Dimensions
there for the people we support

Dimensions Value for Money Statement 2014

1. Introduction

Dimensions is a specialist not-for-profit provider of a wide range of services for people with learning disabilities and people who experience autism. We have a five year corporate strategy with five key strategic aims:

- **Personalisation**: To deliver 'just enough support' that reflects the aspirations of every person we support.
- **Development**: To increase our ability to support more people better.
- **Engagement**: To build our reputation and relationships to achieve positive outcomes for the people we support.
- **People**: To foster an environment that attracts and retains the right people and encourages and recognises best practice.
- **Organisation**: To maintain financial sustainability and use our resources effectively and efficiently.

We support around 3,500 people and their families throughout England and Wales. We employ approximately 5,000 staff and work with over 70 local authorities in England and Wales. Dimensions is a Registered Provider (RP) with social housing assets with an estimated EUV of £14.8 million. The rents from these properties represent c. 3% of our total annual turnover.

The funding of public services in the UK is under tremendous pressure and we have experienced severe pressure on our fees; our customers have increasing expectations for better and more personalised services; and all of our regulators are developing new standards and are continuing to raise the performance bar. We recognise that all of these factors are now permanent features of our environment. Consequently we believe that achieving Value For Money (VFM) in the delivery of our services for people with learning disabilities and autism has never been as important as it is today and that is multi-faceted with specific expectations around social and environmental factors as well as financial.

We see our annual review of VFM as an opportunity to critically assess our performance and to demonstrate the effectiveness of our work through external and internal benchmarking and monitoring our performance over time. We are committed to communicating openly and transparently with our many stakeholders so that they can hold us to account for our performance. Given our broad range of stakeholders we recognise that not all of them will have the same priorities or expectations for our services.

Our aim in writing the Dimensions VFM statement is to set out how we are doing on achieving value for money. This statement has been written for their families and circles of support, our staff and our other stakeholders. An easy read version of this statement aimed for the people we support and our tenants has also been written.

The Dimensions Board has determined our approach to achieving VFM within the context of our Corporate Strategy and our risk management framework. This statement sets out where we currently are, what progress we have made, the challenges we face, what further improvements we have identified and how we intend to achieve these. This document should be read in conjunction with our Corporate Strategy, and our Operating and Financial Review which can be found on our website www.dimensions-uk.org

2. What does VFM mean to Dimensions?

We consider VFM to be the relationship between our costs and the quality of our services and our aim is to continuously seek to optimise this relationship. We have defined our approach to VFM as aspiring to have 'affordable costs with optimal productivity that achieves desired outcomes for our customers and stakeholders.'

In developing our approach, the Board's intention is to ensure VFM is embedded in everything we do and is part of our organisational DNA. Through regular monitoring and robust scrutiny of performance at all levels we are challenging ourselves to be the best we can be. We aim to embed our approach through understanding our performance and how it compares with others, learning how to improve our performance, and so operate more efficiently and effectively in the future.

3. How do we manage and monitor Value For Money?

It is clear to everyone in Dimensions that achieving success in VFM is inseparable from achieving success in progressing our strategic aims. The Board believes the setting of our corporate strategy and objectives, the prioritisation and allocation of our resources, the leadership and management of our business activities and the scrutiny and monitoring of performance, which provide the Board with assurance, are fundamental to our success.

The Board members are non-executive members who have a mixture of skills and expertise, including, finance, marketing, housing and operations. They undertake regular and robust scrutiny of the organisation's plans and performance. VFM is a core tool that runs through how the Board and our Committees manage the business.

In striving to achieve VFM we recognise that market forces apply differently to our different business streams. The market is a major factor in the procurement of social care, whilst it is less prominent within our existing social housing activities. We compare ourselves against a number of different benchmarking resources. Our main ones for our 2013/14 VFM statement were the Homes and Communities Agency Global Accounts and distinct VODG (Voluntary Organisations Disability Group) benchmarking projects which enable us to compare ourselves against other providers of social care for people with learning disabilities and autism. We intend to identify during 2014/15 additional benchmarking resources which more closely reflect our specialism and strategic aims.

The key areas for our on-going management and monitoring of our progress to achieving VFM are:

- the annual cycle of Board and Committee meetings
- the setting of an annual budget
- monthly management accounts that provide relevant, reliable and up-to-date financial information including any significant variances to budget
- forecasts and budgets to allow the Boards and management to monitor key business risks and financial objectives and progress towards financial plans set for the year and the medium-term
- the development of an annual Delivery Plan with quarterly progress reports scrutinised by the Board
- regular scrutiny of our RAG rated Strategy Map and monthly/quarterly) KPI reports
- the development and continuous review of our Risk Map with regular scrutiny by Board and Committees
- a programme on internal compliance audits with quarterly reporting against our standards to the Board and Quality & Practice Committee

- on-going monitoring of corporate projects and with learning evaluation reports reviewed by the appropriate Committee
- the Board reviews the Internal Controls Assurance framework on the effectiveness of the internal control system.

Recognising that our approach to VFM could be improved, during 2013/14 the Board also undertook the following actions:

- commissioned external consultancy to work with the Board and Executive Team to support us in reviewing our approach to VFM
- reviewed other organisations' approaches to reporting on VFM
- reviewed our VFM Strategy
- revised our approach to monitoring our progress in achieving VFM
- conducted a governance review.

4. How did we do in 2013/14?

The Board's headline conclusion is that Dimensions achieved improvement in many key performance areas and achieved a very strong financial result despite the significant financial pressures. We believe our work to achieve VFM must be judged against our five strategic objectives and that we have made good general progress on our VFM programme during 2013/14. However, we have also concluded we can continue to improve our performance, particularly in a number of key areas, highlighted in section 5, which detail our future priorities and plans.

This section provides a detailed breakdown of our achievements during 2013/14 in each of our five strategic areas. The detail includes how our 2013/14 performance compares with previous years, how we have performed in those areas where we set targets for the year and how we have performed against others where comparable benchmark data is available.

4.1. Personalisation: To deliver 'just enough support' that reflects the aspirations of every person we support.

We are committed to enabling the people we support to have as much choice and control over their lives as possible. We achieve this through developing an internal Individual Service Fund (ISF) which enables people to have some control over the funding we receive for their care and support.

Individual ISF: target by end of 2015/16 all people in a residential service will have a Dimensions ISF if their local authority purchaser has not allocated one.	
Q4 2013/14	162
Q4 2012/13	126

We will establish in 2014/15 a better mechanism to report on our performance.

We have strived to maintain the quality of our service provision despite the continuing pressure on our fees. We measure internal compliance against the Dimensions standards. These standards encompass the various regulatory standards that apply to our different businesses and consequently set a higher base standard than pure regulatory compliance.

Internal Compliance: 2013/14 target 90% audits ranked green/amber	
Q4 2013/14	72 % of audits rated green /amber
Q4 2012/13	53 % of audits rated green / amber
Q4 2011/12	30 % of audits rated green /amber

Our second measure is regulatory compliance. Our provision of care and support is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England and in Wales by the Care and Social Services Directorate Wales (CSSIW).

Regulatory Compliance: 2013/14 target 100%		
Q4 2013/14	94% compliant	National benchmark 90%
Q4 2012/13	59% compliant	No benchmark data

The national policy agenda is for people to have choice and control over the public services they receive. In social care and now recently in health care this policy is being achieved by allocating people needing support with a personal budget. They can then use this budget to purchase the services they want from the provider they choose. We have continued to increase the number of people to whom we directly sell support.

March 2014	100 B2C customers
March 2013	90 B2C customers
March 2012	48 B2C customers

Many of the people we support are over-supported, often as a result of staffing levels being prescribed by local authorities on the basis of historical behaviour patterns that are no longer present. However, we continue to pursue the implementation of our 'Just Enough Support' model, which aims to ensure the people we support have as much independence as possible whilst receiving enough support to keep them safe and live the life they choose. *We will establish a mechanism during 2014/15 that enables us to report on this activity.*

We have continued to shape our priorities for our Annual Budget and Delivery Plan around information gained from the Person-Centred Reviews (PCR) we facilitate for the people we support. These reviews are key to ensure we are aware of what our customers want and can build this into our plans.

PCR Reviews: 2013/14 target is that all those supported for more than 30 hours per week will have a PCR	
2013/14	84 % of people eligible.
2012/13	72% of people eligible.

We will establish a mechanism during 2014/15 that enables us to quantify how many people we support want a PCR.

4.2. Development: To increase our ability to support more people better.

During 2013/14 we did not achieve the level of new business growth we had hoped and planned for. There is clear evidence the pressure on the public purse is shifting funding priorities and our research into our market will directly feed into our planned review of our corporate strategy during 2014/15.

We recognised that our business development approach required a fresh perspective and a new approach. We therefore recruited a Commercial Director in January and have invested in a restructured business development function. By early 2014/15 a lot of progress has been made in terms of modernising our approach and introducing new control measures and reporting mechanisms.

2013/14	ITT win rate of 5 of 16 (31%)
2012/13	ITT win rate of 8 of 27 (30%)
2011/12	ITT win rate of 13 of 21 (62%)

These numbers are approximate and our improved systems (see above) will give us more robust information moving forward.

We have made significant progress in providing community based support for people with complex histories through our specialist subsidiary company, Waymarks.

Supporting people with complex histories: 2013/14 target was 20 people	
2013/14	26 people with complex histories supported
2012/13	10 people with complex histories supported
2011/12	6 people with complex histories supported

During 2012/13 the Board concluded that helping people into employment through establishing social enterprises was not a viable option. During 2013/14 we closed down our loss-making subsidiary managing our social enterprises, realising savings in excess of £0.1m. We have consequently continued to achieve our aim through our financially sustainable supported employment activities. We have established a more successful approach to helping people with learning disabilities and people who experience autism gain employment.

Supporting people into employment: 2013/14 target was to increase the number of people we supported into work by 10%	
2013/14	52 people gaining employment
2012/13	33 people gaining employment
2011/12	30 people gaining employment

During 2013/14 we completed the redevelopment of our Smug Oak service in Hertfordshire. The property has been reconfigured as six individual flats in which people with complex

needs are supported to live independently with their own staff teams and the use of assistive technology. We also work with a range of other registered providers and private developers to secure appropriate housing solutions. We worked with a private developer in Brighton to produce two homes (providing 4 bed-spaces) in which people with complex needs will be supported to live. Through taking on leases from private landlords we have also helped seven of the people we support secure their own tenancies.

Our housing brokerage pilot work with Essex County Council has proved to be very successful. This work has now been extended into 2014/15.

2013/14	65 people supported into new tenancies	36 people advised about their housing options
2012/13	33 people supported into new tenancies	10 people advised about their housing options

Many of the people we support had their services commissioned years ago and their needs have changed and they expressed a wish to live either on their own or with people they have chosen.

2013/14	20 people were helped to move into a more appropriate service / accommodation
2012/13	15 people were helped to move into a more appropriate service / accommodation

4.3. Engagement: To build our reputation and relationships to achieve positive outcomes for the people we support.

We have worked successfully with a diverse range of partners during 2013/14.

We established with our partners Ambitious About Autism a multi-academy trust (the Autism Schools Trust) and secured DfE approval for our first free school for children with high functioning autism. Our approach to education is very much focussed on what the children who attend the school will be doing when they are thirty years old. Our research indicates that, through this focus on their life post-school, for every £1 we invest in AST, there will be a social return on investment of £26k.

We have a valued reputation as a thought leader in how social care organisations respond to the challenges arising from the personalisation agenda. We have a long-standing commitment to share good practice. During 2013/14 we collaborated with seven UK provider organisations and three Australian. Our focus was to share our learning from our organisational development work over the past six years.

Through working in partnership with Helen Sanderson Associates we have developed a person-centred thinking tools e-learning product. This has enhanced the learning and development opportunities for our own workforce. We are now able to share this product with other likeminded organisations in social care, health care and education.

Our partnership work with three national cinema chains to offer 'autism friendly screenings' has continued since our first showing in 2011. These screenings offer unique and highly-appreciated opportunities for families caring for a relative with autism to enjoy an experience that otherwise they would be excluded from.

2013/14	65,511 tickets sold
2012/13	23,966 tickets sold
2011/12	14,496 tickets sold

We recognise that we need to establish more effective ways of measuring our performance against our Engagement strategic aim.

The Board, recognising that our future business will require greater levels of collaboration and a wider range of formal partnerships, approved a Partnership Strategy in 2013/14 that will shape our externally facing work

During 2013/14 we established a new partnership with Parliamentary Outreach with the aim of helping people with learning disabilities have a better understanding of voting in elections. We developed this partnership in direct response to a request from our Council who wanted us to help the people we support learn how to vote. This project was aimed at people with learning disabilities in the general population who we don't support. During the year we ran 25 workshops which were attended by over 300 people with learning disabilities.

The Board agreed to establish a Strategic Advisory Panel (SAP) of leading opinion formers and experts from within our existing sector and from the other sectors and industries. Our SAP will help provide a strategic challenge for the Board and provide a touchstone on our performance.

4.4. People: To foster an environment that attracts and retains the right people and encourages and recognises best practice.

Our management of our resources and our efficiency savings through 2013/14 resulted in a better than budgeted financial result. The Board decided to invest in our staff and award each of them an unconsolidated payment. This decision is consistent with our long-standing commitment to pay our staff (particularly those who are lower paid) more when circumstances allow.

Our scheduled re-assessment for our Investors in People (IiP) accreditation highlighted areas for improvement including internal communication and IT training. Our more recent Staff Survey indicated improvement in a number of areas when compared to previous surveys, including a much improved understanding of organisational expectations and increased confidence in the management of poor performance. However, the IiP report and the survey analysis highlighted areas of concern regarding how engaged parts of our workforce currently are.

Our direct management cost is a significant element of our costs base. During 2013/14 we restructured the management of care operations achieving full year savings of £2.2m, with £0.5m achieved in 2013/14. These savings have enabled us to work constructively with our commissioners and respond constructively to requests to reduce in some instances our fees.

We have made more effective use of our IT infrastructure and this has enabled us to introduce during 2013/14 e-learning as our primary means of providing mandatory training for our staff. In previous years all our mandatory training was delivered via face-to-face classroom based training. This change has enabled us to increase non-mandatory training activity, whilst reducing our overall training cost.

Learning and Development course provision by delivery method			
	Face to face	E-learning	Webinars
2014-15	8	15	2
2013-14	9	14	2
2012-13	14	2	0
2011-12	15	0	0

We have strengthened our approach to performance management and established a 'season' based methodology. We also incorporated into our approach person-centred thinking tools. By doing this we are further embedding these critical tools into every aspect of our work which in turn will enhance our capability to provide person-centred support.

Staff who have had a an annual appraisal within last 12 months: 2013/14 target 90%	
2013/14	80% %

We have made some progress in reducing our levels of sickness and the cost of sickness. This, together with other productivity improvements, has led to financial savings in excess of £1.25m. We achieved this through a number of measures, including the withdrawal of occupational sick pay for the first three days of any sickness period. However, whilst welcome, we recognise the level of staff sickness is not acceptable.

Staff Sickness (working days per annum): 2013/14 target		
2013/14	11.2 working days	12 working days (VODG)
2012/13	11.6 working days (est.)	no benchmark data available
2011/12	13.5 working days (est.)	no benchmark data available

4.5. Organisation: To maintain financial sustainability and use our resources effectively and efficiently

Our organisational financial performance in 2013/14 was very positive and achieved as a result of the hard work of our staff in helping drive through the organisation a greater awareness of and commitment to achieving VFM. This positive result was achieved despite reductions in levels of funding and fee reductions.

Operating Surplus	Budget	Actual
2013/14	£1.0m (0.8%)	£3.8m (3.2%)
2012/13	£0.6m (0.5%)	£1.0m (0.8%)
2011/12	£0.0m (0.0%)	£0.6m (0.5%) underlying
2010/11	£0.6m (0.5%)	£1.4m (1.3%) underlying

Actual savings realised in 2013/14 amounted to circa £2.1m and these were realised through a range of measures including restructuring our business support departments, closing a loss making subsidiary, restructuring another subsidiary and restructuring how we manage our care operations.

The Board has set a future target of achieving an Operating Surplus of at least 2% in any year. This provides the organisation with sufficient financial flexibility to deal with the short-term risks the Board has identified.

The Board approved our initial Efficiency Strategy 2012 and to date the following annual savings have been achieved:

	£m
2011/12	1.65
2012/13	0.96
2013/14	2.10
Total annual savings achieved	4.71

The Efficiency Strategy is evaluated and updated annually and ensures that we are able to respond to the financial challenges we face and that we continue to embed VFM in our organisational DNA. Our assessment of our 2013/14 performance is that we made good progress in achieving our efficiency targets.

We restructured a number of business support functions achieving savings in excess of £0.2m. This was aided by further investment in our IT infrastructure and systems which will continue to reduce the cost of our business support functions. We restructured our loss making subsidiary, Waymarks, providing services for people with complex histories. This action realised savings in excess of £0.1m. The restructure of its operations enabled Waymarks to achieve its growth targets for the latter half of 2013/14 and to produce a small surplus. In 2014/15 a surplus of £63k is budgeted.

We developed a corporate procurement policy in 2010/11 to maximise the savings we could leverage as a result of our scale. In year one, we were able to realise significant savings through targeting low-hanging fruit. We have continued to realise savings in each of the following years.

Procurement savings	
2013/14	£126k annualised procurement savings
2012/13	£110k annualised procurement savings
2011/12	£167k annualised procurement savings
2010/11	£470k annualised procurement savings

However, the number of support hours we deliver has not increased to the degree we had modelled when developing our Efficiency Strategy. Consequently our overhead cost as a percentage of income is not reducing as much as we expected. The five year financial forecast (which includes the projected Efficiency Strategy savings and current growth expectations) indicates the overhead reducing to 6% (previous expectation 5%).

During 2013/14 we developed our understanding of workforce productivity. We were able to do this as we have completed the introduction of our DTMS workforce tool and we are now able to produce reliable and robust workforce data weekly. This information has helped our operational managers better appreciate how they use their staff resource and find ways to improve their productivity. Our average organisational productivity in the year was 79%. We did not have a target for 2013/14 as the data had not been available prior to April 2013. The delivery plan target for 2014/15 is 82%.

The absolute and comparative cost of our care services is an important factor for many stakeholders. The comparative cost is indicated by the effective hourly cost of providing

care. The Efficiency Strategy described above is enabling the organisation to reduce this cost. In 2013, the Board set a target for the relationship between the total hourly cost of care services and the base cost of employing a support worker.

The hourly pay of support workers is regularly benchmarked against local employment markets and adjustment made to ensure that we pay the market rate in all areas. In the year, the total of the adjustments made to support workers base pay amounted to £950k per annum.

In 2013/14, the comparative cost of the care we provide reduced by 5.1% (target 5.1%: 2012/13 reduction 2.7%). The current comparative cost is 3.5% above the target set by the Board in the Efficiency Strategy. The Board is satisfied that the actions identified in the Efficiency Strategy through to 2017/18 are sufficient to achieve the targeted comparative cost.

4.5.1. Housing

Value of our assets

Each year we make our own assessment of the existing use value (EUV) of our properties. This is based on the future cash-flows we expect from the property. The calculation shows the EUV of our properties increasing by more than the book value and our conclusion is that this demonstrates that value is being created.

Property Value	Estimated Use Value (EUV)	Book Value
2013/14	£14.8	£4.5m
2012/13	£14.5	£4.3m

Financial return on our assets

We assess the financial return on our assets by challenging ourselves whether we are holding and investing in the right assets, and secondly for those we retain whether we are managing them effectively and efficiently.

We only hold homes where support can be delivered either by ourselves or our agents or where the properties are suitable for tenancies for people with learning disabilities and autism. In addition to these straightforward tests we retain the assets if the in-use valuation indicates that it is commercially advantageous to hold them in the long term or if the in-use [net] cost of a property is justified by the social return. Our litmus test is our ability to house a vulnerable person in a suitable environment, which would not otherwise be possible, and where the additional cost to Dimensions is proportionate to the social return.

Where a property is no longer deemed appropriate to meet the needs of people we support, and commissioners are no longer making referrals to them, then we allow it to become vacant. If we cannot then find an alternative cost effective and appropriate use for the property it will be disposed of on the open market.

During 2013/14 four properties were sold during the year and our aim is to recycle the Capital Grant realised through disposals to provide new housing opportunities for people with learning disabilities and autism. The RCGF available at the end of 13/14 was £2.1m.

Management of our assets

We aim to survey the condition of 20% of our stock each year to determine whether any additional works/investment is required. All of our stock meets the Decent Homes standard.

Major repairs

Much of our stock is pre second world war and a number of homes are from the 19th century, where we would expect the maintenance expenditure to be higher. We would also expect our major repairs cost to be higher than for general needs RPs, due to the different needs of our tenants which require more robust (expensive) fittings which also are more likely to require more frequent repair/replacement.

Our assessment is that because of the factors identified above, a major repairs charge 7% higher than the global accounts average (assuming a 1% 2013/14 increment) is reasonable and does represent VFM. However, we have also concluded that our major repairs were under-resourced prior to 2013/14 and we have directed more resource to this. We anticipate a reduction in cyclical works as a result of this increase in resource from 2017/18.

Unit Cost (Major Repairs)	Dimensions	Benchmark (Global accounts traditional RPs)
2013/14	£ 806	No current benchmark data
2012/13	£ 652	£ 744

Routine / planned repairs

We have concluded that the age of our properties does have an impact on the number of repairs we would expect. In addition, the profile of our tenants can also lead to more wear and tear and therefore more repairs. Failure to act on issues could lead to compliance issues with the Care Quality Commission. We therefore must continue to ensure that components are repaired as they fail.

Where possible, we are fitting maintenance free components (e.g. UPVC windows and doors, UPVC soffits) and this should lead to a reduction in routine repairs. *From 2017/18 we will aim to reduce the charge for routine repairs to the global accounts average plus 10%, which we believe represents value for money for our tenants.*

Unit Cost (Management)	Dimensions	Benchmark (Global accounts traditional RPs)
2013/14	£ 1,092	No current benchmark data
2012/13	£ 1,079	£ 954

Rents

Rents were increased by 3% in 2013/14. The decreases in the average rents below reflect where we have closed or sold more expensive properties. All of our rents are now restructured and are set at target rent + 10%, reflecting the allowed supported housing rent levels.

Rent	Shared accommodation	Self-contained
2013/14	£69.27	£ 135.60
2012/13	£73.09	£ 139.17

Rent arrears

Our rent arrears are higher than the global accounts average. Our assessment is that this is as a result of almost all of our tenants receiving full housing benefit monthly in arrears.

	Dimensions	Benchmark
2013/14	6.7 %	Not available
2012/13	7.0 %	4.8 %
2011/12	10.2 %	4.8 %
2010/11	7.6 %	5.1 %

Voids

Our voids are particularly high, but we have concluded that this is mainly as a consequence of two factors. Where we are planning to reconfigure properties we are required by our commissioners to keep homes vacant. Many of our properties have charges held on against them by other parties, often the NHS. In these circumstances the eventual sale of such a property can take an inordinate length of time due to the difficulty in obtaining the party's consent. Our analysis is that if we were to remove properties affected by these circumstances our underlying void percentage would be 4%.

The underlying void level is still higher in Dimensions than the global accounts average. Our assessment is that this reflects the nature of the referral process for our tenants and our person-centred process of introducing tenants to their new homes.

Voids	Dimensions				Benchmark
	Dimensions managed		Managing Agents		
	No.	%	No.	%	%
2013/14	35	8.5	44	8.0	not available
2012/13	50	11.8	38	7.0	1.7
2011/12	42	11.2	28	4.8	1.8
2010/11	37	8.7	51	7.8	1.8

Housing management

Our housing management costs are higher than general needs RPs. Although the dispersed nature of our stock might require a higher management cost than more locally orientated RPs we do not believe that in the long term our tenants should pay more than average.

Unit Cost (Management)	Dimensions	Benchmark (Global accounts traditional RPs)
2013/14	£1,053	No current benchmark data
2012/13	£1,053	£1,012

We propose to continue to hold our management charge at the current rate until it comes fully in line with the benchmark.

6. Our future plans

On reviewing our VFM performance for 2013/14 and looking ahead to 2014/15 and beyond we recognise a number of challenges that lie ahead. These include:

- the ongoing financial challenges in the public sector and potentially reduced income
- increasing levels of demand for social and health care leading to changes to eligibility criteria
- proposed changes to housing regulation and the impact of on-going welfare reform
- an improving UK economy will make it harder to recruit the right calibre staff if wages in other sectors improve faster than we are able to enhance our levels of remuneration.

However, we continue to be optimistic about the future for Dimensions as we have in place robust strategies to realise further efficiencies and improve levels of productivity. Consequently, the Board is confident in our capacity and capability to continue to improve our VFM.

To achieve this we will:

- undertake a review of our corporate strategy
- develop a new asset management strategy
- develop a new housing strategy
- develop VFM targets for each department and report on progress throughout the year to the Board
- improve our understanding of Social Return on Investment so we can better appreciate the value of what we provide
- review our Efficiency Strategy to ensure it remains focussed and stretching
- expand our benchmarking so we can compare our business support functions, particularly HR and Finance, against other industries.

In addition we have identified some specific priority areas and targets for 2014/15:

- improve our workforce productivity to 82%
- achieve regulatory compliance with CQC/CSSIW of 100%
- further reduce levels of sickness to 10.0 working days
- increase the number of people we assist into employment each year to 100 people
- increase the number of people we employ with a learning disability/autism to 40
- expand housing brokerage (along the lines of the Essex model).