



STRATEGIC PLAN

2017 - 2022

TRIDENT GROUP AT A GLANCE

1 Employs over 750 people

2 Works with 13 Local Authorities

3 Supports up to 8,000 people each year

4 Group Turnover £33m

5 Supports care contracts worth over £13.5m

6 Owns and manages 3424 homes

7 Invested £36.3m to create 341 new homes in five years

8 Spending £6m over 5 years on capital repairs

9 An average of 1200 lets carried out each year

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EXECUTIVE INTRODUCTION

The past 5 years, since we developed our last Corporate and Business Plans, have seen a cavalcade of changes in the external world that have had a profound effect on the Housing and Care sectors and on our customers.

We have seen significant regulatory changes, the introduction of austerity measures including Welfare Reform, funding cuts for Local Authorities and Care Commissioners, rent reduction for the social housing sector and face further uncertainty and change as a result of an impending General Election and the exit from the European Union.

In the face of such change it can be very easy to lose sight of who you are and why you are here. At Trident Group we remain clear and unchanged in our belief that our resources are best directed at providing homes and services for those most in need.

We have continued to provide these services and remain a financially robust organisation, meeting the covenant requirements of all lenders and the compliance requirements of our regulators and Care Commissioners.

This Strategic Plan combines our Corporate Strategy and Financial Business Plans to set out a clear path to remaining a sustainable business whilst keeping focus on delivering our Vision, Mission and Values (outlined on page 4), and reaffirms our commitment to working with disadvantaged communities and individuals.



John Morris - Group Chief Executive



Trident Housing accommodation on Central site in Birmingham

This continuity of focus does not mean that we are unchanged or unchanging, and one of our key strengths has always been our ability to respond to change. We recognise that now more than ever, to continue delivering effective services to our customers and to secure a long, stable future for the organisation we have to remain agile and responsive to our changing and uncertain operating environment.

To achieve this Trident Group has already embarked on a journey of business transformation, streamlining the structure of the business and re-focussing our services. We have unified our Group Structure (as detailed on page 4) and as an organisation we have assessed the delivery priorities that will enable us to consolidate these changes to reaffirm Trident Group as a stable but agile organisation that is fit for the long-term future.

On pages 7 to 10 we outline our priorities and the strategic goals which will shape our work over the next five years, and our Business Plan supports our achievement of these goals, and gives us significant assurance that we can fund our ongoing and future activities whilst meeting all stakeholder covenants and compliance requirements.

The Strategic Plan is intended to be a live document which will be embedded into everything we do; it will be used to set operational targets for departments and individuals, and will be reviewed annually to take account of any internal and external changes, and to give assurance that following the Plan still allows us to deliver our mission as a sustainable business.

John Morris
Group Chief Executive

WHO WE ARE

Trident Group has been providing homes and care and support services to people in some of the most disadvantaged communities in the Midlands for over 50 years. Trident Group owns and manages over 3,400 properties and has one of the highest proportions of supported accommodation among social housing providers.

The Group employs more than 750 staff, works with over 150 volunteers and provides services to approximately 8,000 people. With an annual turnover of more than £33m and assets close to £170m, the Group is also a member of one of the country's development partnerships, Matrix Housing Partnership.

The Group includes **Trident Housing**, which provides landlord services for the Group in respect of housing management and maintenance; **Trident Reach**, a registered care and support charity providing services (homeless, mental health, young people, older people, BME groups and domestic violence) to people in the Midlands; and **Trident Star**, the Group's commercial body.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Trident Group is led by a highly-skilled professional Board who are committed to driving the organisation to achieve its strategic goals. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to ensure we have the correct governance structure for our organisation, and that the Board skills meet the needs of both current areas of business and future business development.

We commissioned an independent Governance Structure Review in 2015. Following the process we simplified the existing group structure, where we existed as 5 subsidiaries and each was run by a separate board in addition to an overall Group Board, to a Common Board of between 10 to 12 members (including the Group Chief Executive and a Senior Independent Director) governing one housing association, one charity and one reinvigorated commercial arm. Streamlining governance gives us greater oversight of the whole organisation as well as greater clarity of responsibility and accountability.

Supporting the Common Board are two committees: People and Performance Committee and the Audit and Assurance Committee, as well as an experienced Executive Team. The Executive consists of the Group Chief Executive, Group Finance Director, Executive Lead for People and Resources, Executive Lead for Housing, Care and Support and Executive Lead for Technical Services; they bring with them a wealth of experience from the private, public and third sectors.

To test and safeguard the strength of our governance we have annual independent governance assessments. These include a thorough board skills audit and testing of our succession and recruitment plans.

We operate in accordance with the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Governance and will review our choice annually to ensure that we are operating to the most appropriate standard for our organisation.




Trident Group has over 50 years of delivering homes, services and innovation for up to 8,000 people in over 3,400 homes in some of the most disadvantaged communities in the Midlands.



Trident Reach is a registered care and support charity providing services to people within the Midlands. These services include homeless, learning disabilities, mental health, young people, older people, BME groups and domestic violence.



Trident Star is the Group's commercial body, which will play a growing role in supporting further increase in the Group's surplus.

MANAGING OUR BUSINESS

ASSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The Group's approach to risk is to identify, assess, manage and mitigate the negative impact of risk, rather than to seek to eliminate or avoid risks altogether, as this could ultimately inhibit growth and innovation and prevent us delivering our Strategic Plan.

We implement a 'whole organisation' and continuous improvement approach to risk; our appetite and direction has been settled through open managed debate by the Group Board, the Executive and Senior Management Team, and whilst the ultimate responsibility for risk rests with the Group Board, we make it clear that responsibility for risk management sits with everyone in the organisation.

The management of risk within Trident Group is a continuous process that is linked to the Group's strategic planning annual cycle and is designed to identify and prioritise the risks.

In addition to our active risk management processes we operate a robust system of internal controls under an assurance framework set by our Audit and Assurance Committee.

These controls include extensive stress testing of our business plans, a wide ranging set of external audits and a full programme of internal audits carried out by our in-house auditor and by external independent review.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Trident Group has adopted the mantra 'Every Pound Counts' to embed into the delivery of all our services our approach to Value for Money (VFM).

Many of our residents and customers have complex needs and vulnerabilities (as evidenced through our past research work with the charitable think-tank, Human City Institute) and this inevitably requires additional investment in services.

Therefore our aim is not to be the cheapest when compared with our peers, but to balance value with the diverse requirements of our customer-base, aiming for our costs to be no more than the median when compared to our peers.

We believe that when making an investment in our services and our people (staff, residents and customers) we should consider not just the immediate cost, but the longer term and wider impact that investment can make.

This does not prevent us from aiming to reduce costs where we can, provided we are maintaining effective services to our residents and customers. For this reason, over the course of this Plan, we will be continuing to work to our Cost Improvement Plan, consolidating assets and streamlining services to eliminate duplication and inefficiencies across the Group.

We wish to be recognised as a trusted and supportive community-based provider of quality services, maximising our social value where possible.

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

Trident puts our residents at the centre of everything we do; understanding and working with our residents, both in order to improve our services and their opportunities, is absolutely integral to achieving our vision and mission.

Much of our focus on working with residents is around building their skills and addressing the increasing problem of social isolation; this can be getting them to participate in craft or lifeskills workshops, or attending our Breakfast Club. We also offer volunteering and apprenticeship opportunities, and work with external partners to provide employment based skills training.

Given the operating and funding environment we now work in, we have had to consider carefully how we offer effective but cost-efficient ways for our residents to engage with us, and so we have streamlined our direct resident scrutiny moving from multiple service-specific scrutiny panels, to one unified 'Challenge Panel'.

We are also focussing on developing our digital engagement platforms to enhance two-way communication, and on creating further partnerships to deliver services to our residents.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Trident Group is committed to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded in every aspect of our work. Working in the Care and Social Housing sectors we have a very diverse customer group and we realise that having staff, board and committee members, contractors and stakeholders who not only understand this diversity but reflects it, is essential to delivering our mission.

Trident Group actively promotes all aspects of social, cultural and diversity matters through workshops, briefings and training. The Group aims to not only meet their legal obligations, but go much further in creating a fairer and more equal place to live, work and visit.

In order to ensure we deliver the best and most relevant services for our diverse customer base, we need to ensure we understand who they are and what they need. This is why we are committing to updating our customer profiling information systems and content as part of our Strategic Plan.

OUR PEOPLE

Our people are one of our greatest assets and the recruitment, training and retention of skilled motivated staff is key to achieving our objectives. To respond to changes in our operating environment we have started a process of transformation to a much closer Group structure, fully integrating our Care and Housing Services.

Some structural changes have already been made and during the first year of this Plan, we will be completing this alignment of services. To support these changes, which we recognise can be unsettling for staff, we have and will continue to be transparent and communicate with all staff and stakeholders.

RESPONDING TO OUR ENVIRONMENT

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

In recent years it has often seemed that organisations who are engaged in supporting the most vulnerable find themselves at odds with central government policy, and the constant change and uncertainty around policy detail has made it difficult to plan, respond, and fund new initiatives at just the time when they are greatly needed.

There is both a housing crisis and a social care crisis. There is a shortfall of affordable housing for all groups and a lack of adequate care services for the increasing number of elderly and vulnerable individuals who rely on the social care system.

The Local Government Association estimates that by 2020 there will be a gap of £5.8 billion in Local Authority funding, £2.6 billion of which is in social care.

The estimate of the housing shortfall varies widely according to sources, but the Government's 2017 White Paper on Housing estimates that between 225,000 and 275,000 additional homes need to be built to keep up with existing and future demand.

Despite these shortfalls central government has continued to cut direct funding for both these sectors over the past two terms.

There has been public and political negativity towards the social housing sector, and towards Local Authority spending, but this has appeared to soften in more recent months.

GOVERNMENT AUSTERITY

Trident Group continues to support an extremely vulnerable client group who, under austerity, has fared even worse than most other sections of society.

They have been subject to income restricting measures such as bedroom tax, benefit caps, harsher sanctions and demands placed on claimants and all the associated stresses of this situation.

In addition, the housing sector has seen its income and security restricted through the introduction of a 1% rent reduction for 4 years, unfavourable Universal Credit payment arrangements and the proposed Local Housing Allowance Cap which restricts the benefit payable on social, rented accommodation to levels which leave unaffordable shortfalls, particularly for those under the age of 35.

At the same time our Local Authority partners have come under increasing pressure and funding cuts have meant that providers of frontline Care and Support services are required to respond to unprecedented levels of complex needs.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Regulation of both sides of our business has been subject to change over the past two years. Both Homes England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have produced new standards by which we must adhere, and increased the reporting burden for organisations.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) moved to a model of fewer but more forensic investigations, and also introduced a focus on Value for Money and Risk Management.

The CQC heightened its powers of intervention, including the ability to seek prosecution without prior warning, and enhancing its ability to put care services under special measures where it is believed they are failing to provide adequate care.

Responding to these changes and re-shaping our organisation to best meet these standards has at times been challenging, but we have developed close working relationships with both our regulators to ensure we are meeting all requirements and can offer robust assurance to all our stakeholders.

IT AND DIGITAL SERVICE DELIVERY

There has been a major shift in recent years towards digital service delivery in all sectors. Consumers expect it and the Government is increasingly moving access to services online. We aim to use innovation and technology to enhance delivery and outcomes that are customer focused, that will create efficiencies, and that make better use of technology.

Significant investment has been made in future-proofing both our internal and external IT systems. We have focussed on establishing a stable platform of solutions for our workforce over the course of our last Business Plan including complete agile working solutions to improve our responsiveness to customers.

Over the lifespan of the next Strategic Plan we will deliver enhanced self-service technology for our customers that will allow them to log and track their repairs, make payments, view online account data and manage their housing account information. We will make advanced changes to our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) application that supports all customer interactions with enhanced business intelligence capabilities to improve digital services.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

RISK AND OPPORTUNITIES

To ensure we respond appropriately to the changing environment for the housing and care sectors we need to understand what the risks and opportunities are for us as an organisation. We have carried out extensive work assessing our risks and our appetite for these risks, as well as the opportunities change can motivate. The following gives a summary of key risks and opportunities identified through this process.

Risks	Opportunities
Welfare Reform has the potential to negatively impact on our income, and our customers' income.	We are a financially robust organisation, and have a skilled workforce who can support those in financial distress. We have existing relationships with money advice providers who can partner to assist those in need.
Cutbacks in Local Authority budgets may mean reduced availability of funding for care contracts.	Diversification of funding sources to reduce the risk opens us up to new strategic relationships, including with new Local Authorities and Health Authorities.
Reduction in grant availability and inflexibility of tenure for grant restricts ability to expand stock.	Innovative models of funding and delivering housing development are opening up and can be explored.
Increasing complexity of customer needs and reduction in external support available.	Exploring new ways of increasing commercial activity to reinvest in additional support for customers.
Exit from the European Union stops access to European Social Fund for projects.	New partnerships and funding arrangements within the UK to support existing successful services, including corporate sponsorship.

MERGER STRATEGY

Trident Group has always been keen to ensure that it uses its resources well and seeks professional support and capacity where it does not have the expertise within the Group. Where it has the capacity and expertise, it has investigated how to provide that support to other partners particularly around shared services and collaborations with local partners.

The Group's preferred method of maximising collective resources is through partnerships and strategic alliances, but remains open to mergers with like-minded organisations where it fulfils a number of core objectives and fits in with the principles identified by the Group which include:

Fit for Purpose - any additions align with our common objectives, vision and mission. Any addition to the Group will share the Group values and will be approved by the Board.

Contribution - a merger or acquisition will only be made if it helps to improve the circumstances for the Group beneficiaries in some way i.e. improve service delivery.

Value for Money and Risk - additions should not impact financial position or covenants negatively nor demonstrate poor value for money.

PRIORITIES

The following pages set our priorities for the next five years. The strategic objectives and outcomes we have set reflect our assessment of the current and potential impact of our operating environment, and our reflection on how we can best position our organisation to meet the long-term future.

Our strategic objectives and the outcomes we will achieve over the period of this plan are set out under three themes:



PEOPLE



Trident Group aims to be an employer of choice. We want to attract skilled and energetic people to our organisation who share our values and will dedicate themselves to the sometimes very difficult task of supporting and housing vulnerable individuals.

We want to understand our customers better so that we can provide targeted services that genuinely meet their needs and their expectations, and to enable us to advocate successfully on their behalf. We want to be able to communicate with our customers on their chosen platform, creating more effective and meaningful two-way interactions.

Objectives

1. To create and retain a skilled, motivated workforce.
2. To be resident and customer-focused; be clear who our customer base is and target services appropriately to meet their needs.
3. To be a great storyteller, an advocate and campaigner for our residents, service users and their communities.

Outcomes

1. Customer and staff satisfaction levels achieving at least sector average by year 4 of the Plan.
2. Staff turnover no greater than 30% and workforce stability index no less than 75%.
3. Customer feedback levels show a year on year increase in number and we demonstrate change as a direct result.

Actions

Develop a new model for capturing and monitoring Customer Experience (including storytelling) by September 2018.

Develop a Tenant Voice panel of residents and customers who feedback directly to the Board of Directors by September 2018.

Implement a Digitalisation Plan to enhance and develop our communications platforms through 2019/20.

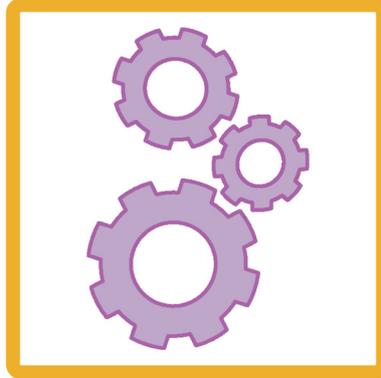
Reduction of agency staff costs by 60% against 2016/17 performance by September 2018.

Develop a staff task group to explore implementation of Psychologically Informed Environments approach to the working culture.

Continue work with Birmingham City Council to implement the City's Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

All staff to have an identified training plan relevant to their role by December 2018.

SERVICE DELIVERY



Trident Group is committed to delivering effective services which represent the best value for our customers. We aim to operate under a fully integrated organisational model which harnesses the strengths of all parts of our business. We aim to create a working atmosphere that encourages communication and seamless coordination between departments and individuals through the whole organisation so that we can deliver the best possible service to our customers.

We recognise that the key to providing effective services is to hold and use accurate up to date information to make strategic and operational decisions; Trident Group is committed to improving our data quality and quantity for this purpose.

Objectives

1. Deliver efficient, effective, targeted services which meet the diverse needs of our current and future customers, whilst maximising our social impact.
2. Manage our resources effectively and efficiently to maximise our return on investment and ensure we have the financial capacity to deliver our priorities.
3. Be recognised as a leading provider of care and support services and accommodation.

Outcomes

1. Year on year improvement in benchmarked performance (as identified in our KPI targets in our Business Plan).
2. Seamless and consistent provision of services and business processes across the Group.
3. Complete, up-to-date core profiling data for all customers and assets held on a central accessible database.

Actions

All departments to develop their own action plan for delivery of the Strategic Plan - March 2018 plus annual review.

Completion of independent stock condition survey and refresh of the Asset Management Strategy by December 2018.

Completion of Service Area Reviews of voids and income management (achieved in July 2017) and implementation of recommendations through 2018/19.

Completion of large scale customer satisfaction survey and an improvement plan agreed where appropriate by October 2018.

Work with residents and customers to develop new Service Standards across all departments within the Group to provide absolute clarity on delivery expectations by December 2018.

Develop improved internal reporting on key business areas for all services by November 2018.

GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY



Trident Group aspires to create steady, sustainable growth, both in terms of property numbers and contract income. Our current Plan looks to sustain existing income levels within our care contracts, but to diversify our income sources and review our target client base. This diversification will concentrate on exploring income sources that allow us to respond to support the social investment needs we have identified, rather than on those commissioned by statutory bodies.

We will be developing new homes at the start of this Plan but this will be followed by a period of consolidation as we focus on the quality of our service delivery and investment in our existing stock. Over the course of this Plan we aim to invest in our commercial entity, Trident Star, to enhance our ability to deliver increased social investment and fund property development in the future. We will also be exploring new Strategic Partnerships that bring innovative solutions to the delivery of care and housing.

Objectives

1. Maintain and sustainably grow the business, focusing on diversification of income and reduction in reliance on statutory funding.
2. Operate a clear sustainable model for housing and care delivery.
3. Provide consistent value for money to our stakeholders and create extra social value in all activities.

Outcomes

1. New models and partnerships for delivery of housing development and support service delivery developed.
2. Expansion of our commercial activities under Trident Star.
3. Efficiency savings of 1% year on year achieved.

Actions

- Complete our Affordable Homes Programme Development by March 2019.
- Complete regeneration and small-scale development of out of use units and sites. Plan by March 2019.
- Complete stock rationalisation reviews including the consolidation of office space by October 2018.
- Full independent review of our treasury arrangements to be undertaken and recommendations to be Implemented by September 2018.
- Relaunch Trident Star to focus our commercial delivery by 2020.
- Develop a comprehensive Growth Strategy for the Group by March 2019.
- Identify how services can provide opportunities for apprentices by March 2019.
- Review our Value for Money Strategy including our approach to monitoring and reporting by September 2018.
- Explore provision of shared services model as a source of additional income by June 2019.

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

I am delighted to join Trident Group as we embark on a challenging new chapter.

The housing and care sectors are experiencing unprecedented levels of change and uncertainty, but have also never been in such great demand. We are facing extreme shortages of affordable housing provision and suitable social care to meet the needs of the population. Trident Group has a long history of providing homes and services to vulnerable individuals and communities, and is determined to carry on doing so even in the face of significant external challenges.



Andy Ballard - Chair of Group Board

The key to achieving this is balancing risk with stability, and it is with this in mind that Trident Group have created this Strategic Plan.

Supported Housing is seen as a risky environment, and one which many providers are turning away from. Trident Group is committed to providing this much-needed resource, but will be doing so from a considered and stable financial and organisational platform.

The Group's strengthened Governance and Risk Management strategies will enable it to constantly keep under review the impact and viability of the activities we are engaged in, to ensure we operate a portfolio of services that are relevant and add value to the lives of others, but that remain financially viable.

The Strategic Plan outlines a path of steady sustainable transformation and supporting this we have a robust five year financial plan. Together this ensures we meet the needs of all of our stakeholders, whether that be regulators, lenders, customers, employees or suppliers. On this basis I commend the Strategic Plan.

The work we are doing now will create firm foundations for securing a long term and exciting future for the Group, and I am looking forward to working with the rest of the Board and the Executive Team to ensure we accomplish the strategic goals we have set for the organisation.

Andy Ballard
Chair of Group Board



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