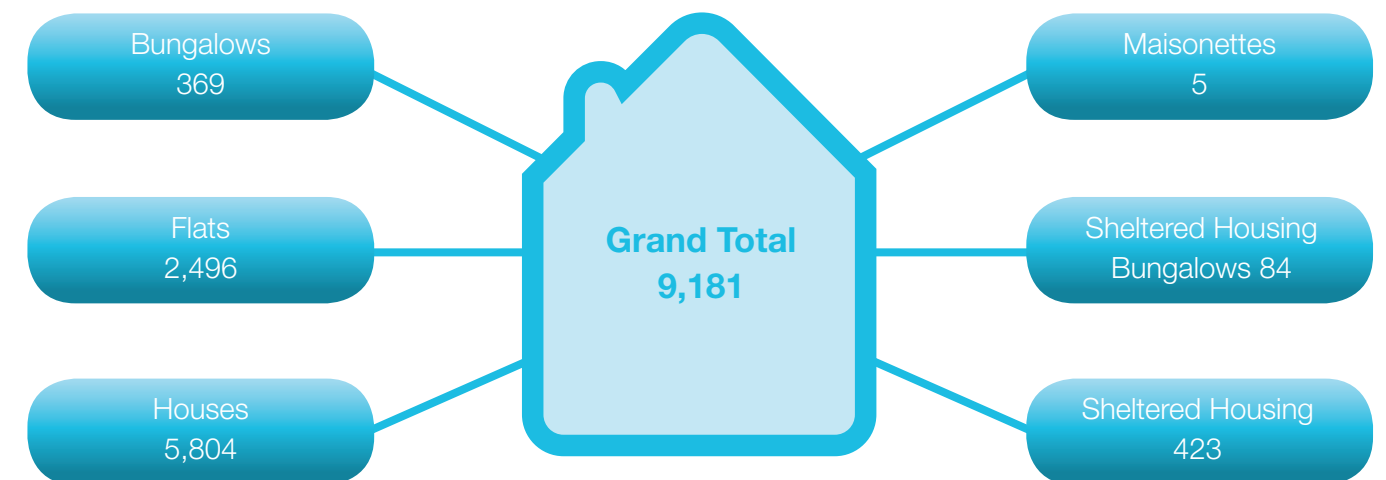
NPT Homes operates in a very challenging environment:

- 17 of the 190 most deprived communities in Wales are in Neath Port Talbot;
- 52 Communities First cluster areas have been specifically set up to tackle poverty in the most deprived communities in Wales of which 4 are in Neath Port Talbot;
- Unemployment remains above both the regional and national average - 25% of residents in the Borough of working age (16-64) claim unemployment benefits compared to the Wales average of 14.7%;
- 76% of our tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit; and
- The population of the Borough is projected to increase by 8,900 (6.5%) by mid-2023 and the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to grow by 17% between 2006 and 2031.

In order to address the significant employment issues within Neath Port Talbot we have committed to create training, work and employment opportunities for our residents. We also provide money and budget advice and have a dedicated team to support the financial inclusion agenda.

About our Properties

The table below shows the profile of our 9,181 properties in our communities across the Borough.



Tenants at Our Heart

As a community housing mutual organisation, it is written in our Rules to ensure that our members (including tenants, leaseholders, local business and members of the community) have a formal role in the governance and decision making of the organisation. Members of the organisation have the power to scrutinise, challenge and effect change to the organisation. They can choose how involved they want to be and can increase or decrease their level of involvement according to their needs – whether that be as one of four tenant board members; by applying to join the Membership Committee; through involvement in working groups; by joining a local group; or simply by commenting on our services or participating in surveys and consultations.

The desired impact of our work on our Tenants and Communities (Local Outcomes)

At the start of the corporate planning process staff, tenants, board members, leaseholders and community partners worked together to develop a set of local outcomes. These describe the desired impact of our work on our tenants and other stakeholders.

Through evaluating existing data and carrying out new research by speaking to stakeholders we analysed how we are currently performing against each outcome, what we are doing well and what we need to improve.

The project findings have given us a real flavour of how far we have come and have helped us shape our vision and strategic objectives.

To ensure that our local outcomes are completely embedded in our day-to-day activities, we have aligned them with the relevant strategic objectives in this plan and in the operational plans that have been developed by our teams to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. This ensures that there is a ‘golden thread’ running through the organisation ensuring that we all work towards achieving the outcomes that are important to tenants and key stakeholders.

Further information is available on our website www.npthomes.co.uk



Member of the Tenant Liaison Team with tenants

Local Outcomes

Inside and outside our homes – we provide desirable homes and estates that people want to live in.

Partnerships – we have a strong, open, transparent partnerships with all relevant stakeholders for the benefit of the community.

Health – we provide modern, up-to-date homes and vibrant communities that ensure tenants are supported to enjoy the best attainable level of physical and mental health.

Secure homes and estates – tenants feel safe and secure living in well-managed environments.

Sustain tenancies/independent living – we help tenants stay in the homes they need in a place that they want to live by providing advice, support and access to services.

Economic stability – we are a financially sound and viable business that supports the financial well-being of our tenants and communities.

Communication – tenants are better able to access appropriate services based on clear information.

Getting involved – tenants, members and residents experience enhanced skills, confidence and active citizenship through engagement opportunities.

Governance – we make sure our purpose is clear and we achieve what we set out to do – knowing who does what and why.



How we Measure Our Success

We are committed to the continuous improvement of services and performance. We currently measure performance in the following ways:

- Offer Document Promises Tracker – progress monitored by Board and through NPTCBC’s Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee;
- Annual budgets – progress monitored through Board;
- Tenant satisfaction with our WHQS work – progress monitored through Board; and
- Key Performance Indicators – reported to Board throughout the year.

We are also in the process of developing a ‘balanced scorecard’, a cross-section of performance data that tracks progress against key strategic objectives and measures the overall ‘health’ of the organisation. This will be regularly reviewed by the Senior Management Team and reported formally to Board on a quarterly basis.

In addition, progress against this plan and Heads of Service’s Operational Plans will be monitored by Senior Management Team and reported to Board on a quarterly basis.

Further information on the Senior Management Team and our Board is available on pages 26 and 27.

How we Respond to Risks

In conjunction with measuring performance we are mindful of risks to our continued progress. Examples of risks include the uncertain economic outlook, Welfare Reform and changes to the way we are regulated. We have a robust risk management framework in place which is embedded across the organisation. Our approach to effective risk management is supported by strategic and operational risk registers, progress against which is reviewed and reported on a quarterly basis to ensure that they remain up-to-date. Our overall risk approach is monitored and directed through the Audit and Risk Committee which is committed to strengthening and continual improvement of our internal controls. Our approach to managing risk will be assessed by the Welsh Government as our Regulator.

Our Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives

The consultation process that informed this plan gave a clear mandate to empower staff to provide services that have a lasting positive impact on our homes and communities. This approach is captured in our vision and mission.

Making a Difference

Teamwork Honesty Professionalism Respect Commitment

Our vision sets out our long-term goal, where we want to be as an organisation in the future, and is described as ‘**Making a Difference**’. Our mission sets out ‘how’ we will achieve our vision.

Our Vision – *Our Long-Term Goal* – ‘**Making a Difference**’

Provide quality housing with a customer focus and create a working environment where employees work well together and are empowered to provide outstanding service. We see a future where NPT Homes is the choice for customers and those seeking employment.

Our Mission – *How We Get There* – ‘**See it, Sort it**’

We will continually work on understanding and meeting our customers’ needs with courtesy and respect. We have a customer focus but are commercially aware, challenge the norm and strive for development and growth across all aspects of the organisation.

Strategic Objectives – *Breaking Down our Vision*

We are committed to achieving our vision by delivering the following strategic objectives so that by 2017 we will:

- Be the landlord of choice for customers and the preferred employer for those seeking employment;
- Have a high performing workforce who challenge the norm and are empowered to provide outstanding services;
- Continually work to understand our customer needs and deliver services based on “What Matters”;
- Be commercially aware and strive for development and growth across all aspects of the organisation; and
- Ensure our business is strong and financially secure and our governance arrangements provide the highest level of assurance.

Achieving Our Plan

We have carried out detailed work to identify what each of the strategic objectives means to the business and what activities we will need to carry out at an operational level, either jointly through the delivery of the Top 10 projects or within our actual work teams, in order to deliver our local outcomes and ultimately our vision.

Landlord and employer of choice – *To be the landlord of choice for customers and the preferred employer for those seeking employment*

Landlord of Choice

Why is it important?

We believe that providing good quality, well maintained, affordable homes in areas people want to live in will ensure that current and future applicants choose to live with us instead of other social housing providers and private rented landlords in the area.

Links to local outcomes:

- We provide desirable homes and estates that people want to live in;
- Tenants feel safe and secure living in well-managed environments;
- We help tenants stay in the homes they need in a place that they want to live by providing advice, support and access to services; and
- We provide modern, up-to-date homes and vibrant communities that ensure tenants are supported to enjoy the best attainable level of physical and mental health.

How will we get there? We will:

- Complete WHQS work by 31st March 2017; ✓
- Implement the environmental works programme based on the detailed research carried out to establish the needs of our communities; ✓
- Continue to develop expertise and best practice in dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) by achieving ASB accreditation standards and continuing to work closely with the police on information sharing; ✓

- Undertake a service review of the current housing application and allocation process including furnished lets and re-shape the service based on “what matters” to tenants; 10
- Review the possibility of extending the operating hours for the day-to-day repairs service; ✓
- Continue the 30 year investment programme on disabled adaptations and review how Disabled Facilities Grants and Works of Adaptation will be delivered from April 2015 onwards; and ✓
- Finalise the review of works required to communal areas of blocks of flats and sheltered accommodation schemes. ✓

The indicators we could use to measure our success include:

- % of stock meeting WHQS;
- % overall satisfaction with the repairs service;
- Time for adaptations to be undertaken (number of days end to end);
- Time to re-let properties by category (number of days end to end); and
- % of our tenants who feel proud of the area they live in.



Our properties in Croeserw

Employer of Choice

Why is it important?

We need to ensure that we are perceived as a financially sound business that provides good job security, good terms and conditions of employment, a good working environment, competitive pay and good training and development opportunities. This will help us to attract and retain high calibre applicants who choose to work with us over other employers not just in the social housing sector.

Links to local outcomes:

- We are a financially sound and viable business that supports the financial well-being of our tenants and communities; and
- We make sure our purpose is clear and we achieve what we set out to do – knowing who does what and why.





Staff collect the Gold Corporate Health Standard Award for NPT Homes



Lisa Evans, Joy Kent
CEO of Chwarae Teg
and Ken Stakes Deputy
Minister for Skills and
Technology

How will we get there? We will:

- Gain the Investors in People Accreditation;
- Continue to deliver high quality training to staff including:
 - essential skills;
 - systems thinking approaches; and
 - customer care. 
- Review terms and conditions of employment and pensions; and 
- Implement the behaviours framework to identify whether staff are working in accordance with our values.

The indicators we could use to measure our success include:

- Total sickness absence as a % of total available days;
- % staff turnover;
- % of staff who are 'proud to tell others I work here'; and
- Number of applications per vacancy that meet the essential skills criteria.

High performing workforce – *To have a high performing workforce who challenge the norm and are empowered to provide outstanding services*

Why is it important?

If we are to continue to prosper we must develop our staff so that they have the right skills and tools to succeed and empower them to be innovative and to make decisions to improve services to tenants. Behaviour is fundamental to getting this right so staff must deliver services in accordance with our values.

Links to local outcomes:

- We make sure our purpose is clear and we achieve what we set out to do – knowing who does what and why.

How will we get there? We will:

- Communicate this plan so that staff understand the role they play in delivering the Vision;
- Continue to deliver high quality training to staff that meets their learning and development needs including essential skills, customer care, change management and multiskilling our tradespeople; 10
- Through our managers, help create a supportive environment to encourage individual staff decision making to deliver ‘What Matters’ to our customers; and
- Create an operating environment that enables our staff to use technology to work smarter, known as agile working. 10

The indicators we could use to measure our success include:

- Actual spend compared to budget on training:
 - Board;
 - Staff; and
 - Health and Safety Training.
- % of staff receiving annual appraisals; and
- % staff who feel that they are ‘Making a Difference’ in their role.

Delivering “What Matters” – *To continually work to understand our customer needs and deliver services based on “What Matters”*

Why is it important?

In order to develop a culture where staff place the customer at the heart of what we do we have to ask and listen to what is important to them and provide services based on their needs in the most efficient and cost effective way.

Links to local outcomes:

- We are a financially sound and viable business that supports the financial well-being of our tenants and communities;
- We provide desirable homes and estates that people want to live in;
- Tenants feel safe and secure living in well-managed environments;
- We help tenants stay in the homes they need in a place that they want to live by providing advice, support and access to services;
- We provide modern, up-to-date homes and vibrant communities that ensure tenants are supported to enjoy the best attainable level of physical and mental health;
- Tenants are better able to access appropriate services based on clear information;
- We have strong, open, transparent partnerships with all relevant stakeholders for the benefit of the community; and
- Tenants, members and residents experience enhanced skills, confidence and active citizenship through engagement opportunities.



Property and Contract Works Team member with a tenant

How will we get there?

We will undertake reviews of the way we manage:

- The impact of Welfare Reform and managing its effect on our arrears levels; 10
- Service charges for tenants and leaseholders, plus a review of financial services to leaseholders generally; 10
- Housing applications and allocations; and 10
- Sheltered accommodation schemes and bringing them up to Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). ✓ 10

We will base these service reviews on the following operating principles:

Our Operating Principles

Purpose – We will understand both the service purpose and what matters to our customers

Measures – We will understand our performance using both evidence and experience

Problems – We will solve the problems that get in the way of us doing the right thing

People – Our managers will:

- help create a supportive environment to encourage individual staff decision making and service redesign to deliver our purpose and ‘What Matters’ to our customers; and
- regularly spend time walking the system from the beginning to end of the process.

The indicators we could use to measure our success include:

- Total rent arrears owed by current and former tenants as % of total rent owed;
- Total amount of rent collected during the financial year from current and former tenants as a % of rent collectable;
- The time it takes from date of enquiry to date of being able to bid;
- % of new tenancies ending in less than 1 year; and
- Score out of 10 for the overall service, social activities and lifeline service in sheltered accommodation.



Roofing works to one of our properties

Innovation and Growth – *To be commercially aware and strive for development and growth across all aspects of the organisation*

Why is it important?

In order to continue to offer the range and level of services we provide to our customers we need to use innovative ways to get the best price and quality for the goods and services we procure. We also need to be able to respond quickly, professionally and commercially when opportunities are presented and look for opportunities to save and make money wherever possible. Any surplus made is re-invested into the organisation to benefit service users and the wider community.






Over time we will look to sell services and develop and grow into other geographical areas which will include property development. For this we will need a robust and targeted plan for future business growth.

Links to local outcomes:

- We have strong, open, transparent partnerships with all relevant stakeholders for the benefit of the community; and
- We are a financially sound and viable business that supports the financial well-being of tenants and communities.

How will we get there?

We will:

- Seek further funding opportunities to expand our asset base taking demand and costs into consideration; 
- Examine opportunities to generate income through the sale of services; 
- Implement a programme of environmental works using a resident led approach to define estate based priorities and neighbourhood enhancements; 
- Consider a new handyman/garden maintenance scheme during 2014/15; and 
- Examine opportunities and relevant funding streams to establish social enterprises affiliated to NPT Homes. 

The indicators we could use to measure our success include:

- Net increase in housing stock;
- Value of money savings made through service reviews and changes to procurement practices;
- Cash gains made as a result of the sale of services;
- Energy efficiency ratings; and
- Overall tenant satisfaction with environmental regeneration programme.



Signing the WHQS contracts - NPT Homes' Chief Executive and the Directors of our main contractors

A Strong Business – To ensure our business is strong and financially secure and our governance arrangements provide the highest level of assurance





Why is it important?

In a fast moving world, it is vital to keep the infrastructure of our business under review in order to provide assurance and confidence about our financial viability and strength to our customers and stakeholders.

Links to local outcomes:

- We are a financially sound and viable business that supports the financial well-being of our tenants and communities;
- Tenants are better able to access appropriate services based on clear information; and
- We make sure our purpose is clear and we achieve what we set out to do – knowing who does what and why.

How will we get there?

- Put in place systems to make sure that the data we hold on our service users and assets (land and property) is up to date and accurate; 
- Ensure that we listen to, accurately record and act on information provided through contact with our customers and stakeholders; 
- Integrate key areas of the business into our single IT system (QL); and 
- Develop a balanced set of performance indicators across the organisation for a range of audiences that can be benchmarked and will inform decision-making. 

The indicators we could use to measure our success include:

- Retain our ‘pass’ status in our annual Financial Viability Judgement; and
- Number of enquiries or complaints where the root cause relates to inaccurate records/information.

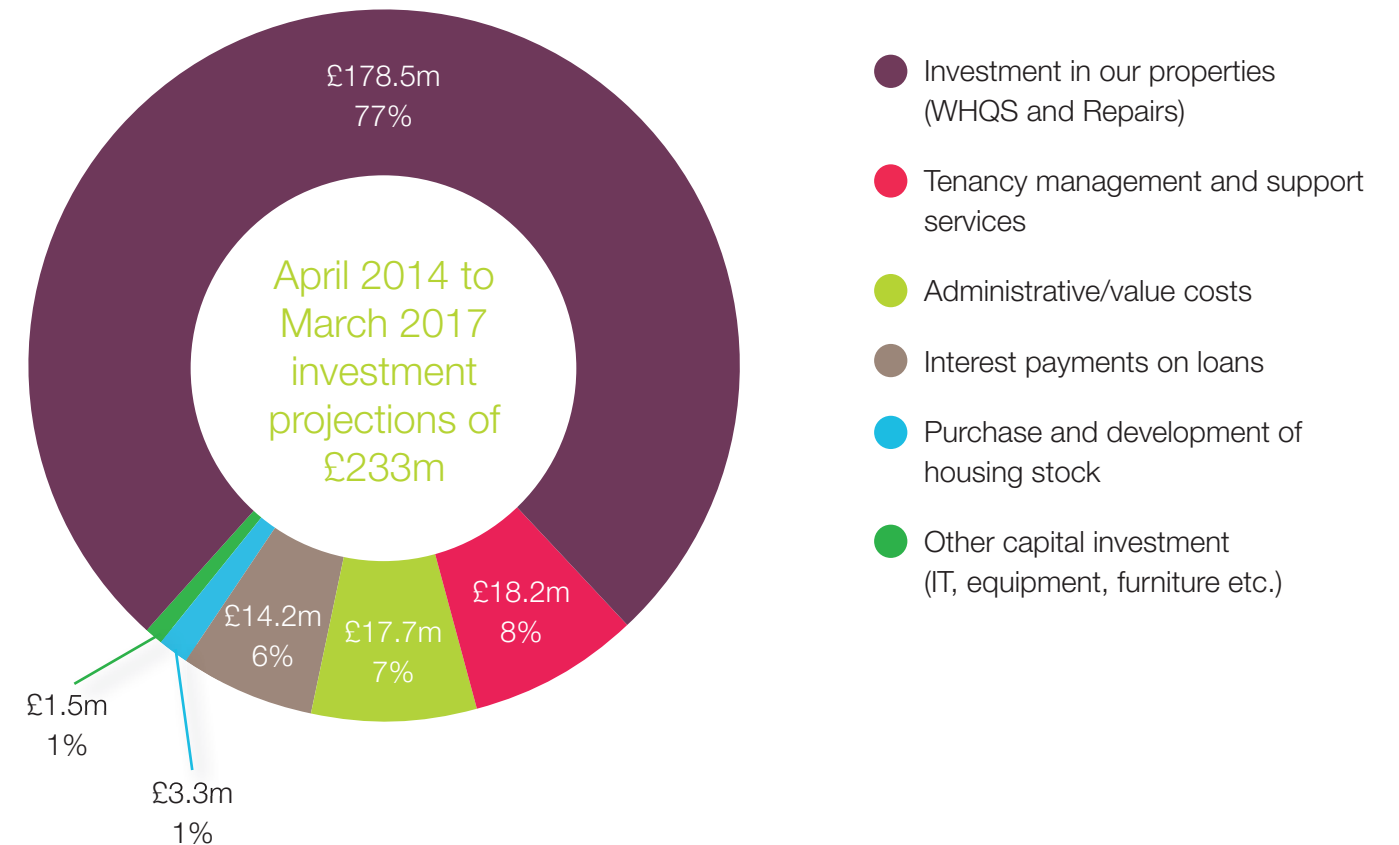
Financing Our Plan

It is important that we achieve our vision on a sound financial plan and strategic framework.

Over the next three years we will receive income of over £125m and we plan on investing £233m in to our properties, communities and services.

The cash shortfall of £108m will be met by bank loans, which are already in place. Our borrowings are set to peak in 2018 after completion of the WHQS major works programme and will be fully paid back by 2038.

We will invest the £233m in our properties, communities and services in the following way:



About Our Leadership Team

The delivery of our plan is led by the Executive Directors who form the NPT Homes Senior Management Team.



Linda Whittaker
Chief Executive



Steve Tucker
Director of Assets



John Andrew
Director of Finance and
Corporate Services



Claire Maimone
Director of Housing and
Regeneration

The Senior Management Team is supported by Heads of Service who will work together to develop plans to deliver the top 10 projects and each develop annual 'operational plans' with their teams. Operational plans are key in establishing the 'golden thread' from this plan to the day-to-day activities of teams. They outline the major actions and developments within each financial year, all of which are linked to a strategic objective. Operational plans are developed at the same time as departmental budget proposals, ensuring that resource implications are identified and considered as part of the budget setting process.

About the Board

The strategic direction of the organisation set out in this plan has been approved by the Board. The Board will be responsible for monitoring the plan and achieving its implementation over the next three years.



Roger Williams
Chair – Tenant Board Member



Nikki Buttland
Tenant Board Member



Ellen Greed
Tenant Board Member



Hilary Griffiths
Tenant Co-optee



Ted Latham
Vice Chair – Council Nominee



John Rogers
Council Nominee



Rosalyn Davies
Council Nominee



Alan Lockyer
Council Nominee



Harry Lloyd
Independent Board Member



Brian Davis
Independent Board Member



Steve Mundy
Independent Board Member

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NPT Homes Limited is a charitable Industrial and Provident Society (31041R)

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