

Business Plan

2022/23







“ A supply of readily available and affordable accommodation for rural people in rural areas with a view to helping maintain and regenerate rural communities. ”

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Introduction and Mission Statement

Rural Housing Association works throughout Northern Ireland and has a particular interest in working in what are considered to be disadvantaged rural areas. The Association does not see its role as merely providing rural housing but rather helping to build strong and sustainable rural communities. It is a core belief of the Association that the housing requirements of small rural communities are best identified, understood and solved through close co-operation with local community development groups. To this end the Association works closely with local communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in assessing needs and delivering appropriate housing solutions in what is, predominantly, a niche rural market.

The Association's housing stock of 550 dwellings are widely dispersed right across Northern Ireland.

Rural Housing Association is governed by a voluntary Board of Management whose members come from a range of professional, commercial and social backgrounds such as finance, education, not for profit sector, regeneration and the public sector. Together they forge the strategy of the Association and provide an oversight on the operations of the company. They are supported by two subcommittees: Technical Committee and Audit, Risk and Governance Committee.

Much has changed for the Association, its staff and tenants over the last year and our Corporate Strategy which was agreed last year, provides a much clear picture for the organisation going forward in what is hoped will be a post pandemic scenario.

In March 2021 the Board of Management and Senior Staff met virtually to agree a strategic view for the association for the next 3 years. In particular they re-examined the threats and opportunities for the association, considered the association vision and purpose and agreed a set of values that would be carried through by the organisation for the incoming 3 years.

To deliver operationally on these values 5 strategic themes were agreed that would have an overarching influence on the next 3 one year business plans, with targets and KPI's cascading down from Senior Management to Officer level.

Those 5 strategic values are used to guide this business plan for 2022-2023.





Our Vision

“To see rural Northern Ireland thrive through the provision of high quality, comfortable and affordable homes.”

Our Purpose

To provide for rent and sale desirable housing in rural communities throughout rural Northern Ireland that meet local needs.

Our Values

In order to fulfil our purpose we commit to the following values as being essential for our organisation:



Distinctive

As the only specialist rural association in Northern Ireland we will be at the forefront of new ideas and solutions for the provision of housing in the 6 counties.

Passionate

Our goals are unique within Northern Ireland and we will work to inspire others to help achieve them.

Collaborative

Working effectively as a team within our own organisation and with our external stakeholders will provide the desired outcomes.



Customer Inspired

Our tenants will be at the heart of what we do both at a strategic and operational level.

Professional

Our staff are highly qualified and experienced and we will meet all relevant governance standards.

Strategic Objectives

These themes will be set out in each of the business plans for the next three years and cascade down into measurable, progressive KPI's for each Manager and Staff Member.

The progress of these themes against targets are measured and monitored through weekly internal meetings, Senior Management Team meetings and monthly Board of Management meetings, thus providing effective governance and full accountability.

The Association publishes an annual report which provides information on all our financial and business performance for the previous year, alongside a value for money statement which ensures we are using our money effectively and efficiently.

Below are outlined our strategic objectives:





The Challenges

- The impact of Covid-19 pandemic not only presents immediate demands and threats but longer-term goals, plans, and operations need to be assessed in its context to ensure we are considering all the aspects that could affect, not only our business and lives, but also that of our tenants.
- With all staff working at home from mid-march 2020, the Association is now at the juncture of setting new guidelines for a long-term hybrid working model for staff.
- Welfare reform continues to be a prevalent player in the lives of our tenants and in the management of their tenancies. The next year will provide further challenges for them and us as the economy strives to reboot.
- As part of the Social Housing Development Programme we now have an inhouse team of development staff and have seen our staff numbers increase to 21. Systems need to be re-examined to ensure they are fit for purpose given the move to hybrid working.
- The lack of availability of sites in areas of housing need and the changes in planning procedures make our targets more difficult to achieve.
- Brexit and the war in Ukraine provides challenges to our business, suppliers and funders. Along with the pressures of the Covid-19 pandemic, supply chains, health and safety, employment pressures and business practises have converged into a business landscape which is not recognisable and which will continue to put significant pressure on cashflows and budgets over the year.

Financial

Rural Housing Association financial projections are central to the delivery of our Corporate Plan and this Business Plan.

Without a sound, viable financial footing the Association's plans and ambitions would be worthless.

The tables below show the Associations estimates for Income/Expenditure and Balance Sheet for the next three years that will allow this Corporate Strategy's objectives to be met through our annual business plans:



Forecast Income & Expenditure Account



	Budget 2022/23	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25
INCOME			
Rent Receivable	3,059,116	3,312,959	3,537,092
Rates Receivable	439,800	487,673	564,020
Other Income	8,700	7,000	7,000
Amortisation of grants	526,046	536,567	547,298
Profit on disposal	-	-	-
TOTAL INCOME	4,033,662	4,344,199	4,655,410
EXPENDITURE			
Property Costs	687,783	829,980	871,357
Insurance	54,277	59,239	61,527
Rates (net of discount)	395,820	438,906	507,618
Administration Costs	1,038,910	1,068,289	1,106,531
Bad Debt	50,984	55,328	59,505
Development Costs	13,000	13,000	13,000
Depreciation - property	870,026	905,145	923,248
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,110,799	3,369,887	3,542,786
Transfer to Disposal Proceeds Fund			
TRADING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	922,863	974,311	1,112,624
Property	1,120,944	1,183,339	1,331,011
Rates	-	-	-
Administration	(198,080)	(209,028)	(218,387)
	922,863	974,311	1,112,624
FIXED ASSETS AND INTEREST			
Administration Costs Capitalised	198,080	209,028	218,387
Profit/(Loss) on sale of Fixed Assets	-	-	-
Interest Receivable	-	-	-
Interest Payable and other costs	(870,851)	(789,682)	(903,394)
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	250,093	393,657	427,617
Additional Units in the year (social)	43	98	50
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS			
Housing Properties at Cost	77,444,286	86,847,629	95,023,051
LESS			
Depreciation	(11,387,630)	(12,292,775)	(13,216,023)
NET BOOK VALUE OF HOUSING PROPERTIES	66,056,656	74,554,854	81,807,029



Business Priorities for 2022/23

Deliver Excellent Customer Services to our tenants

Priority	Work Stream	Outcome	Measurement of Success	Target
Deliver Excellent Customer Services to our tenants	Continue to adapt systems and processes to enable safe and productive homeworking for staff in the long-term	Provide efficient and effective frontline services to tenants	Health and safety of staff while still providing high customer satisfaction levels	Yr1
	Implement the office plan for hybrid working safely and productively during the pandemic and beyond including an online tenant portal	Provide efficient and effective frontline services to tenants	Health and safety of staff while still providing high customer satisfaction levels	Qtr1 Yr1 dependant on Government Guidance
	Test the Market for high quality IT support and advice	Provide efficient and effective IT for remote homeworking and frontline services to tenants	Staff downtime	Qtr1 Yr1
	Annual publication of tenant newsletter	Communicate effectively with tenants	Increase in Customer Satisfaction Levels	Qtr3 Yr1
	Deliver effective communication to our external stakeholders.	Communicate effectively internally and externally using Communication Action Plan	Increase in Customer Satisfaction Levels	Qtr1 Yr1
	Continue to provide assistance and support tenant panels	Continue to support and Develop opportunities to enable Tenant Panels to fully participate in the governance and decision making processes of service delivery Commit to encourage tenant participation and ensure tenant involvement	Number of groups formed and numbers of Quarterly meetings	Qtr4 Yr1
	Provide a full formal consultation to tenants on the 2023/24 rent increase.	Develop opportunities to allow tenants to participate in decision making process of the association at the highest level	Increase in tenant satisfaction levels	Qtr4 Yr1
	Continue to implement Section 75 duties and Disability action plans and ensure all staff receive regular equality training	Ensure RHA is compliant with all equality legislation and staff are aware of all requirement under the legislation	Number of training sessions	Qtr4 Yr1
	Explore fully with HA5 new tender opportunity for new MTC contractor	Ensure continued quality, effectiveness and value for money and high service levels	Tenant Satisfaction Levels	Qtr2 Yr1
	Carry out regular tenant satisfaction / feedback surveys	Ensure continued quality, effectiveness and value for money and high service levels	Tenant satisfaction levels	Qtr3 Yr1
	Deal effectively with internal and external audits	Ownership and effective responses with clear improvement plans and regular Board and Committee updates	Level of Assurance	Yr 1,2,3
	Test the market for External Audit for next 3- 5 years	Ensure value for money and quality in services provided	Response to Tender	Qtr1 Yr1

Build and provide high quality homes to meet local needs

Priority	Work Stream	Outcome	Measurement of Success	Target
Build and provide high quality homes to meet local needs	Continue new build programme.	65 new Units started - mixture of new development (45) and ESP's (20)	Number of homes	Qtr4 Yr1
	Develop opportunities for provision of mixed tenure housing.	Provide alternatives for potential intermediate housing	Number of homes	Yr1 Yr2 Yr3
	Provide attractive, local, new build through use of our Rural Design Guide	Provide framework and guidance for future developments and deliver well designed schemes with likeminded partners	Number of Design Awards	Yr1 Yr2 Yr3
	Be at the forefront of housing provision in rural areas with limited planning opportunities	Investigate and bring forward to SHDP at least 1 scheme per year in areas of limited planning through PPS2 I	Number of homes	Qtr4 Yr1
	Through local links identify and highlight rural areas where rural needs testing is required	Investigate and bring forward at least one scheme for latent demand testing in conjunction with the NIHE Rural Section	Number of homes	Qtr3 Yr1
	Through ongoing stock condition surveys continue to develop detailed profiling of our properties and their components	Protection of assets	Expenditure at year end	Qtr4 Yr1
	Invest planned and response maintenance including component replacement, external painting and annual servicing	Protection of assets	Expenditure at year end	Qtr4 Yr1
	Market Test for a new £20 million loan portfolio	Ensure future of development programme	Cost for private finance / Number of homes developed	Qtr4 Yr1

Be an Excellent Employer

Priority	Work Stream	Outcome	Measurement of Success	Target
Be an Excellent Employer	Develop highly trained staff as laid out in our Human Resources Strategy	Happy, effective staff with low turnover	Staff turnover	Qtr4 Yr1
	Continue to renew the Board of Management through a renewal programme in accordance with the 9-year rule	Ensure compliance and regeneration of Board	Board numbers and turnover	Qtr1 Yr1
	Provide in-house and external training for Board Members led by an annual skills analysis	Ensure effective and informed Board	Board satisfaction levels through appraisal	Qtr3 Yr1
	Continue to Implement the Board Member Appraisal policy and carry out an annual appraisal of Board Members to identify governance and performance issues	Ensure effective and informed Board	Board satisfaction levels through appraisal	Qtr1 Yr1
	Carry out a review of staffing and structure through an external consultant	Happy, effective staff with low turnover	Staff turnover and sickness levels. Levels of response to Recruitment	Qtr4 Yr1

Priority	Work Stream	Outcome	Measurement of Success	Target
Be a Key Influencer in rural housing policy	Produce yearly operational Business Plan	Identify and measure work targets	Publication	Yr 1, 2, 3 Qtr4
	Encourage Board and Senior staff to make new links with relevant external stakeholders	Increase partnerships with rural community groups to support expansion of community initiatives	New partnerships	Yr1 Qtr4
	Encourage representation on NIFHA board	Increase policy involvement and ensure rural priorities are at the forefront of housing policy	New partnerships	Yr1 Qtr4
	Produce Corporate plan every 3 years	Provide direction and effective strategic leadership in rural policy	Publication	Yr 2 Qtr4
	Use social media to ensure the profile of the Association is at the forefront of rural policy	Provide a high profile for the organisation	KPI's on social media	
	Create a decarbonisation strategy and plan for the Association to implement a 50% reduction in scope 1 and scope 2 emissions by 2030 and commit to reducing scope 3 emission, on a baseline of 2015	Provide leadership in carbon reduction in the rural sector by understanding, measuring, planning and committing publicly to decarbonisation targets	Using a baseline of 2015 / , measuring our organisational footprint and measuring our reductions	Qtr2 Yr1

Priority	Work Stream	Outcome	Measurement of Success	Target
Support and sustain our rural communities	Identify additional Housing for All Neighbourhoods in rural locations	Sustain rural communities through community development	Number of new schemes. Community Satisfaction through project surveys	Qtr1 Yr1
	Extend delivery of community projects focussed on addressing social isolation in rural areas	Sustain rural communities through community development	Community Satisfaction through project surveys	Qtr1 Yr1
	Explore areas to provide non-housing products to our tenants and local communities	Sustain rural communities through community development	Community Satisfaction through project surveys	Qtr1 Yr1
	Work in partnership with the NIHE and local groups to conduct latent demand tests in rural locations	Identify new areas for social housing and sustain local communities	Number of latent demand tests at year end	Qtr1 Yr1
	Implement a hardship fund for our tenants to help sustain tenant welfare and tenancies	Identify those tenants in severe need and provide assistance as required	Number of tenants helped through hardship fund at year end	Qtr1 Yr1

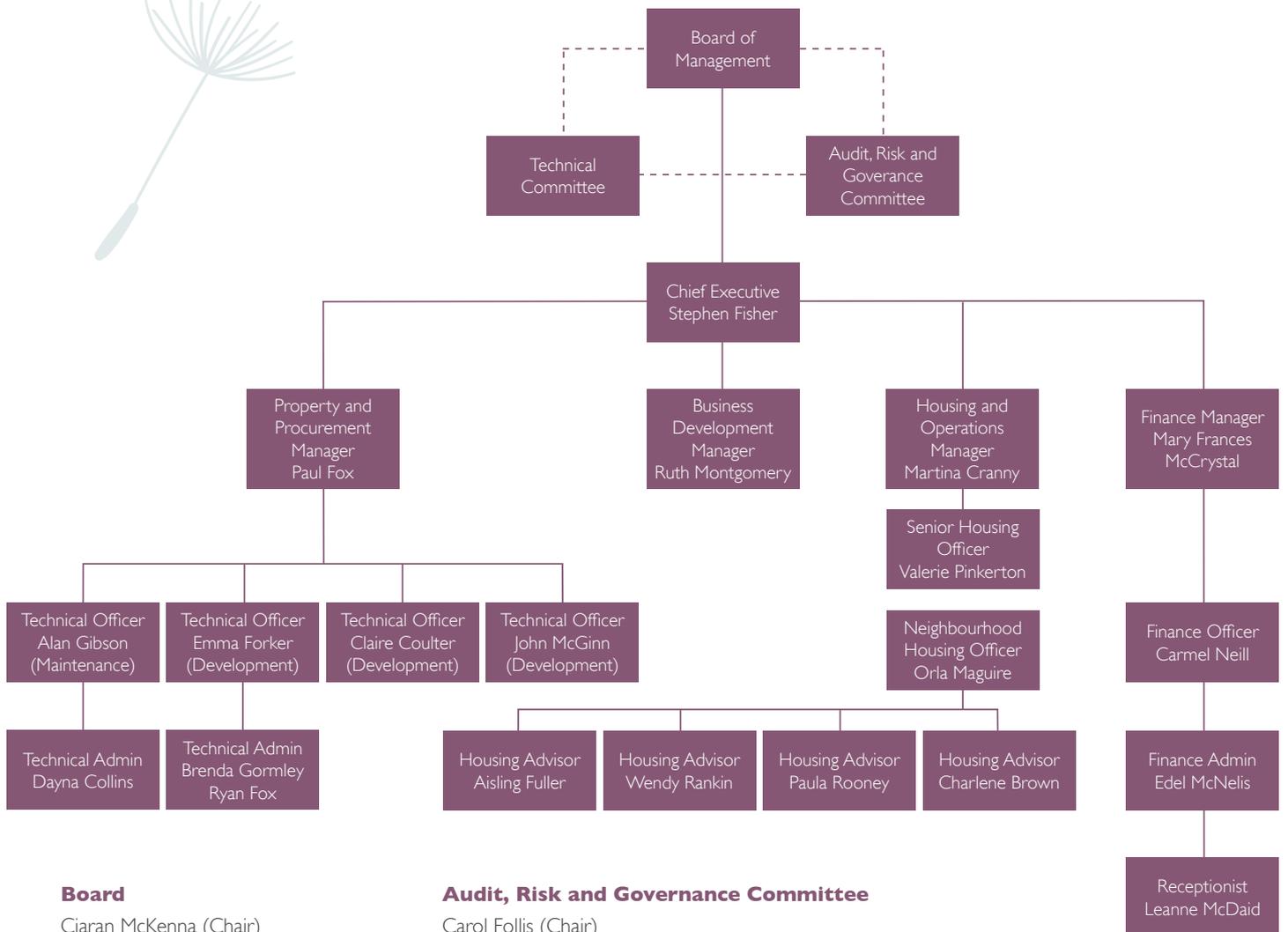
SMART Targets

Measurement		Target Date	Target
Surplus for Year The difference between income and expenditure for the year		Mar-23	£250,093
Prompt Payment Days (normal)		Mar-23	30 days or within contract term if shorter
Prompt Payment Days (new build)		Mar-23	14 days
Gearing Ratio		Monthly	<50%
Interest Cover		Monthly	> 1.35
Interest Cover		Monthly	< 1.1
Current Ratio		Monthly	1.00 or higher
Non-Technical Arrears Arrears owing directly from tenants as a % of rental income expected directly from tenants		Mar-23	5%

Measurement		Target Date	Target
Technical Arrears		Mar-23	5%
Arrears Write Offs Amount of arrears that are not collectable as a % of total rental income		Mar-23	2%
Tenants 13 weeks in arrears		Mar-23	3%
Past Tenant Arrears Arrears owing from ex-tenants as a % of total rental income		Mar-23	2%
Maintenance Costs How much it costs the Association to maintain its properties from day to day		Mar-23	Monthly Budget -5%+5%
Repair Relet Costs How much it costs the Association to bring vacated properties back into lettable condition		Monthly	Monthly Budget -5%+5%
Repair Relet Time How quickly the Association can get repairs done on a vacant property		Monthly	14 Days
Allocation of Relets How quickly the Association can fill a vacant property		Mar-23	35 Days
Voids The cost of vacancies as a % of total rental income		Mar-23	2.0%
Complaints Deal effectively with 90% complaints within time limits		Mar-23	90%
Anti-Social Behaviour Deal effectively with 90% complaints within time limits		Mar-23	90%
TBUC Scheme Identify and initiate within development plan (scheme numbers)		Mar-23	1 new scheme
Grant Aid Identify and claim new grant aid for tenants and local communities (measured in numbers of tenants or residents engaged with fund)		Mar-23	50 additional tenants or local residents are engaged through new grant funding in community activities
Latent Demand How many latent demand tests are carried out with RHA as the lead housing association		Mar-23	5 additional latent demand tests completed in rural areas
Web Site How much traffic directed to RHA website		Monthly	1000 per month
Social Media Active Followers Facebook and Twitter measured in number of people New Followers/Total Followers * 100		Monthly	Extra 100 per month
Social Media Applause Rate – Interaction with social media posts Likes/Followers * 100		Monthly	At least 1100

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Appendix I - Rural Housing Staff



Board

Ciaran McKenna (Chair)
 Neville Armstrong
 Carol Follis (Vice Chair)
 Rory O'Brien (Secretary)
 Alistair McKane (Treasurer)
 Tommy Gallagher
 John Waddell
 Margaret Rafferty
 Claire McKeefry
 Michaela McCusker
 Tom Potter
 Ryan Brady

Audit, Risk and Governance Committee

Carol Follis (Chair)
 Tommy Gallagher
 Neville Armstrong

Senior Management

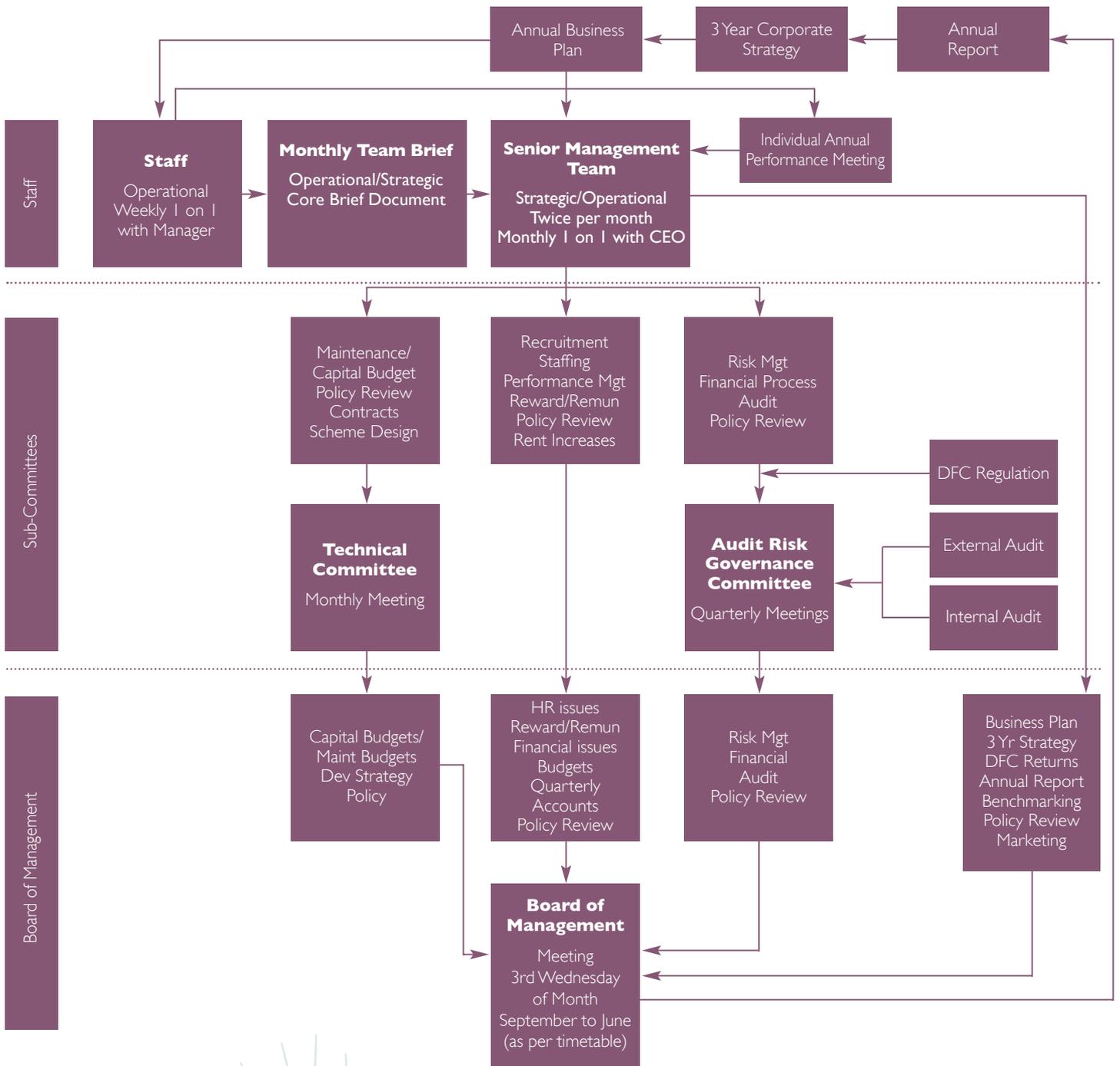
Stephen Fisher (Chief Executive)
 Mary Frances McCrystal (Finance Manager)
 Martina Cranny (Housing and Operations Manager)
 Paul Fox (Property and Procurement Manager)
 Ruth Montgomery (Business Development Manager)

Technical Committee

John Waddell (Chair)
 Alistair McKane
 Rory O'Brien

Appendix I - Operational Infrastructure

Rural Housing Association Governance Process and Workflow 2022-2023





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