

**The Medina Plan
2009 - 2014**

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1. Glossary of Terms

AMS – Asset Management Strategy (part of Homes and Environment Strategy)
ASB – Anti-social Behaviour
CBL – Choice Based Lettings
CORE – Continuous Recording (system of data collection)
DHS – Decent Homes Standard
DLO – Direct Labour Organisation – Maintenance Direct
DNS – Decent Neighbourhood Standard
EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
HR – Human Resources
IMD – Index of Multiple Deprivation
IoW – Isle of Wight
IT – Information Technology
KPI – Key Performance Indicator
LAA – Local Area Agreement
MHA – Medina Housing Association
MOI – Menu of Involvement
NAP – Neighbourhood Action Plan
NPB – Neighbourhood Partnership Board
OCI – Operating Cost Index
PNP – Pan Neighbourhood Partnership
QHS – Quality Housing Services
RP – Registered Provider
RTB – Right to Buy
SHG – Spectrum Housing Group
SLA – Service Level Agreement
TCC – Tenant Consultative Committee
TSA – Tenant Services Authority
Vfm – Value for money
WING – Working in Neighbourhoods Group

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2. Executive Summary

The Medina Plan sets out the vision and programme for Medina Housing Association (MHA) for the period 2009-14.

Medina is an operating subsidiary of the Spectrum Housing Group based on the Isle of Wight. As such, the Medina vision reflects and delivers that of Spectrum and its subsidiaries. The approaches and objectives set within the Plan also reflect and accommodate the evolving and maturing Spectrum Group position.

Operating on the Isle of Wight presents many opportunities and challenges. During the course of the last three years, MHA has developed an approach to service delivery which reflects local needs and strategic requirements. We understand the needs and aspirations of our residents through profiling and surveys and work closely with key stakeholders to develop and deliver the targets within the Housing Strategy and the Island Strategic Plan.

We operate in three of the most deprived wards on the Island, which has influenced our neighbourhoods-focused agenda. Our objective is to locate housing at the hub of a co-ordinated approach to breaking the cycle of deprivation and improving the quality of life and life chances of our tenants. We will work closely in partnership with residents and local stakeholders, to secure what we call '**Vibrant Neighbourhoods**' – cohesive environments in which people choose to live, work and play.

Our vision over the life of this Plan is to be recognised as the best landlord possible with a solid reputation for providing quality homes and environments, delivering excellent services to residents and neighbourhoods, and providing increased choice and influence to residents. Our approach to achieving this position is heavily influenced by the constraints and characteristics of our Business Plan, which are outlined in section 6.

This vision will be delivered through **six** core strategies, covering:

- Homes and Environment Strategy – *quality homes*
- Value for Money Strategy – *quality services*
- Resident Involvement Strategy – *empowering people*
- Active Communities Strategy – *active communities*
- Sustainable Neighbourhoods Strategy – *better futures*
- EDI Plan – better futures

This vision is translated into strategic and operation objectives and extrapolated to local neighbourhoods. Our six core strategic objectives are:

- To contribute to the improvement of social and economic opportunity and inclusion
- To achieve high quality homes and neighbourhood environments
- To develop resident involvement mechanisms and initiatives which

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comply with the requirements of the Tenant Services Authority, meet residents' needs and enable residents to exercise choice, influence and effective governance in the way in which MHA delivers services and develops plans for the future.

- To contribute to improved baseline social indicators as appropriate to each neighbourhood by 2014
- To contribute to MHA's financial viability by ensuring the most productive use of resources through achieving cost-effectiveness and value for money
- To support and empower communities and individuals to achieve the quality of life to which they aspire irrespective of their personal characteristics, values or beliefs. To promote harmony and awareness amongst residents, staff, contractors, partners and stakeholders to ensure that all who come into contact with MHA are valued, supported and respected.

We aim to deliver high quality services, influenced by residents and which are cost-effective, responsive and offer choice where possible. As part of a Group objective, we aim to achieve upper quartile performance in all aspects of our operations.

We plan to develop Neighbourhood Partnership Boards (NPB) to cover our three main geographical areas as a way of cementing resident interest in neighbourhood engagement. We believe that NPBs offer a good vehicle for promoting greater local accountability, influence over service delivery and devolution of spending decisions.

The Medina Plan is built on the premise of close working arrangements with other agencies and partners to deliver a more holistic approach to service delivery, focused around Neighbourhood Profiles. These profiles will enable prioritised action plans to be negotiated with residents and partners.

The five year coverage of the Plan reflects the fact that achieving sustainable change and tangible outcomes often takes time. Our belief is that the Plan should be transformational as well as operational and as such, we have set longer-term goals in terms of community change. These, however, can only be delivered in tandem with partners and residents themselves. Both transformational and operational activities will be measured, evaluated and accountable.

This Plan has been developed in consultation with staff, residents and partners. It sets ambitious, but deliverable objectives, which we believe are the right ones for MHA.

3. The Medina Vision & Strategic Objectives

The MHA vision and strategic objectives have been developed out of the Spectrum Housing Group Mission, Values and Vision, in response to local

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needs and priorities. The Golden Thread which runs through the Medina Plan originates in this Spectrum Group strategic framework.

Spectrum Group Mission

To be recognised and respected for providing quality homes and services. Empowering people, supporting active communities and building better futures.

Spectrum Group Values

- Committed to quality
- Committed to equality
- Committed to partnership working
- Committed to growth
- Committed to staff

Spectrum Group Corporate Objectives

- One organisation
- Tenants at the heart
- Working communities

4. Medina Vision for 2014

In its interpretation of the Spectrum strategic framework, MHA is committed first and foremost to its residents. It is also fully committed to improving the neighbourhoods in which it works and contributing in partnership to the enhanced well-being and the development of a sustainable economic, social and environmental future for the Isle of Wight.

The vision of MHA for 2014 is to be the best landlord possible with a solid reputation for providing quality homes and environments, delivering excellent services to residents and neighbourhoods, and providing increased choice and influence to residents. Its established reputation will enable MHA to engage with the local authority as a recognised management agent of choice, thereby securing opportunities to increase the affordable housing stock of the Island in conjunction with the Spectrum Housing Group and its development partnership.

Working in partnership with residents and local stakeholders, MHA will aim to secure as an outcome what we call '**Vibrant Neighbourhoods**' – cohesive environments in which people choose to live, work and play.

Achievement of this vision will be measured by:

- Sustained levels of performance improvement in service delivery [e.g. level of QHS accreditation, STATUS % uplift in satisfaction, peer group positions, KPIs].
- Homes and Neighbourhood improvement [e.g. DHS +, DNS %, social indicators].

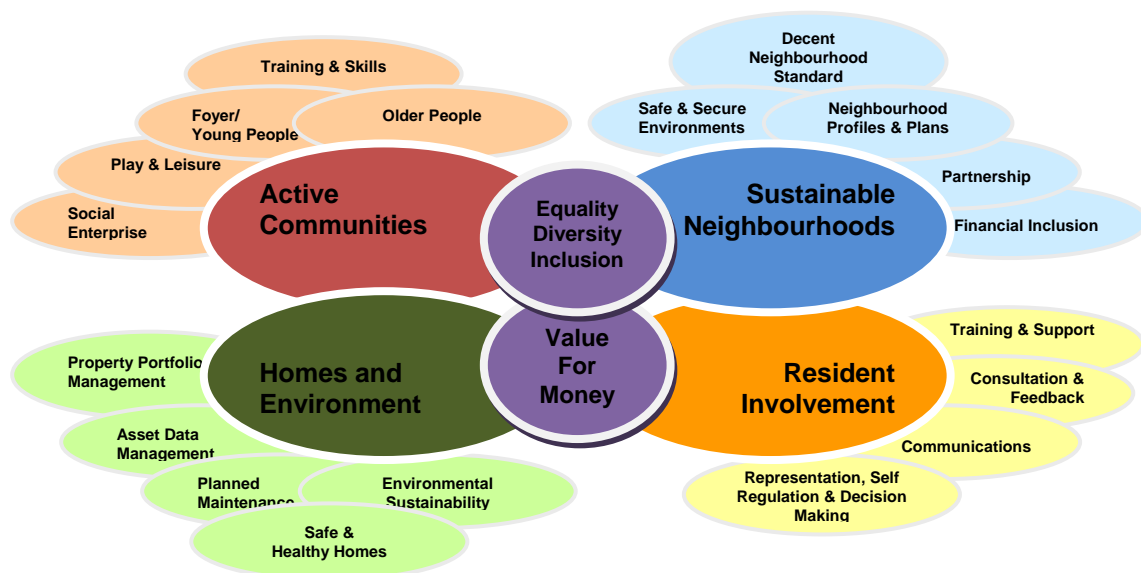
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- Tenant involvement and influence [improvement in perceived levels of influence measured in STATUS, numbers of residents involved through the Menu of Involvement, impact assessment].
- Increased social and economic opportunity [e.g. reducing benefit dependence, higher levels of residents in work, number undertaking training].
- Increased contribution to provision of new affordable homes [e.g. % new affordable homes by SHG managed by MHA].
- Effective engagement with local authority and other partners [e.g. leadership in single conversation, contribution to Housing Strategy, Island Plan and Island Strategic Partnership].
- Value for Money – achieving targets in the Annual Efficiency Plan, benchmarked costs against peers [e.g. annual review of VfM strategy, review of Efficiency Plan, Housemark cost benchmarking].
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – high satisfaction levels across all groups, impact assessments, feedback from Stakeholders Group [e.g. annual EDI Audit, Impact Assessment, Annual Resident Survey].

This vision will be delivered through **six** core strategies that are described fully in their respective strategy documents where the detailed objectives for each strategy are also elaborated:

- Homes and Environment Strategy – *quality homes*
- Value for Money Strategy – *quality services*
- Resident Involvement – *empowering people*
- Active Communities Strategy – *active communities*
- Sustainable Neighbourhoods Strategy – *better futures*
- EDI Plan – *better futures*



Each strategy has a strategic objective for 2009-14 which, combined, contribute to the achievement of the overall vision for this five-year plan.

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Annual action plans detail the objectives, targets and actions for the coming year and link to the annual budget. Personal objectives are set in conjunction with the annual action plan and are extrapolated into Neighbourhood Action Plans, which reflects local needs and circumstances. The Golden Thread, which begins with the Spectrum Group mission, values and vision, flows through the Medina Vision, the core strategies and annual action plans to personal objectives. The Spectrum Continuous Improvement Policy ensures that the Golden Thread also runs through the review and report process to drive continuous improvement.

4.1 Our Core Strategic Objectives

- To contribute to the improvement of social and economic opportunity and inclusion
- To achieve high quality homes and neighbourhood environments
- To develop resident involvement mechanisms and initiatives which comply with the requirements of the Tenant Services Authority, meet residents' needs and enable residents to exercise choice, influence and effective governance in the way in which MHA delivers services and develops plans for the future.
- To contribute to improved baseline social indicators as appropriate to each neighbourhood by 2014
- To contribute to MHA's financial viability by ensuring the most productive use of resources through achieving cost-effectiveness and value for money
- To support and empower communities and individuals to achieve the quality of life to which they aspire irrespective of their personal characteristics, values or beliefs. To promote harmony and awareness amongst residents, staff, contractors, partners and stakeholders to ensure that all who come into contact with MHA are valued, supported and respected.

5. Medina Housing Association

5.1 Where we work

MHA is a charitable RP created in 1990 to receive the housing stock of the former Medina Borough Council on the Isle of Wight (IoW). We manage 3,000 homes for rent and sale from two offices in Newport, which is the County Town. We also have a base and depot for our Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) in Ryde. We also own a Foyer, in Ryde, which is managed by a wholly owned subsidiary, Foyer for the Island Limited, which is a registered charity. The Foyer delivers housing and educational/employment services to young people between the ages of 16-24. MHA joined Western Challenge Housing Group in 2001, which became Spectrum Housing Group (SHG) following a merger with the Signpost Housing Group in

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2007.

MHA operates within three of the most deprived wards on the Island and this has been a key element in the decision to adopt a neighbourhoods-focused agenda. Our objective is to locate housing at the hub of a co-ordinated approach to breaking the cycle of deprivation and improving the quality of life and life chances of our tenants.

In terms of local strategic plans, we actively contribute to delivering the Housing Strategy, the Local Plan and the LAA. Through our membership of the Source Development Partnership, we are involved in two of the three strategically important development sites on the Island, at Pan and Whippingham. These could collectively deliver nearly 500 new affordable homes over the next five years. Together with a number of other proposed sites, these are major contributions to the delivery of affordable housing targets in the Housing Strategy.

The nature of the Island's geography creates a number of issues which present challenges:

- The costs and constraints of ferry travel creates a barrier to inward economic investment, resulting in a largely low-wage economy. It also effectively creates a self-contained market, which has an impact on recruitment of staff and contractors and also affects procurement opportunities.
- The absence of employment and higher educational opportunities has resulted in many in the 16-25 age group leaving the Island, thus skewing the potential work force and community demography.
- There is high inward migration of older people, resulting in a community with high-support needs.

Other key local indicators:

- The Isle of Wight experienced 98% growth in average house prices (over the 2000 – 2005 period).
- The South East region has the lowest proportion of population living in the UK's most deprived areas. However the Isle of Wight falls within the 40% most deprived local authorities in England, ranked 126th from 354, according to the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD2004/5). It is within the most deprived quartile of local authorities in the South East region.
- The IMD2004 indicates that the Isle of Wight contains six local areas which are in the 10 – 20% most deprived in the country, covering parts of Ryde, Newport and Ventnor.
- Deprivation on the Island is particularly noted in: Income, Employment and Education and Skills domains together with Barriers to Housing and Services, and the Living Environment.

The physical separateness of the IoW is a major contributing factor to its identity and characteristics. While having an adverse impact on investment and employment prospects, costs and mobility, the clearly defined

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and Development) through the Group on a recharge basis. This enables us to access high quality professional services at a lower cost that would be achievable externally. The result is that we have been able to invest in IT to a level which would not be possible if the costs were not shared across the Group. Similarly, HR advice, an active training and development programme and support with recruitment processes are also key components of service delivery.

The other significant benefit from Group membership is access to the Source Development Partnership. Medina’s Business Plan does not facilitate active development. However, through Source, Medina receives new developments funded by Western Challenge HA, on lease.

As one of the drivers for its formation in 2007, the Spectrum Group are committed to delivering improved governance, consistent quality and efficiency across the Group. This entails a programme of actions to deliver the key strategic theme of *one organisation*, in relation to culture, governance, systems and operational structures. While the principles underpinning the approach set out within the Medina Plan are flexible and represent common currency across all parts of the Group, the structures and frameworks within which services are delivered and with which residents engage will be subject to review and change. This will be achieved in consultation with residents and key stakeholders to positively improve our chances of achieving the excellence to which the Group is committed.

6. Understanding our Operating Environment

6.1 Knowing Our Tenants and Communities

We are clear that in order to deliver effective and appropriate services, we need to know about our residents and their needs and aspirations. The better we know and understand our residents and service users, the more effective we will be in developing services that people want and need. It will also increase the relevance and focus of our partnerships, which in turn should deliver greater impact, community cohesion and value for money. We will use this knowledge in planning, delivering and reviewing our services on a regular basis. Full details of this process can be found in our *Diversity Action Plan*.

We achieve this knowledge in a number of ways. Strategic, Island-wide data, CORE Data – relating to new MHA lettings, Profiling data – from dedicated forms and other more routine mechanisms – which includes regular contact from residents relating to their needs, contact from other agencies and advocates, data gained from service delivery, complaints, satisfaction returns, surveys e.g. STATUS, etc.

During 2008 we conducted a full tenant census, and we now have comprehensive information on over 80% of our tenants. It is our intention to further extend that knowledge and to maintain its accuracy through a constant

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rolling review.

6.2 Tenant Views

A STATUS Survey conducted in August 2008 indicated high levels of satisfaction expressed by tenants for service quality across most aspects of our work. This assessment is further endorsed by the achievement of QHS Enhanced Standard accreditation in May 2008. Both of these assessments are conducted by independent organisations. Our headline STATUS responses are detailed in figure 1 below. Virtually all areas of activity surveyed produced responses which showed improvement over the previous survey in 2005.

Our tenants have indicated that they consider the most important service areas to be:

- repairs and maintenance
- overall quality of home
- anti social behaviour

We have recognised and reflected these views in scheduling service reviews of each of these areas during 2009. We will use these opportunities to examine, in consultation with residents, the potential for further improvements.

- All aspects of the actual repair work was rated as “good” or “very good” by 91% or more of tenants who had a repair completed in the last 12 months*
- 90% are satisfied with the services provided by their landlord
- 90% find staff helpful*
- 87% are satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance service*
- 86% are satisfied with the quality of their home
- 85% feel that Medina keeps them well informed
- 82% are satisfied with the general condition of their homes
- 82% are satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live
- 79% feel they obtain good value for money from their rent
- 71% think that their landlord takes account of their views*.

Figure 1 STATUS Survey 2008 summary

6.3 Local Authority

As we operate exclusively on the Isle of Wight, our key stakeholders are the local authority. As such, we have actively contributed to the Housing Strategy, the Local Plan and the LAA. Through our membership of the Source Development Partnership, we are involved in two of the three strategically important development sites on the Island, at Pan and

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Whippingham. These collectively will deliver approximately 500 new affordable rented units over the next five years. Together with a number of other proposed sites, these are major contributions to the delivery of affordable housing targets in the Housing Strategy.

We contribute to the All Island Housing Register, to which we provide at least 80% of our vacant property, which is let on the basis of points-based housing need. We are joint partners with the Council in developing a choice-based lettings scheme (CBL), which is due for implementation in early 2009.

We have adopted a Homelessness Action Plan in partnership with the Council's Housing Department, and have also signed up to joint protocols relating to dealing with victims of domestic violence.

We work closely with the Council in delivering aids and adaptations and have a service level agreement (SLA) which guides this.

We also have an SLA with the Revenues and Benefits Department, which includes an agreement for MHA staff to conduct verification procedures on behalf of the Council.

6.4 Performance & Peer Position

What we know about our performance:

Overall, we have a good understanding of our performance, both in absolute terms and benchmarked against others. We are members of the Housemark Benchmarking Service and QHS and we conduct regular independent resident surveys through STATUS. We use Performance Indicator data through the TSA and until recently, the Housing Corporation's Operating Cost Index. In addition, we also benchmark performance across the Spectrum Group. Together with a suite of other internal performance indicators, this provides a clear picture of our costs, performance and satisfaction levels, which are in most cases well above sector averages.

6.4.1 Housing Corporation KPIs

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| Indicator | 2006/07 | National Quartile | 2007/08 | National Quartile | Trend |
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| % Social Housing Stock failing Decent Home Standard | 19.2 | Q4 | 13.2 | Q4 | ↑ |
| Average SAP rating of self contained GN dwellings | 69 | Q3 | 69.5 | Q2 | ↑ |
| % Social Housing rental dwellings vacant 31 March | 1.3% | Q2 | 0.5% | Q1 (T) | ↑ |
| Average days to re-let all managed dwellings | 37.9 | Q4 | 27.9 | Q2 | ↑ |
| % Social housing current tenant arrears | 4.5% | | 4.2% | Q3 | |
| Tenant satisfaction with overall service (managed GN dwellings) | 84% | Q2 | 89% | Q1 (T) | ↑ |
| Tenant satisfaction with 'Views taken into account' (managed GN dwellings) * | 59% | Q3 | 69% # | Q1 | ↑ |
| Tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance service (managed GN dwellings) | 82% | Q2 | 86% | Q1 | ↑ |

6.4.2 Housing Corporation Operating Cost Index (OCI)

The Housing Corporation's OCI data for Medina shows the following actual costs as a % of predicted costs:

2005 - 73% 2006 - 77% 2007 - 79%

Medina is ranked in the top quartile performers in all three years. Without major repairs the figures are even further improved:

2005 - 73% 2006 - 77% 2007 - 68%

Once again, Medina is top quartile in all three years 2005-7, and in 2007 ranked 36 out of 329 housing associations.

6.4.3 Housemark Benchmarking

We have benchmarked with Housemark since the beginning of 2008. The key indicators reveal:

Cost:

- Responsive and Void Repairs spend per property – Upper Quartile
- Housing Management Pay – Upper Middle Quartile
- Major and Cyclical Repairs spend per property – Lower Middle Quartile

Quality:

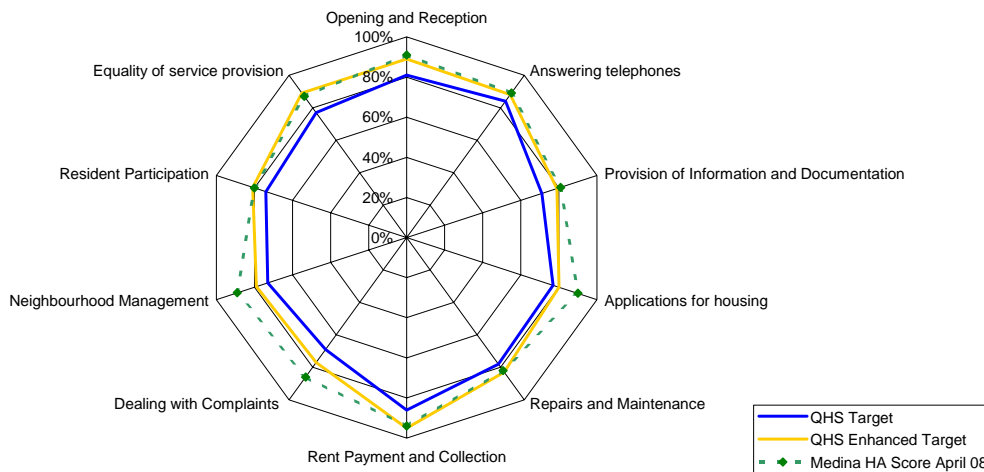
- Overall tenants satisfaction - Upper Quartile
- % residents satisfied with repair service - Upper Quartile
- % repairs completed on time - Upper Quartile
- % residents satisfied with influence - Upper Middle Quartile
- Weeks taken to re-let property - Lower Middle Quartile
- % homes failing decent home standard - Lower Quartile (however on

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- target to achieve DHS target)
- Current rent arrears as % of rent due – Lower Quartile (however this includes Housing Benefit and is therefore not a true picture)

6.4.4 Quality Housing Services (QHS)

MHA was the first housing association in England to be awarded the enhanced accreditation by QHS.



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7. Financial Plan

We are working to a Business Plan which was agreed in 2001 and reflects the financial circumstances that applied to MHA at that time and the prevailing economic and regulatory climate. In particular the original Business Plan reflected:

(i) Transfer funding

The transfer of housing stock from the local Council was funded, in part, by a £20m loan with a rate of interest of 13.74% fixed for 25 years. This has had a material impact on the surpluses that we have been able to generate since 1990 and was allowed for in the original Business Plan.

(ii) Rent restructuring

When rent restructuring was introduced in 2001 MHA's rents were nearly 30% above target levels. We were therefore granted an extra 5 years in excess of the 10 year target, to reach target rents, which will be achieved by 2017.

(iii) Right to Buy (RTB) sales

The 2001 Business Plan was drafted at a time when levels of RTB sales were relatively buoyant and formed a material part of MHA's income in the Plan. This is important because of the changes since 2001 which have seen a housing market boom followed more recently by a significant downturn. Because MHA has not developed new dwellings, surpluses generated in the Plan have been used entirely to repay debt which in 2001, stood at £47.6 million.

Since 2001 MHA's operating environment has changed significantly. Closer regulation, increased standards and expectations and evolving roles in terms of local neighbourhood management have resulted in additional costs over and above the original Plan.

The sector has also become much more conscious of the need to deliver efficiencies since 2001. MHA has had success in delivering these efficiencies and this has primarily been achieved by setting up its own Direct Maintenance function which has demonstrated considerable savings on maintenance costs that are now delivered by the "in-house" team. In 2007 MHA joined the SHG and further efficiencies have been achieved, particularly in relation to the purchase of services such as insurance.

The disappearance of RTB income has required the disposal of other assets to bridge the shortfall in the Business Plan. As a result we have developed a structured approach to asset management, which forms a part of the Homes and Environment Strategy. This also identifies the costs of maintaining MHA stock to ensure we meet the requirement of the Decent Homes Standard and more latterly our own Decent Neighbourhood Standard. Issues emerging from this are detailed in the Risks/Challenges section below.

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The Business Plan is updated each year and reflects the current financial position. At 31 March 2009, our debt will have reduced by around £12 million to £35.5 million and we remain on target to repay existing debt by 2025. In 2006 we restructured operations around a new Neighbourhood Strategy and this is the operational model assumed in the Business Plan.

The Plan contains a relatively high level of property disposals and these targets remain challenging in the current uncertain economic climate. A further substantial challenge lies in the need to re-model some of our sheltered housing to bring it up to an appropriate standard.

The Plan remains tight and these challenges demonstrate the need to achieve further efficiencies in MHA's business. These will be delivered through the Annual Efficiency Plan and Value for Money Strategy. MHA continues to achieve its original Business Plan targets for the repayment of debt and the implementation of rent restructuring. However, spare capacity remains limited in the Plan and we will need to ensure that we maximise outcomes from our resources and deliver further efficiencies to offer scope for further service development.

8. Opportunities and Risks

The identification and management of risk is key to a viable and sustainable organisation. The framework for risk management within Spectrum is co-ordinated across the Group by the Spectrum Risk Unit. This ensures a consistent and robust approach across all subsidiaries. The detailed risk identification and management activity is devolved to subsidiaries and captured within a detailed risk map.

From an MHA perspective, an analysis of strengths and opportunities set against an assessment of risks, indicates that our operating environment is generally positive. The one negative indicator within the last three years has been an *uncertain prospects* rating from an Audit Commission inspection in May 2008. However, we have wholly engaged with the resultant improvement plan and a review by the Housing Corporation in November 2008 indicated satisfactory progress in line with expectations.

From a **positive** perspective, we have:

- Preferred local authority partner status
- High levels of overall resident satisfaction (90% - STATUS 2008)
- QHS enhanced accreditation
- Upper quartile benchmarking in most activities
- Motivated and committed staff
- Support of the wider Spectrum Group
- Effective network of partnerships
- A strong local focus
- Track record of improvement and delivery
- Experience through membership of Pan Neighbourhood Partnership

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Board

- Strong engagement with key Government initiatives, e.g. resident involvement, neighbourhoods, worklessness, etc.
- Leading edge in some aspects of neighbourhood management
- Scope to extend the role of Maintenance Direct to further improve services and generate income
- Good track record for successful funding bids
- Extended our expertise in developing support for Social Enterprise initiatives

Potential **risks** relate to:

- Restricted headroom in the Medina Business Plan
- Re-investment needed in some sheltered schemes
- A disappointing inspection outcome
- Potential vulnerability in the Foyer and sheltered housing with future uncertainty over Supporting People funding
- Lean and therefore vulnerable to externally-driven pressures
- Failing to achieve partnership engagement by key agencies
- Failure to deliver efficiency plans
- Failure to respond adequately to emerging TSA requirements
- The impact of the recession
- Potential reduced ability of residents to pay rent as a result of unemployment, etc

9. Core Strategies and Strategic Objectives 2009-14

The four key themes identified in the Vibrant Neighbourhood model are designed to provide strategic coherence and focus. Although individual, they are not intended to be discrete and there are many areas of overlap and synergy. Each theme has its own strategy and defined objectives, which are the subject of separate documents, but are summarised below. They set the strategic direction for the Association, which is then implemented in a way which reflects local circumstances. This is facilitated through our use of Neighbourhood Profiles and Neighbourhood Action Plans as part of our Neighbourhood Programme.

9.1 Active Communities

To contribute to the improvement of social and economic opportunity and inclusion.

The Active Communities Strategy sits at the heart of the Medina Plan's commitment to long term change. The experience of most housing associations is that deprived communities place greater demands on housing services. Such communities are often marginalised, i.e. excluded from the mainstream in terms of employment, education, leisure and health. This results in low aspiration, limited opportunity, financial exclusion and worklessness.

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The Strategy addresses the economic behaviour of our residents, and how their knowledge and skills enables them to increase their productivity and that of the communities in which they live. Our aim is to broker cultural change within communities, foster more positive community links and networks, ensure that our residents are aware of the opportunities available to them, work with partners to help residents in our neighbourhoods overcome actual and perceived barriers to participating in a range of initiatives being delivered and to help engender a sense of pride of place and belonging within our target communities.

Vibrant Neighbourhoods are more than just good quality housing. By working with communities we hope to alter an established spiral of decline. Moving towards better functioning communities will not only improve well-being and the quality of life for many households, it will also, in our view, reduce costs to MHA in relation to voids, arrears, repairs and anti-social behaviour.

The Active Communities Strategy is supported by the Social Enterprise Plan, Sheltered Housing Review action plan, Foyer three year plan and the Play and Leisure scoping report which has identified priority areas for improving play and leisure opportunities.

Measures of success:

- Improved Perception Studies across all neighbourhoods by 2012
- Appropriate play activities and facilities in all neighbourhoods by 2015
- Increase in neighbourhood events in sheltered schemes by 30% by 2012

9.2 Homes and Environment

To achieve high quality homes and neighbourhood environments.

Key to the achievement of Vibrant Neighbourhoods are the homes and environment in which residents live and work. The condition of their homes is the most important issue for the majority of our tenants (STATUS 2008). Our physical assets are vital to the long term viability of MHA. They are the basis of income generation through rents and they absorb the majority of our expenditure through planned and responsive maintenance. For many tenants, reporting a repair is the only or main contact they have with us, so it is crucial that we provide an efficient, tenant-centred, effective service.

Our aim is to achieve and exceed the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard before 2010. We also plan to maintain a *Decent Homes Plus* approach to property condition throughout the life of this plan. Our target is that all homes will be well maintained, economical to heat, free from hazards and above all meet the needs of the residents. Through active consultation with residents we will ensure that high quality, sustainable, value for money services are provided, offering choice wherever possible. We have in recent years brought maintenance activities in-house where appropriate, achieving

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significant cost reductions, improved satisfaction and greater control over delivery.

We will work closely with Neighbourhood Partnership Boards to develop service standards which reflect residents' requirements for specific localities. In addition, we have established the Medina Homes Panel, which will provide the opportunity for tenants to input into policy and strategic development in respect of repairs and asset management. Through effective **Asset Management** we have used stock condition data, to develop planned maintenance programmes in conjunction with residents, to prioritise properties and neighbourhoods that fail to meet standards.

We will consider how we can support local business through a strategic approach to procurement, recognising a fragile Island economy. This will extend to the possible promotion of social enterprises.

We will also seek to support and contribute to the Island's Sustainable Community Strategy, *Eco Island*. Through ISO 14001 accreditation we will seek to reduce Medina's carbon footprint and improve the efficiency of our homes and workplace.

The Homes and Environment Strategy is supported by the Asset Management Plan, the Environmental Policy, Service Review Plans and Neighbourhood Action Plans.

Measures of success:

- Achieving Decent Homes Standard by 2010
- Achieving Decent Neighbourhood Standard by 2015
- Improving Energy Ratings to an average SAP rating of 70 by 2012

9.3 Residents Involvement (to be known as Residents Voice)

To develop resident involvement mechanisms and initiatives which comply with the requirements of the Tenant Services Authority, meet residents' needs and enable residents to exercise choice, influence and effective governance in the way in which MHA delivers services and develops plans for the future.

Residents are at the heart of our business and we are committed to involving them in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods. Through a partnership approach we aim to develop excellent and continuously improving services which meet our residents' needs and provide good value for money.

We retain the commitment in our Neighbourhood Strategy that: "At the heart of the Strategy is a commitment to working in partnership with residents and local stakeholders to create a cohesive environment within which people choose to live, work and play". The establishment of a Resident Involvement Unit in 2007, has enabled us to put this commitment into practice and to resource and innovate to ensure involvement. An example of this is the Menu of Involvement (MOI). We have seen the benefit of this in the improved

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perception of residents in their ability to influence outcomes.

Our principal goal is to ensure that MHA residents have the opportunity to influence all the Association's activities and are able to monitor and review delivery. We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all our tenants to participate.

We believe that by supporting and equipping our residents to be influential within MHA, they will be able to use their skills more widely and become more influential within their neighbourhoods. By promoting this, we will also be developing human capital and enhancing prospects for employment. There are clear links between resident involvement and all the other themes. More engaged tenants will feel a greater ownership of their homes, neighbourhoods and environment.

We recognise that the establishment of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) further increases the expectations on social landlords to improve their performance in relation to providing tenants with real influence and choice in the services they receive. This fully resonates with our approach in the Medina Plan.

Residents Voice is supported by the Resident Involvement Strategy, Resident Involvement Toolkit, Spectrum Resident Involvement Policy.

Measures of success:

- Measure of perceived influence (STATUS)
- MOI take up
- Levels of Resident Involvement

9.4 Sustainable Neighbourhoods

To contribute to improved baseline social indicators as appropriate to each neighbourhood by 2014.

We are committed to create safe and secure environments with good quality homes in locations in which people wish to live. Hard to let properties, which are difficult to manage are costly, wasteful and are rarely perceived of as homes. Our commitment is to enable diverse households to occupy our properties in a manner which reflects their needs and aspirations; with secure and peaceful enjoyment and receive the services and support appropriate to their circumstances. We have signed up to the Respect Agenda and take seriously our obligations to safeguard victims of inappropriate behaviour. We will work closely with partners to ensure that a co-ordinate approach is adopted, which is more likely to be effective. Our preference is to prevent ASB in the first instance, and we adopt the Safer By Design criteria to reduce opportunities for environment-related tensions.

Knowledge and evidence are at the heart of the Medina Plan. The development of our use of Neighbourhood Profiles will provide a platform for

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partnership, offer a framework for identifying multi-layered neighbourhood characteristics, map trends and determine and prioritise prospective actions. The resultant Neighbourhood Action Plans offer the potential to effectively co-ordinate these diverse actions and to act as a vehicle through which to engage local residents in developing local action plans which they can influence.

Partnership underpins all aspects of achieving Sustainable Neighbourhoods. Our links with practitioners from the Police, Health Authority, Social Services, voluntary sector and other social housing providers is key. We have service level agreements with a number of organisations, including the Law Centre, CAB, Credit Union, mediation providers and IoW Revenues and Benefits to ensure that support and service delivery is delivered in an efficient and effective manner.

We work in a low-income area, with members of the community who are most likely to be excluded from the financial mainstream either through age, disability, caring responsibilities, low levels of experience and qualifications and other forms of disadvantage. In order to maintain vibrant and sustainable neighbourhoods, we need to invest time and resources into providing support and opportunity for our residents where possible. Failure to do this will result in increased deprivation and potentially 'unmanageable' areas. As a result, we have developed a structured approach to addressing social and financial marginalisation through our *Financial Inclusion Strategy*.

We aim to develop 'decent neighbourhoods'. Good quality homes in areas where people do not wish to live is not a sustainable position. We will look to foster the development of *neighbourhood wellbeing*, defined as "people continuing to want to live in the same community both now and in the future... a local community's satisfaction with its neighbourhood". The Sustainable Neighbourhoods Strategy will be the vehicle to achieve this, particularly through the Decent Neighbourhood Audits, Neighbourhood Walkabouts and local neighbourhood surgeries.

Sustainable Neighbourhoods is supported by the Tenancy Sustainment Plan, Financial Inclusion Strategy, ASB Policy, Neighbourhood Profiles and Action Plans, and Service Review Reports.

Measures of success:

- Reduction in rent arrears
- Improved satisfaction with neighbourhoods
- Achieving DNS standard by 2015

9.5 Value for Money

To contribute to MHA's financial viability by ensuring the most productive use of resources through achieving cost-effectiveness and value for money

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Value for Money is an integral part of the vibrant neighbourhoods model which is at the core of the Medina Plan. As a result of our financial constraints, we need to deliver efficiencies which can be re-invested elsewhere in its business. We would, in any event, seek to optimise efficiency within the organisation since this will enable us to deliver more and/or improved services to our residents. To ensure we achieve this, we will operate a *Value for Money Strategy*, and adopt an *Efficiency Plan*, which will identify targets and opportunities for improved financial delivery.

Cost efficiencies will continue to be delivered by procuring goods and services at lower cost while recognising that the quality of the product or service cannot be compromised as a result. In particular we will seek to drive down costs by (i) using the purchasing power of Spectrum Housing Group and (ii) taking further maintenance work “in house” where this is appropriate.

As well as generating cost savings, MHA is committed to reviewing the way in which we deliver services and applying the principles of efficiency to those services through an ongoing Service Review process which will include value for money as an integral consideration. We recognise the importance of getting all key stakeholders involved in Value for Money and are committed to providing training to staff, Board members and resident groups in this respect. We have also established a resident working group, the *Money Matters Group*, to be a consultative body for vfm and related matters.

We are clear that productivity can often be improved through focussed and targeted investment in IT. In such cases, we will seek returns either in actual cost savings service delivery improvements result and that these will be accounted for in the Efficiency Plan.

We recognise the importance of performance measurement in achieving value for money and we will continue to use Housemark and other benchmarking tools to assess performance over time and against peer group organisations.

As well as generating efficiencies from within Medina, we are also set to benefit from the centralisation of back office systems within Spectrum Housing Group. The Finance, IT and Personnel functions are subject to considerable investment in new computer systems which are common to all companies within the Group and these are expected to deliver considerable efficiency savings over the medium term.

The Value for Money Strategy is supported by the Annual Efficiency Plan, Value for Money Log and Housemark Benchmarking data.

Measures of success:

- Reduction in operating costs over the life of the plan
- Year on Year improvements in lower costs/extended services

9.6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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To support and empower communities and individuals to achieve the quality of life to which they aspire irrespective of their personal characteristics, values or beliefs. To promote harmony and awareness amongst residents, staff, contractors, partners and stakeholders to ensure that all who come into contact with MHA are valued, supported and respected.

Our commitment in delivering the Medina Plan is to achieve a position in which no household is denied housing, services or opportunity solely because of their racial, gender, age, disability or other personal characteristics. We also recognise that in order to successfully develop and deliver services which meet tenants' needs, we must know and understand those needs.

Based on as comprehensive a level of knowledge of our tenants' needs and requirements as we can reasonably generate, we will ensure that our resources are geared towards accommodating the diverse needs of the communities we serve. For instance, we know that we have disproportionately high numbers of disabled and elderly tenants. We have therefore recently conducted a Sheltered housing review geared towards improving service and re-investing in our sheltered schemes and we plan to spend nearly three quarters of a million pounds on adaptations to our stock. We will also conduct a service review of aids and adaptations during the first half of 2009.

We will deliver our diversity plans through the context of Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes generated by both the Spectrum Group and also by partners working together on the Isle of Wight. We will also work closely with our tenants and other key stakeholders through our EDI Group and Stakeholders Forum. Full details of our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion are contained within our **EDI Policy** and **Diversity Action Plan**.

- EDI is supported by Spectrum EDI Policy, Spectrum Gender and Disability Equality Schemes, Island Race Equality Scheme, Resident Profiling Data, Annual Impact Assessments.

Measures of success:

- High satisfaction ratings for all representative groups across all services
- Compliance with legislation and good practice
- Effective involvement across all representative groups
- Reduction of negative impacts as gauged through Annual EDI Audit and impact assessment.

10. Neighbourhood Programme

Our Vibrant Neighbourhoods model places housing at the centre of a partnership framework. We recognise that sustainable neighbourhoods and communities are not achieved through good housing alone, but are equally

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dependent on employment, leisure, transport, shopping, schools and health facilities, hence our commitment to working with others linking in to these areas. Fundamental to the Medina Plan is the need to work closely with other agencies and partners to deliver a holistic approach to service delivery. This partnership is focused on the development of a series of Neighbourhood Profiles, which deliver evidenced perspectives of the needs of local neighbourhoods, which allows prioritised programmes of action to be negotiated with residents and partners.

Key examples are our involvement in the Pan Neighbourhood Partnership and the establishment of the Oakfield/Elmfield Partnership Board. In both cases, these vehicles have enabled us to engage more effectively with key stakeholders, deliver improved outcomes to residents and attract additional funding.

We recognise that we are not able to deliver the full range of social and economic changes needed to reverse deprivation by ourselves. The longer term objectives of this Plan, relating to improvements in baseline indicators health, education and employment are simply not in our gift. However, we can look to promote and facilitate the dialogue, mechanisms and ambition for this to become achievable. We have seen the benefits of using non-traditional methods of service delivery and engagement to achieve the traditional “core” outcomes, such as lower void levels, reduced anti-social behaviour and improved satisfaction.

Neighbourhood Partnership Boards (NPBs)

Our experience indicates that a focus on local identity, an emphasis on personal contact and the opportunity to really influence decisions is the key to getting local residents involved in neighbourhood initiatives. This has been borne out in the work conducted by PNP on Pan.

We are looking to develop Neighbourhood Partnership Boards (NPB) to cover our three main geographical areas as offering a way to consolidate progress and cement resident interest in neighbourhood engagement. We believe that NPBs offer a good vehicle for promoting greater local accountability, influence over service delivery and devolution of spending decisions. We have already put in place the mechanisms to support this approach through DNS Audits and Neighbourhood Profiles, which will contribute to the development of Neighbourhood Action Plans. We will co-ordinate and support the work of the NPBs through an executive group, the Working in Neighbourhoods Group (WING).

Our intention is that these Boards will, in time, establish resident majorities, with additional membership of key stakeholders and service providers and more generally serve the interests of the neighbourhoods they serve, not just relate to housing issues. This has been demonstrated to work at Pan and we believe it is possible and desirable to extend this to other localities and this is our aim. We recognise that this requires support and engagement from a range of other agencies, organisations and town and parish councils and wide

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consultation with residents. The process of engagement will represent a key objective during 2009.

Role of Neighbourhood Partnership Boards

The role of NPBs is envisaged as primarily to negotiate, monitor and review Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) both annually and to establish medium and longer term objectives. These individual and customised NAPs will be the key mechanism for the delivery of Vibrant Neighbourhoods. The NAP objectives will be agreed and prioritised on the basis of data derived from Neighbourhood Profiles, Neighbourhood Walkabouts and surgeries, Decent Neighbourhood Audits (see Appendix) and routine neighbourhood activity (see below). We will look, where possible, to identify and devolve influence over budgets to NPBs. We also believe that effective Partnership Boards can offer an ideal mechanism for local community engagement in relation to governance and place shaping.

11. Continuous Improvement

Medina fully engages with the process of continuous improvement. We recognise the need to consistently deliver the maximum impact from our available resources. We also recognise that the needs and aspirations of our residents change over time, as does our operating environment.

Our approach to this process is guided by a Group-wide framework to ensure consistently high performance from each subsidiary. The Continuous Improvement procedure sets out a timeline for setting objectives. This synchronises the two fundamental parts of the planning process – budgeting and objective setting.

To achieve this, we undertake a thorough analysis of our current position through reviews and analyses and impact assessments. The resulting outputs form the basis of the broad strategic themes for the coming year, which are approved by both the Medina Board and the Spectrum Resident Group.

We also undertake a series of impact assessments which are reviewed by the Medina Board. These are synchronised across the Spectrum Group.

Specifically:

- Impact of Asset Management Strategy
- Impact of Neighbourhood/Community Strategy
- Impact of Resident Involvement Strategy
- Impact of Value for Money Strategy
- Impact of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

This overarching framework is supported by a structured programme of:

- Service reviews
- Quarterly Performance Reports

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- Neighbourhood Audits
- QHS Audits
- Benchmarking

We operate a three-year programme of service reviews which covers all of our key activities, set out in the table below.

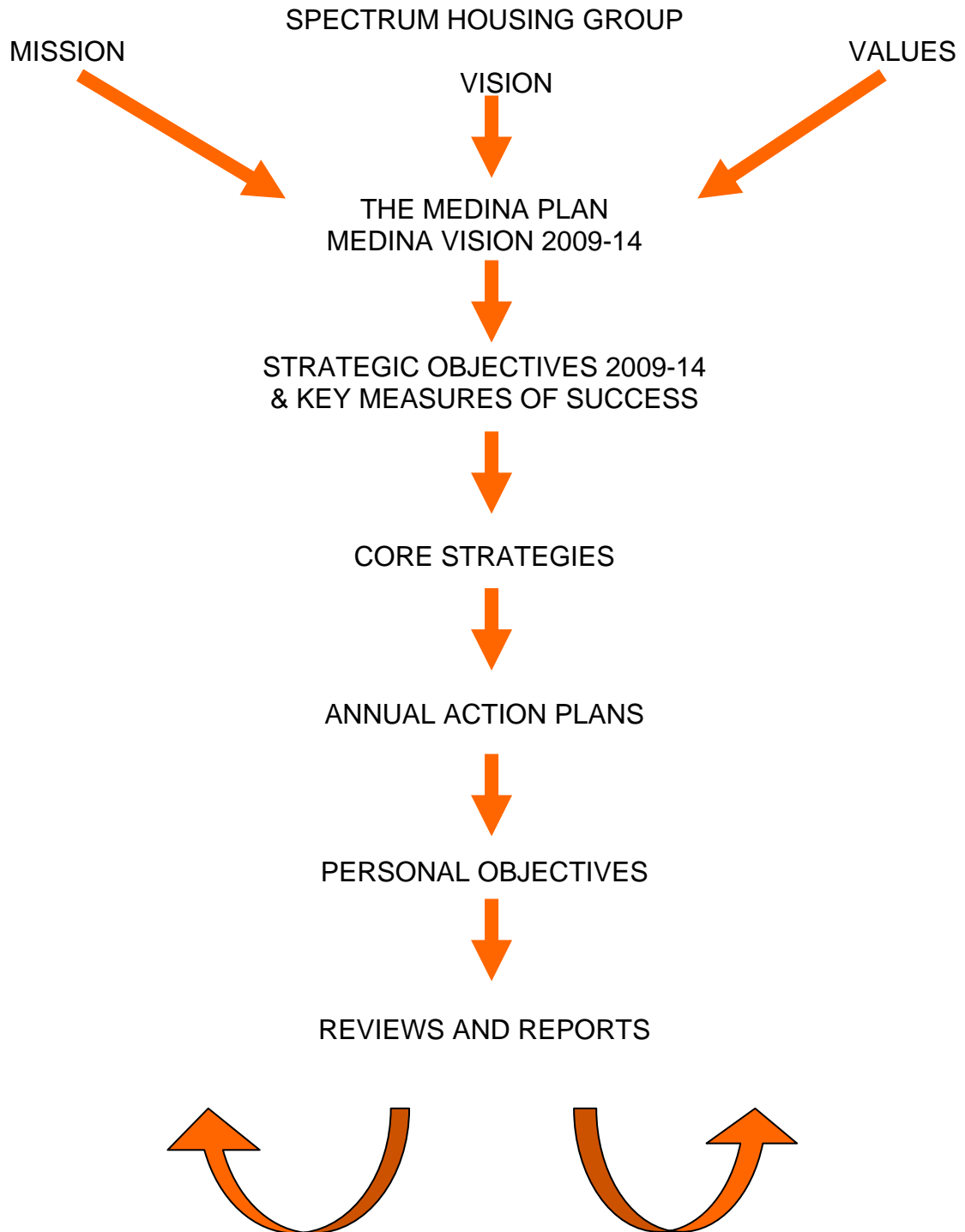
| Ref | Objective | Lead Officer | Time Target |
|------------|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| SRP16 | Sheltered Housing | CEM | October 2008 |
| SRP9 | Current and Former Tenant Arrears Collection | HoNS | June 2009 |
| SRP10 | Debt Advice | HoNS | June 2009 |
| SRP11 | Resident Involvement | RIM | June 2009 |
| SRP7 | Aids and Adaptations | HoMS | June 2009 |
| SRP19 | Complaints | PMM | Nov 2009 |
| SRP4 | Responsive Repairs | HoMS | Nov 2009 |
| SRP13 | Enforcing Tenancy Conditions and Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour | HoNS | Nov 2009 |
| SRP3 | Capital improvement, planned and cyclical maintenance and major repairs. | HoMS | June 2010 |
| SRP8 | Rent and Service Charge Accounting | HoNS | June 2010 |
| SRP17 | Leasehold Management | RIM | Nov 2010 |
| SRP12 | Tenancy Management | HoNS | Nov 2010 |
| SRP6 | Gas Servicing | HoMS | Nov 2010 |
| SRP1 | Service Standards for Access, Customer Care and User Focus | PMM | June 2011 |
| SRP14 | Neighbourhood Management | HoNS | June 2011 |
| SRP2 | Stock Investment – Strategic Approach | HoMS | Nov 2011 |
| SRP5 | Voids – Relet standard and speed of turnaround | HoMS/ HoNS | Nov 2011 |
| SRP15 | Allocations and Lettings | HoNS | Nov 2011 |
| SRP18 | Management of Right to Buy | RIM | Nov 2011 |

Table 1 Medina Service Review Programme

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Appendix 1: The Golden Thread In The Medina Plan



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Appendix 2: Appendices Proposed to be included on accompanying CD

Appendix 2 - Action Plan 2009/10 (strategic objectives)

Appendix 3 - Annual Plan (operational objectives)

Appendix 4 - Neighbourhood Programme

Appendix 5 - Risk Map

Appendix 6 - Medina's Objective Setting Model

Appendix 7 - Social Enterprise Plan

Appendix 8 - Value For Money Strategy

Appendix 9 - Environmental Policy

Appendix 10 - Anti-social Behaviour Policy

Appendix 11 - Sheltered Housing Review Action Plan

Appendix 12 - Foyer Three Year Plan

Appendix 13 - Play and Leisure Scoping Report

Appendix 14 - Medina Business Plan

Appendix 15 - Medina Budget and Rent Plan

Under Development

1. Active Communities Strategy
2. Homes and Environment Strategy
3. Resident Involvement Strategy
4. Sustainable Neighbourhoods Strategy
5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
6. Tenancy Sustainment Plan

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