



A Year of Evolution & Adaptation

Strategic Review 2021/22

Our Mission

Growing Stronger Communities

Guided by six core principles: safety, health, inclusivity, connection, sustainability and aspiration, we partner with communities to build better futures.

Change is enabled through four strategic focuses: investment, resilience, intelligence and influence. They form the bedrock of the Group Corporate Plan, ["A New Day" 2021-26](#)



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2021/22 Highlights



Strategic

- ✓ **Launched our Corporate Plan – “A New Day”**, setting our strategic approach to dealing with the challenges of the next five years
- ✓ **Conducted a full gap analysis** of requirements from the Social Housing White Paper, putting us in a position to become **“White Paper Ready”**
- ✓ **Unveiled our Business and Customer Intelligence Strategy**, transforming our business intelligence team and enabling further **insight-led decision making**
- ✓ **Published our People Strategy**, pushing forward a culture of improvement and ensuring we have the skills and values to deliver on our ambitions



Developments

- ✓ **346 new homes built and 877 new homes started on site** in the last year, showing our commitment to delivering new homes where they are needed most in our heartlands
- ✓ **84 Shared Ownership sales were completed and 103 reservations were made**, with over £6.7m sales to reinvest in new homes

Safeguarding

- ✓ **Bespoke Safeguarding Training** has been delivered to all teams across the group through 150 sessions, **embedding a new safeguarding approach**
- ✓ **Signed up to** the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, meaning we can begin the journeys towards **achieving DAHA accreditation**



Sustainability

- ✓ **Created and published** Torus’ First Environmental and Sustainability Strategy, setting out our approach to **delivering carbon net zero**
- ✓ **Awarded £2.6m** from wave one the government’s Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF), allowing us to deliver retrofit at scale
- ✓ Set out a formal approach to **integrating MMC into our development pipeline**, allowing us to work with partners and deliver efficient, futureproofed homes
- ✓ **Developed the Group’s first ESG report**, allowing us to better articulate the work we are doing to improve social, environmental and governance activity



Customer Service

- ✓ **Launched our new Customer Access Strategy** and Aligned Service Standards, providing customers with a clearer understanding of the levels of service they should expect from us
- ✓ **Shortlisted for two TPAS awards**, the “the Outstanding Tenant Engagement Award” and “Excellence in Tenant Communication Award”
- ✓ **Launched our new Aids and Adaptations Policy**, ensuring our tenants with disabilities or age-related conditions have access to services which can help maintain dignity and independence



Health and Safety

- ✓ **100% of service and remedial works completed** following Health and Safety checks, reflecting our commitment to stringent safety compliance
- ✓ **Signed up to the Building a Safer Future (BSF) Charter**, enhancing our Safety Plus approach and meaning we go beyond basic regulatory requirements



Tenant Support

- ✓ **Supported 1,004 individuals into work** through targeted and person-centred programmes that offer a holistic approach to workplace integration
- ✓ **Unlocked £4.2m in grants and benefits** for residents, ensuring our tenants our claiming all they are entitled to and can better manager their finances
- ✓ **1,898 individuals were supported** by digital inclusion activities with **96% of this group** reporting an increase in digital confidence
- ✓ **2,048 over 18s took part** in Health and Wellbeing Activities, physical activity, mental health coaching and healthy eating programmes
- ✓ **Delivered targeted** energy and cost of living projects, combating one of the most significant issues facing our tenants

Notes From the Chair

In a year dominated by after effects left by the global pandemic and increasing economic uncertainties, Torus has continued to work tirelessly to support customers, communities and our people.

I am pleased to report that, despite the socio-economic turbulence witnessed in 2021/22, we have continued to deliver on the strategic objectives we set out in 'A New Day' – Torus' Corporate Plan for 2021/26. Most importantly, as a resilient and diversified group we have pressed ahead with our mission of 'growing stronger communities'.

This Strategic Review is a new report for Torus. It aims to complement our Financial Statements, Annual Report for Tenants and Environmental, Social and Governance Report (also new for 2021/22). Our focus here is on the five-year Corporate Plan itself and how we have delivered against the Year One objectives that launched in April 2021.

The four strategic focus areas at Torus – Investment, Resilience, Intelligence and Influence – provided the bedrock for our 2021/22 priorities and considerable progress was made on all fronts. The development of a new and ambitious Asset Management Strategy is a particular highlight in the Investment theme and will ensure we do even more to optimise building safety, listen to customers and respond effectively to the climate emergency. Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy also launched during the year and sets out our pathway towards achieving carbon net zero in the long-term.

In Resilience, the Developments' Strategy contains a core commitment to create 5,600 new homes by 2026 and 9,000 by 2029, and therefore to play a leading role to bridge the gap between supply and demand for quality affordable housing in the North West. Whilst materials supply held back delivery during 2021/22, 877 new homes that started on site and 1,200 further starts are projected for 2022/23.



A comprehensive review of the Social Housing White Paper was also completed in the year in review. This critical Intelligence initiative will ensure we are fully prepared to meet all the requirements when it becomes regulation. Torus' new Business and Customer Intelligence Strategy launched whilst the White Paper review was in progress; this is already delivering promising insights and enabling intelligent decisions to be made to provide support customers as well as business priorities.

Our primary goal in the Influence theme was to develop and publish the first Torus Group Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Report. We have adopted an integrated approach to addressing ESG factors for a number of years and the report that launches alongside this one represents a positive step forward against ESG's 48 criteria and 12 themes.

The initiatives mentioned above – and many others – are showcased in the following pages. Given the publication of our ESG Report this year we have chosen not to release a separate Social Value Report for 2021/22. The social outputs and outcomes achieved by Torus Foundation and teams across wider Torus during the year deserve to be recognised fully, however, so we have included key activities and impacts within this report.

It remains a time of significant change for the business, customers and the North West. It is clear that we cannot go back to 'business as normal' but rather will need to operate with increased flexibility and to do things differently in 2022/23 and beyond, in response to the ever-changing times we are witnessing.

Providing essential support to those most in need across the North West remained the central element in our mission throughout this year of 'evolution and adaptation'. My hope is that this report demonstrates the power of the Torus operating model in even the most challenging of times.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Paul Burns who served as Chair for a significant part of year. I'm delighted that he's been appointed by The Queen to be a Circuit Judge, it is a fantastic achievement and testament to the qualities he displayed during his time with us. All at Torus wish him every success.



Graham Burgess
Chair of the Board

About Us

We are the North West's largest affordable housing provider and one of its biggest and fastest-growing developers and commercial contractors. But building, maintaining and managing a large, mixed portfolio of quality homes is just part of what we do. We're working hard to make a difference.

Profits made through commercial activities are reinvested to create genuine social impact. That investment funds much-needed projects that improve lives, makes places better and communities stronger.

By supporting local people and investing in their future, we're helping to create sustainable, stable and thriving local communities in the North West.

"A New Day" the Group Corporate Plan 2021-26

2021/22 saw the launch of our current Group Corporate Plan 2021-26, "A New Day". Shaped by an unwavering commitment to our mission of 'growing stronger communities' and by our four Strategic Focuses of Investment, Resilience, Intelligence and Influence, 'A New Day' is about achieving even bigger impacts in partnership with customers and communities over the next five years.

New approaches are needed more than ever to tackle critical themes including the ongoing chronic shortage of affordable homes, responding to ageing population trends, the cost-of-living crisis, the net-zero carbon agenda, innovation, skills and levelling up. These priorities sit at the heart of the Corporate Plan as a whole and the specific pledges we set out to deliver in year one.



"The world has changed, and we need to respond. The future is unpredictable, and we need to be ready; to support our tenants and residents, our communities, our partners, our region and our people."

Chief Executive Officer, Steve Coffey when presenting the plan in 2021

1. Delivering the Plan – Year One



INVESTMENT

We invest with a strong place-making focus to unlock the greatest outcomes for our tenants, residents, communities, our region and our business. Targeted investments in new and existing homes, our people, business infrastructure, supply chains, partnerships and services enable the achievement of our goals.

Strategic Goals

1. Deliver excellent services driven by quality, value for money and changing demand
2. Embed exemplar standards of safety across homes and communities and our working environments
3. Tackle the green agenda to create healthy, sustainable places
4. Embrace innovation and technology to drive efficiency and enhance services



1.1 Asset Management

At Torus, the vision is for every home and every property owned and managed to be in a good state of repair – well maintained and regularly improved to keep up with changing times. In 2021/22, the assets budget spend on existing homes totalled £76 million. In 2022/23, that figure will rise to £86 million.

A new, five-year Asset Management Strategy was developed during 2021/22 and will launch in autumn 2022. It responds to a time of great change and challenge, driven by the national focus on building safety, on listening to customers and responding effectively to the climate emergency.

2022 to 2027 for Torus will deliver the first stage of transformational impact that is required to reach longer-term asset targets, including net-zero.

This stage has three primary focuses: creating an intelligent, agile and predictive way of understanding stock dynamics and changing customer needs and aspirations; establishing a 'Torus standard' that all customers can expect regardless of where they live; and maximising the Group's potential to support the development of sustainable, vibrant, healthy neighbourhoods.

Eight priorities have been developed as the bedrock of future delivery: **Safe, Consistent, Responsive, Optimised, Intelligent, Future-ready, Responsible and Place-focused**. Together, these themes will underpin annual investment planning and support Torus' assets vision to 'ensure every customer lives in a home that is safe, secure and meets their needs.'



1.2 Safeguarding

In 2021, Torus undertook a full safeguarding peer review with an Independent Safeguarding Consultant. They assessed our strengths and identified areas for improvement in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

In response to this review, in July 2021, we launched a three-year Safeguarding Strategy 'Playing Our Role' that sets out how we will work in partnership with organisations and communities to promote well-being and keep people safe, focusing on early intervention, prevention and continuous improvement.

To support this refreshed approach, Torus has relaunched an internal Safeguarding Operational Group and subgroups, new safeguarding policies and procedures and appointed a dedicated Safeguarding Lead. They will champion a proactive Safeguarding culture, including domestic abuse, across Torus.

We are also supporting our 1,400 colleagues and Board members to understand the critical part they play in keeping people safe. Tailored training has been delivered to all staff, so no matter their role, they understand what safeguarding is, how it can affect colleagues and customers and the critical part they play in keeping people safe. The training programme was developed with a specialist consultant who worked closely with our safeguarding leads to develop content and delivery.

Following the launch of our strategy and the rollout of training, **108 safeguarding referrals were made in 2021/22**. Our new, refocused, approach to safeguarding is present in recent case study. A 78-year-old Torus Tenant was being financially abused by a 'friend' who had unwantedly moved into her home to use drugs and entertain his friends. Despite this, she was adamant she did not need any help, even though she was missing rent payments and was struggling to feed herself.



 Read the Torus Safeguarding Strategy [here](#)

Through determination of the Neighbourhood Officer to build her trust, the tenant finally engaged with us. We were then able to remove the unwanted visitor, maximise her income by making sure she was accessing all benefits she was entitled to and make sure she has the on-going support of the Torus Support Network, Staying Home Team.

“I can’t thank everybody enough for helping me. Not only do I now feel safe and happy, I know that not only will I get the help and support I need.”

The tenant in question feeding back to Torus Support Network.

1.3 Customer Access Strategy

Launched in October 2021, Torus’ Customer Access Strategy recognises that customers should always be able to access services quickly and in a way that reflects their needs. Agile contact and transactional channels should offer the right services at the right time, with an emphasis on those less able to self-serve using online platforms.

This three-year strategy commits the group to developing a range of efficient and easy-to-use contact channels that are Consistent, Accessible, Responsible and Engaging – and underpin service excellence and value for money. The current focus is on enhancing digital channels and these will centre on the new Torus website, launched in September 2022.

The external environment is always changing from a legislative and technological point of view, so Customer Access methods will continually be reviewed in partnership with tenants, leaseholders and other customer groups.

Impacts of the Social Housing White Paper (profiled in section 3.1 of this report) will also shape how different customer types can access Torus services, based on the clear principle that our customers are individuals with different needs and expectations.

1.4 Safety Plus

In response to the formulation of the Building Safety Bill throughout 2019-21, we committed to reviewing our Safety Plus approach in 2021/22. The Building Safety Bill, soon to become the Building Safety Act (2022), came into being following a review of building regulations following the tragic Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017. It introduces new and more stringent requirements for residential buildings. It is designed to give residents more power to hold builders and developers to account and toughen sanctions against those who threaten their safety. A Building Safety Regulator will oversee the new regime and be responsible for ensuring that any building safety risks in new and existing high rise residential buildings of 18m and above (or of seven storeys or more) are effectively managed and resolved.

Our 'Safety Plus' commitment looks to go above and beyond the minimum legal and statutory requirements – being proactive, investigating homes to see what we can do to make them even safer, demonstrating our desire to meet higher safety standards, to keep improving and enhancing our homes and communities.

In November 2021, Torus signed up to the Building a Safer Future Charter, which promotes a positive safety culture and behaviour change in the safety of the built environment. It is about putting people's safety first in how we plan, design, build and maintain the buildings we live and work in.



Becoming a Charter Registered Signatory confirms our commitment to acting on five pledges:

- **Collaborate** to spearhead culture change and be the voice of building safety across our sector
- **Be transparent** in the interests of safety, sharing key information with residents, clients, contractors, and statutory bodies in a useful and accessible manner in the design, construction, and occupation phases of the process
- **Make safety a key factor** of choice in who we work with, ensuring that building safety is placed at the centre of selection decisions without compromising quality or value for money
- **Ensure that the voices** and safety of residents, visitors and employees are central in our decision-making process
- **Set out and communicate** clear responsibilities within our organisation and with our partners, ensuring everyone with a stake in the building during design, construction and occupation understands their role and has the time and resources they need to achieve and maintain building safety

Becoming a Registered Signatory is an important first step towards a cultural change in our approach building safety, and we will work to ensure we embed the principles of the Charter across our activities.

Torus has three high-rise blocks: Marwood Towers and Baden Court in Liverpool and Kingsway in Warrington.

We have engaged customers living in these blocks to discuss:

- **Fire safety** – Fire and Rescue home visits
- The Building Safety Bill and **what it means for them as a tenant**
- What Torus is doing to help **keep the tenants safe** in their home
- **PEEPS** (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans)

Opportunities for tenants to get involved and feedback, via the development of a new High Rise Building Safety panel.

So far:

- ✓ Building safety information has been shared with 126 residents
- ✓ 3 consultation events have been held with customers
- ✓ 18 customers attended engagement events

We have also been proactively exploring what can be done to enhance the safety of the blocks both internally and externally. This has involved conducting external wall and structural surveys to fully understand the fabric of the buildings and installing new illuminated fire safety 'wayfinding' signage.



1.5 Environmental Sustainability Strategy


October 2021/22 saw Torus create and publish the Group's first Environmental and Sustainability Strategy. This document sets out a clear approach and pathway towards achieving carbon net zero in the long-term. In the short-term, the publication of the Strategy was followed by a "Year One Action Plan", setting out the activity needed to kickstart Torus' decarbonisation journey.


Throughout July – September, Torus worked closely with SHIFT, the organisation providing sustainability standards for the housing sector, to create an initial carbon footprint. This baseline data has been used to inform the long and short-term targets set out in the Strategy. The quality and collection of our baseline and performance data will be reviewed and updated year-on-year. Additionally, the Environmental and Sustainability Strategy itself will also receive an annual update and be published alongside a new action plan.

Although Torus' environmental plans have an emphasis on reducing carbon emissions, waste and pollutants, there is also a focus on increasing green spaces and biodiversity in our communities. We are also working hard to make residents partners in our decarbonisation journey so that they can truly realise the benefits of healthier estates and lower utility bills.

Our first assessment from SHIFT has made clear the scale of the challenge and a proportionate economic response is reflected in our Strategy and initial Action Plan. A significant budget to invest in decarbonisation and environmental initiatives has been ringfenced and we continue to bid for funding to deliver retrofit programmes at scale.



 Read the Torus SHIFT Sustainability Report [here](#)

 Read the Torus Environmental Sustainability Strategy [here](#)

1.6 Diversity and Inclusion

Torus strives to create and maintain an inclusive workplace, where everyone knows they belong and feel that they can do their best work.



Following on from the 2021 launch of our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, we have:

- ✓ **Continued** to report on our annual Gender Pay Gap and implement positive actions to reduce it, wherever possible.
- ✓ **Started** to review several of our employment policies, with drafts being shared with the trade unions for consultation purposes.
- ✓ **Commissioned** Housing Diversity Network in early 2022 to undertake a DNA accreditation assessment. This has given us a greater understanding of our current position in relation to Diversity and Inclusion, as well as the programme of work to deliver in order to make improvements.
- ✓ **Run** a 'Your Voice Matters' employee survey throughout July 2022. Feedback from the survey will help us to identify any areas where there are barriers to inclusion, and develop a fully inclusive culture
- ✓ **Added** a specialist Diversity and Inclusion role to the group. Active recruitment is underway at the time of writing.
- ✓ **Diversity and Inclusion** will remain a priority for all parts of Torus and we look forward to reporting substantial progress on this front in next year's report.

1.7 Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)

Torus stepped up the approach to modern methods of construction (MMC) in 2021/22. Embracing the efficiencies that offsite manufacturing and onsite construction techniques bring is a strategic priority and one that will become increasingly embedded within Torus Developments' programme in the years to come – enabling faster construction and fewer defects, and generating less energy use and waste than traditional bricks and mortar housebuilding.

In January 2022, Torus entered into the new Homes England Strategic Partnership 2021-2026 programme, with a commitment to delivering 700 homes using MMC over the next six years (equating to 26% of the total programme). In total, almost 1,000 new Torus homes will utilise offsite manufacturing in the coming years.

17 MMC homes were completed across two sites during this year: Pennine Close in St Helens, and Palladian Gardens in Cheshire West. For 2022/23, this figure will rise to 72 at four sites across the North West. Torus continues to explore partnerships with local MMC suppliers as skills and expertise develop across the region.

For example, last year Torus commenced a net zero carbon new build scheme at Oakdale Road in Wallasey in partnership with Starship Homes. It is hoped this project will lead to future joint ventures. As a leading developer in the North West, Torus is also a primary sponsor of the LCR MMC National Centre of Excellence.





Operating Context

The rapidly developing costs-of-living crisis has made our mission of growing stronger communities more critical than ever. We are still feeling the tremors of the global pandemic and a prevailing sense of insecurity has threatened to entrench long-term social issues across our heartlands.

In 2020/21, we worked hard to unlock funding and explore new models of business – enabling us to make the biggest impacts where they were needed most and adapting the way we support people.

This section of the Annual Review looks back at some of the services, projects and interventions we delivered, and provides insight into impacts achieved - both as a direct service deliverer and in partnership with like-minded organisations.

We would like to thank everyone on the team, our partners and communities for the inspirational way they have responded to difficult new realities over the last 12 months. I look forward to further evolving offer from Torus Foundation throughout 2022/23.

Kate Shone.

Kate Shone
Managing Director,
Torus Foundation



Our social and community responsibilities are always a key consideration at Torus. In 2021/22, the increased demand for funded and community-based support made us find ways to step up and increase delivery of social projects for communities facing the impacts of the pandemic and a looming recession.

The key to enabling this was the implementation a commissioned services model that saw our charitable arm, Torus Foundation, deliver services requested by our Landlord directorate.

The commissioned services model enabled targeted investment by allowing Torus' Landlord function to commission specific projects that dealt directly with pertinent issues impacting our residents during the latter stages of the pandemic. Four focus areas were identified: Health and Wellbeing, Employment, Digital and Financial Inclusion, and projects/services were put in place to deal with issues stemming from these themes – many started in 2020/21 and continued into 2021/22.

Skills and Employability

A volatile job market has caused significant challenges for our tenants over the last two years. In many cases employment opportunities they were working towards disappeared, training courses were cancelled and support agencies stopped meeting. As a result, demand for our skills and employability support increased sharply. **In 2021/22, 1,848 individuals accessed employability support through Torus Foundation, with 1,004 gaining a job and 552 earning new qualifications. Furthermore, 87% of customers have reported an increase in skills or confidence due to engaging with this service.**

A large proportion of these outcomes are delivered through two projects which Torus Foundation lead, New Leaf and Springboard. A full overview and case studies from these projects is covered in section 2.8 of this report.



Financial Inclusion

It is common knowledge that household income levels across our heartlands and the wider North West are disproportionately lower when compared with many geographies across the Midlands and South. The lasting impacts of the pandemic and rampant inflation has added to the financial pressure faced by many people in our communities and this has been evidenced by an increased demand for our services. Our Financial Inclusion Team provide free, confidential, high-quality advice and training regarding welfare benefits, debt, and financial capability issues. Torus Foundation also commission the RAISE Benefit Service to offer money and debt management facilities. **In 2021/22 £4.2m in grants and benefits was unlocked via these services.**

Furthermore, the cost-of-living crisis has caused many people to seek help dealing with rising energy costs. As a result, Torus Foundation ran two projects in 2021/22 specifically addressing this issue.

Supportive Energy is delivered in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust and provides in-depth advice on energy debt, bills, and tariffs to vulnerable people in St Helens, Warrington, and Liverpool. The project provides an advocacy service on behalf of vulnerable tenants to contact, negotiate with and challenge energy providers – this also includes claims to the energy ombudsman.

Torus Foundation also ran a winter energy fund programme with the Energy Saving Trust. The project distributed energy vouchers to customers with a pre-payment meter who are at risk of disconnection.

In 2021/22 277 fuel vouchers were granted totalling a value of £15,148.12.

“I cannot thank you enough, you are an amazing person.

You have helped me out in so many ways I cannot describe, and you have made me feel like life is worth living again.”

Mr. B writing to his Torus Foundation advisor after receiving financial inclusion support

In 2021/22 Supportive Energy produced the following outputs:



752
people engaged with us



2,066
telephone advice sessions



276
home visits



£39,634
estimated savings

Digital Inclusion

Since the pandemic has encouraged a steady integration of online-only activities into everyday life, it has never been more important for people to have the skills and equipment to stay digitally connected. Our Digital Inclusion team work to increase the number of our tenants using digital services by providing training, support and in some cases equipment. The core offer from this team is the provision of Digital Hubs which Torus Foundation run and manage across our heartlands. These are established in various locations, such as sports and community centres, including FireFit Hub. These hubs offer one-to-one drop-in sessions where residents can get online, learn basic digital skills and deal with specific issues (such as submitting an online application for Universal Credit); 986 people utilised this service in 2021/22.

Furthermore, Torus Foundation also runs and manages Connecting Communities. This project aims to tackle isolation and digital exclusion in the vulnerable and elderly population, this is done by distributing tablets and educating people on how to use them for video calls and basic services.

664 internet enabled devices were distributed through this project in 2021/22.

Torus Foundation are also delivery partners in the Include IT Mersey project. This is a European Social Fund programme that provides targeted, personalised digital skills development and employment support to digitally excluded, unemployed people in St Helens and Liverpool. It focuses on developing basic IT skills, online navigation techniques and building confidence.

In 2021/22, 1,898 individuals were supported by digital inclusion activities and 96% of this group reported an increase in digital confidence.



Health and Wellbeing

Torus Foundation's Health and Wellbeing Team offer activities aiming to improve physical and mental health for all age groups and abilities. Health and Wellbeing officers work across Torus neighbourhoods and sheltered and extra care schemes with the aim of engaging residents in physical activity, mental health coaching and healthy eating programmes. Activities typically included moving to music, holistic therapies and mindfulness training. The tail end of 2021/22 saw many of these activities recommence in face-to-face settings, vastly improving effectiveness and resident engagement. Reverting to face-to-face sessions also meant that Torus Foundation could introduce personal assessment tool (PAT) – this allows participants to assess their physical progress between two benchmark dates. 139 PATs have been completed with 80% of participants showing an increased score.

Additionally, Health Promotion Officers operated in each heartland to act as a conduit between the local community and the Foundation team. They worked to identify clear community needs and match them to the Foundation offer.

This activity was possible due to strategic partnerships with local bodies, including Clinical Commissioning Groups and various schools and Children's Centres.

In 2021/22, 2,048 over 18s took part in Health and Wellbeing Activities.

Moreover, 2021/22 saw Torus Foundation forge an initial partnership with the charity Making Space, which produced an 18-month commissioned service entitled 'Mindspace'. The service gives Torus customers access to Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (cCBT) to help improve their mental health. Modules include overcoming depression or low mood, building self-esteem, stress, problem solving, controlling anger, mindfulness, mood and anxiety, social anxiety and work stress. **At the end of 2021/22, 2,048 over 18s had used the service and 912 under 18s.**

Furthermore, hunger is a significant issue that faces communities across our heartlands and as a result our Health and Wellbeing team spend significant time and resource supporting local food banks and pantries.

Last year, we supported five foodbanks with donations worth £32,000 and provided £40,000 to assist in the establishment of eight food pantries.

Also under the Health and Wellbeing theme, Torus Foundation delivered 31 Impact Days in 2021/22. Impact Days allowed Torus Foundation to increase engagement and support in our neighbourhoods, whilst also delivering practical help to clean up an area. **Over 100 skips were filled with just under 1000 tonnes of rubbish during the Impact Days,** thanks to the support from HMS Green Space operatives - many of which were young people on the Government's Kickstart programme which gave people ages 16-24 a chance to earn while they learn.

As well as clearing away bulky household waste and fly-tipped items, Green Space Operatives worked to tidy hedges and lawns for residents who may have been struggling, improving communal outdoor areas and helping communities to safely remove garden waste.

The Environmental Impact Days were also a great opportunity for teams from Torus Landlord services, Torus Foundation employment, skills and wellbeing teams, and key partnering organisations, to speak to tenants and residents about the issues impacting them and provide support and signposting where possible.



Community Investment Fund

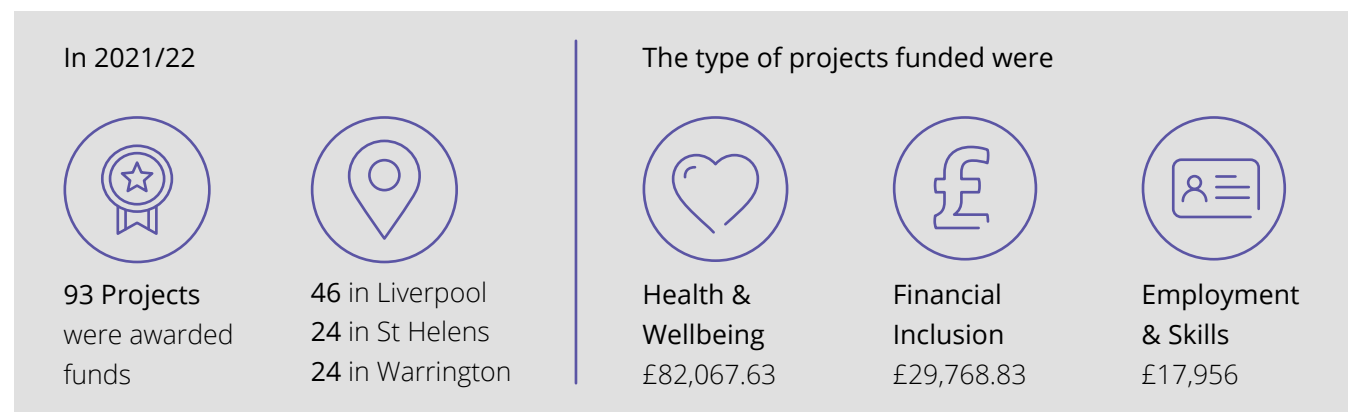
Torus Foundation also manage and administer the Community Investment Fund (CIF), a key tool for direct community support. CIF is allocated to develop projects that will benefit Torus tenants and their surrounding neighbourhoods. Constituted community or resident groups are invited to apply, along with organisations that deliver services within a Torus neighbourhood.

These projects collectively attracted £144,286.33 in match funding and £130,708.58 value in-kind.

As shown in these examples, the projects funded make a real difference to our partners and people.

St Helens Shed is a community space for men to connect, converse and take part in crafts using reclaimed timber. It was set up to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents who may be battling isolation and mental health issues. The charity were struggling to supply a full range of utensils to attendees and were unable transport timber creations once complete. To remedy these issues, they put forward a successful application to CIF for £3,000 to procure tools, a trailer and expand the Group.

Tuebrook Hope Group are a community charity helping people throughout Tuebrook and adjoining communities improve their wellbeing. They wanted to make sure local people on low incomes were able to enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner with their family. As a result, they applied for £750 from CIF in order to procure 30 meat hampers which were distributed within the community.





1.8 Case Study: Torus Developments and Generating Social Value through Edge Lane

A landmark site for Torus, The Approach sits at the heart of the multi-million-pound Edge Lane regeneration area – the primary eastern gateway into Liverpool City Centre.

This once unloved, but strategic site on the city's edge has become a unique and vibrant place where young professionals want to live; 145 high-specification homes for Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy now occupy land on which a derelict Victorian terrace previously stood prior to demolition, managed by Liverpool City Council.

The Approach is a former Liverpool Strategic Housing Partnership scheme – a cross-sector initiative designed to unlock difficult sites and deliver quality homes and housing solutions. Crescent shaped and in need of remediation when Torus acquired the site, its location and size offered potential for transformative 'place-making'.

From the outset, Torus and the Project Team regarded the £20 million development as an opportunity not only to build aspirational homes, but also to unlock substantial social value. Torus Foundation worked closely with main contractor Vistry from the outset to connect the build site with the surrounding community.



Key outcomes included

- **Engagement with over 280 people** wanting to work in the Construction Industry
- **Over 15 collaborative sessions** in local Kensington schools (4 health & Safety sessions, 3 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and several career days
- **Taking an active role** to support **Women in Construction**, working with Blackburne House, a Liverpool-based charity that supports the development of local, often vulnerable women. As well as undertaking interview skills and mock interviews sessions, work placements were offered to Blackburne House and Torus tenants.
- **14 work experience candidates** spent a week each on site
- **Hosting apprentices** on site, including **17 apprentices** employed by subcontractors

The principle of local connections extended beyond the construction phase; The Approach was envisaged as an affordable location for people working at the neighbouring Royal Liverpool Hospital and Knowledge Quarter. According to surveys carried out by Torus with Rent to Buy and Shared Ownership residents after they had moved in:

- **The primary reasons** for choosing The Approach were the cost of housing in the area and close proximity to the city centre (58% response), followed by the size and type of homes (39%) and the quality of the build (32%)
- **29% of Rent to Buy** respondents come from the local community and **97% are employed**
- **4 out of the 23 Shared Ownership** respondents work in Healthcare/NHS; 21 are from Liverpool
- **Only 3 customers** were previously social tenants; **44%** had been living with family and friends whilst **35%** came from a private rental

The Approach shows well how cross-sector partnerships can turn difficult, neglected sites into thriving future-ready neighbourhoods – built on principles of affordability and community opportunity. Whilst the initial survey results present only a partial picture of social value outcomes, they suggest that the primary aim of the scheme – to provide quality affordable housing solutions, linked to Kensington and the Knowledge Quarter, has been realised.



1.9 Case Study: Delivering on Decarbonisation

Although 2021/22 saw the launch of Torus' first Environmental and Sustainability Strategy, we have been rolling retrofit to decarbonise of our assets for a number of years and this programme continues apace.

In 2021/22, Torus was awarded £2.6m from wave one the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF). This will be supplemented with £9m of our own investment. Using this funding a total of 189 properties will receive a combination of efficiency improvement measures including: external wall and loft insulation, solar panels, replacement doors, windows and roofs along with space being left for future solar battery storage. Once completed, the properties will surpass an Energy Performance Certificate C.

Bid for via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, which was awarded £11.1m from wave one of the SHDF to work with nine housing associations, Torus' was the single biggest grant in the region. We are now working with partners to prepare another funding bid for more projects in wave two.

Last year, Torus also tapped into the last round of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant funding to decarbonise stock. The funding programme finished in March and £1.1m was used to retrofit 330 properties across five projects – one electric heating, one underfloor insulation and three fabric first. Whilst a fabric first approach has been the priority for Torus - 732 improved doors were fitted in 2021/22 and 4,679 dwellings now have external wall insulation – we are adopting new innovations and heating systems.





2. Delivering the Plan – Year One



RESILIENCE

The last two years have shown that now more than ever, we need to be equipping our communities and our business to withstand difficulties and be futureproofed. Our activities under this strategic theme focus on increasing the strength of communities and our own business operations so that they can withstand the volatility of the modern world.

Strategic Goals

1. Provide a firm platform for growth to withstand challenges
2. Practice good business across the Group and its supply chains
3. Build, regenerate and transform places and communities
4. Foster partnerships that develop communities where people thrive



2.1 Aligning Service Standards

A key priority for Torus' in 2021/22 was to develop aligned service standards in partnership with communities. This activity was led by our Landlord function, who spent December 2021 – March 2022 engaging tenants to understand the levels of speed and effectiveness they expect from us.

In December, 10 tenants from our Scrutiny Panel critically analysed Torus' existing service standards and compared them with the offers from other landlords. Using feedback from this exercise, we outlined a new set of standards for the Group. In January, the drafted standards were then sent to LOC for appraisal. Following this second round of feedback, the standards were updated, refined and made into an official proposal for tenants.

The newly drafted standards put forward parameters for how quickly we respond to customer enquiries, enhanced levels of transparency and levels of service quality.

All changes and new concepts were underpinned by our customer experience principles, which promise to:

- Make sure customers can access services effortlessly (at a time that is convenient for them, via appropriate channels)
- Listen and show empathy and understanding
- Recognise that every customer is an individual and respect individual needs
- Always keep our promises
- Get it right first time
- Meet our customer service standards (providing a timely response)
- Keep customers informed every step of the way

A consultation on the draft service standards took place in March and this involved:

- 50 involved customers
- 556 Torus Talk members
- 24,000 tenants being invited to give views in the monthly tenants eNewsletter
- All residents living in our 35 supported living schemes being invited to give views in the monthly tenants printed newsletter.
- The Consultation being shared on Torus Facebook and Twitter feeds

Feedback has been positive and we expect the new service standards to be approved by LOC in April 2022 and implemented in July 2022. Going forward, our performance as a landlord will be monitored against these standards and our performance will be shared with customers and stakeholders.

2.2 Aids and adaptations

Late 2021/22 saw Torus launch a new Aids and Adaptations Policy following an extensive review and consultation with residents and local authorities. The Policy exists to ensure that those who experience difficulties in their homes due to disabilities or age-related conditions have access to services which can help maintain dignity and independence as well as choices for alternative housing solutions. The Policy has also been devised to ensure that a fair, transparent, and consistent service is delivered across the Group by outlining a framework for performance management and service standards.

Aids and Adaptions account for a significant part of Torus' repairs and maintenance activity with £2m being spent on major and minor works in 2021/22.



2.3 Developments' Strategy and Pipeline

Launched in 2021, Torus' five-year Development Strategy 'Future homes, thriving places' commits the group to building 5,600 new homes by 2026 and 9,000 by 2029. Operating as one of the largest, most influential housing developers in the North West, Torus will therefore support the economic proposition of Liverpool City Region, Warrington & Cheshire, and the wider North West.

Strategic objectives include achieving the Future Homes Standard by 2025 and Net Zero Carbon Housing by 2030. Energy efficiency, affordability and best practice design and construction principles are embedded into the strategy, which sets out a mixed-tenure approach to create homes for affordable rent, specialist housing provision and home ownership. At least 25% of all homes built over the five years will be constructed off-site using MMC approaches (see section 1.7 of this report).

In 2021/22, Torus started on site with a major new build scheme of 195 apartments at Lightbody Street. This complements the wider regeneration of the North Liverpool Docks which includes projects such as Liverpool Waters and Everton FC's new stadium at Bramley Moore Dock. In addition, Torus also completed an important flagship scheme, The Approach, on Edge Lane in Liverpool. This on the fringe of the City's Knowledge Quarter, another major regeneration zone.

In 2021/22 we invested £95.4m on new homes. £21.5m of this was on 346 New Builds and 28 conversions (the Champions Court scheme in St Helens, which provides specialist homes and services to tackle homelessness); £73.9m was spent on homes under construction, land purchases and future homes. The construction sector as a whole experienced shortages of materials and skills during the year, which impacted on delivery numbers.

Our profile of new builds in 2021/22 was:

- 95 for affordable rent (general needs)
- 81 for Shared Ownership
- 170 Rent to Buy units
- 877 new homes started on site in 2021/22
- 1,200 new homes to start on site in 2022/23



2.4 Supply Chain and Social Value

Torus drafted our first Group Social Impact Framework during the closing stages of 2021/22. When formally published, this document will outline how Torus creates social value and put forward a methodology for measuring social impact. Our procurement team will integrate this framework into the tender process in 2022/23 as a means of compelling contractors to consider and deliver social value of part of their bid.

This will be done by offering a “social value menu” to tendering parties, containing items such as: offering apprenticeships, training residents, refurbishing community spaces and supporting starts-ups. The idea is that bidding parties can then select which social value activity they can offer and deliver on as part of their proposal. This new practice is being trialled as part of the procurement process for Torus’ repairs and maintenance contract which will close in early 2022/23 – the social value menu in this case is focused on employment, training and apprenticeships.



2.5 Fire Protection and Building Safety

We cannot build stronger communities and support our residents unless all our homes are fundamentally safe and secure. Because of this, building safety has, and will always be, a core priority across the Group. As discussed in section 1.5, tragic events of national significance have stimulated profound change in our sector's attitude towards building and fire safety; active and proposed changes to policy and regulation can be seen in The Social Housing White Paper (2020) and the Building Safety Act (2022).

Essential safety checks are a core component of our building safety operations. In 2021/22, 100% of Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) for Torus' general needs and sheltered living schemes were completed. 97% of remedial works resulting from FRAs were also completed (this figure is just under 100% due to access issues presented by the pandemic).

In addition to fire safety checks, in-date, accredited gas safety checks are also key as they ensure that all gas appliances and flues in our homes are functioning properly and safe to use. The importance of these checks to Torus is indicated by fact that 99.9% of our properties have a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR). Furthermore, in 2021/22, 97% of LGSR checks were completed within a one-year anniversary (again, figures remain just under 100% due to access issues presented by the pandemic).

Furthermore, in 2022/23 our Tenancy Visits initiative will see Torus staff carry out face-to-face visits to general needs customers in their homes. This is to ensure we proactively put our customers first and respond to any concerns they have regarding the safety and quality of their home before escalation. Our Aligned Service Standards are also allowing us to deal with emergency and non-emergency building safety issues more efficiently.



Be Gas Safe

Let us in – it could save your life

Every year, we are legally required to complete a gas safety check in your home. It is **FREE** and it helps to keep you, your family and neighbours, safe.

torus GAS

2.6 Integrating Green Technology and Data

Throughout 2021/22 Torus collaborated with private and public partners, including the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, to pioneer new construction technologies and methodologies that could transform the local housing and infrastructure sectors.

A Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Programme has been the cornerstone of these relationships and a pilot looking at the execution and efficiency of on-site retrofit work was completed last year. The pilot used a sample of Torus properties and critically analysed on site work relating to replacing the roof, windows and the installation of External Wall Insulation (EWI) to four semi-detached properties. Intelligence gained from this exercise has informed Torus' wider retrofit programme and new and emerging technologies are now being considered as viable alternatives to traditional methods.

The next phase of the programme will explore how modular and digitised construction can increase the supply of new, energy-efficient homes and create robust opportunities for local supply chains.

In addition to work with MTC, **Torus had 111 active heating trails live at one point during 2021/22.**

These were exploring the commercial viability of air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, electric infrared panels, electric boilers, underfloor heating and water filled electric radiators. The latter two options have proved to be particularly successful and a wider roll out of these technologies is underway – the largest implementation being a 36 unit over 55's scheme being upgraded from storage heaters to water filled electric radiators.

mtc
Manufacturing
Technology Centre



Spot the robot dog can be used to conduct surveys



Q-Bot installs underfloor insulation

2.7 Case Study: Torus Support Network

Torus Support Network provides housing advice, help maintaining a tenancy, confidential support for domestic abuse and services to support independent living in later life.

As part of the support network, Torus is commissioned by St Helens Borough Council to run its Domestic Abuse Support Service, Safe2Speak, which supports all victims of domestic abuse in the St Helens area, not just Torus tenants. Safe2Speak provides support, advice and emergency accommodation for those needing to flee. The service employs qualified and highly experienced team to provide non-judgemental emotional, practical and safety support for male and female victims of domestic abuse. This includes guidance through the Criminal Justice and Civil Court systems.

In January 2022 Torus also started working towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. By signing up with DAHA we aim to improve our response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process.

In 2021/22 Torus Support Network dealt with 1,520 (776 high risk) domestic abuse referrals and 61 new refuge admissions, 25 of which were families with children.

The work of our Support Network's Income Team is best articulated in the case study of Ms T. After losing her job to ill health, Ms T let her rent arrears get out of control, she didn't ask for help and was about to lose her home. Eviction is always the last solution and our Income Team contacted Ms T to provide support, which was accepted. The Income Team helped Ms T to ensure she received the benefits she was entitled to and also provided her with energy vouchers.

Ms T is no longer at risk of losing her home, her arrears are reducing and she is getting support to manage her debts and welfare benefits.

"I just wanted to thank you for all your help. I honestly don't know what I would have done without your support. I feel like I can breathe, you have saved my life."

Ms T, talking to our income team following support

Torus Support Network are also responsible for managing our approach to safeguarding across the Group. Safeguarding, tenants, residents and our colleagues means enabling people to live a safe life, which is free from abuse and neglect. Our Safeguarding work during 2021/22 is covered in section 1.2 of this report.

2.8 Case Study: European Social Fund Programmes

Torus Foundation delivers two European Social Funded (ESF) programmes that aim to get people into work: New Leaf and Springboard Cheshire.

Led by Torus foundation, New Leaf exists to help people to get into work or training through a holistic approach and person-centred approach that offers 1-2-1 mentoring, money advice, access to volunteering and mental health support. The programme is open to anyone living in Warrington or Cheshire who is currently out of work. In 2021/22, **716 participants started on the project; of which 189 went into employment and 79 into education or training.**

Springboard Cheshire is also led by Torus Foundation and provides personalised wrap-around support to help individuals find long-term and sustainable employment. Springboard launched in October 2021 and so far **249 participants have started on the programme with 76 going into work.**

Since early 2022, the New Leaf and Springboard Cheshire projects have used innovative methods to engage new community members with employability projects. Following China's crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong, several hundred families have settled in Cheshire under the British National (Overseas) Visa Scheme since 2021. Visa-holders have the right to live and work in the UK but are not eligible for mainstream employment support. Torus Foundation was made aware that members of this community needed help to find employment in the UK and several events were held to introduce the projects available and encourage people to sign-up.

Over 200 people booked onto an initial online event, including some who were still in Hong Kong but planning to relocate. A follow-up email went to everyone who signed up, and 61 people responded to request further support. This was followed with a series of face-to-face events with the aim of building further relationships, increasing enrolment and gaining a greater understand of desired outcomes from participants.

new leaf
Motivating Cheshire

springboard
cheshire



This was a new approach to engaging individuals with our employment projects, in that we focused on events for members of a specific community first, prior to enrolling them onto our projects on an individual basis. As a result of this targeted activity, 117 Hong Kong nationals have enrolled on the projects so far (55 New Leaf and 62 Springboard) and 21 have started work. Positive case studies are plenty one member of the community even started work for Torus Foundation in the New Leaf team as a Business Support Officer.

Charis, is one participant from Springboard who signed up to the project following our outreach to the Hong Kong Community. When Charis signed up for Springboard she had recently moved to Cheshire from Hong Kong, and was looking to find work that fitted around her responsibilities as a parent. With her employment advisor at Warrington Disability Partnership, she researched several occupational areas before deciding that she would like to work as a Personal Assistant in the Home Care industry.

Charis' Employment Advisor arranged for her to meet the manager of the Direct Payments service at Warrington Disability Partnership, who was happy to talk her through the process of applying to be a Personal Assistant, and what the role entailed. Three weeks later Charis was offered two part-time roles that complemented each other and fitted around her parenting responsibilities. She is now very happy to be taking the first step on the ladder into a new career direction, whilst still being able to spend time with her daughter.

We are using the new techniques developed through our work with the Hong Kong community with some other specific communities in the area, including a group of Kurdish women, Afghan refugees and people involved in the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme.



2.9 Case Study: FireFit Youth and Community Hub

Torus Foundation operate the FireFit Youth & Community Hub in Toxteth. The centre delivers 52 hours of activities and interventions each week in the form of open and targeted programmes/activities that have been co-designed with young people – all of which aim to improve mental and physical health. Whether it be through an open access activity, Duke of Edinburgh Award, SEND provision, social action project or 1-2-1 support, the outcome for the young person is at the centre of the activity or intervention.

Data collected via our new youth outcomes framework, adopted in 2021/22, shows that 67% of young people improve their health & wellbeing through engagement with the centre.

Centre users have also been found to express more positive sentiments towards ‘interests/activities’ and ‘education/work’. FireFit Hub activity is aligned to the National Youth Work Curriculum and the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.

Furthermore, FireFit Hub acts as the central point for outreach and street-based work in the L8 community.

918 young people were engaged through street-based contact in 2021/22, with many going on to receive additional one-to-one support and signposting to the broader suite of Foundation services on offer.





3. Delivering the Plan – Year One

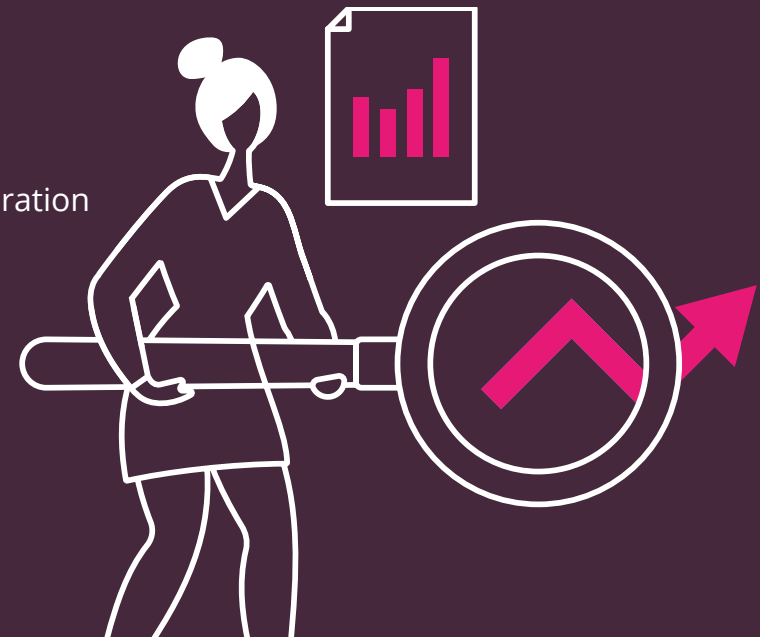


INTELLIGENCE

The changing nature of our sector and the world around us means that we need to evaluate and respond more effectively to community and market conditions. We are doing this by putting intelligence at the heart of our business and using data, insight and experience to drive decision-making and help us learn, adapt and evolve.

Strategic Goals

1. Provide tailored solutions based on an understanding of need and aspiration
2. Drive effective organisational performance, strength and influence
3. Listen, act and respond to shape places and services
4. Embed a culture of evidence-based improvement and learning from experience



3.1 Social Housing White Paper

The Charter for Social Housing Residents, more commonly known as the Social Housing White Paper, is driving significant changes for our sector in the short, medium and long-term. It sets out the actions government will take to ensure that residents in social housing are safe, listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong.

Although many of the requirements put forward in the White Paper remain “draft clauses”, we want to make sure we are ready to fulfil these new responsibilities across the Group as soon as they become regulatory. As a result, a significant activity for Torus in 2021/22 was completing a “Social Housing White Paper Gap Analysis”. To do this, we critically analysed all of the draft White Paper requirements and scrutinised the extent to which Torus is in a position to fulfil these. Where significant gaps were found, actions have been agreed to mitigate these.

implemented throughout 2022/23. Some examples of activity put forward in this document are: improving our engagement with leaseholders; enhancing the complaints function on our website; and tackling the stigma many of our residents feel is associated with living in social housing.

3.2 Internal Culture of Improvement

A flexible, high-performing and inclusive workforce is needed to deliver operational activities and Torus’ longer-term strategic goals. The group’s Workforce Strategy, which launched in 2021, sets out how Torus and its entities will work to develop the existing and future workforce to ensure they have the skills, environment and values required to enable the Group to deliver its Corporate Plan ambitions.

Considerable progress has been made since the strategy’s launch to progress a culture development programme for the group: A new individual performance review process and Learning Management System launched in 2022; a new management development programme will be rolled out later in the year; and a group-wide Skills Audit began in August 2022. This will provide a clear understanding of colleagues’ existing skills and abilities, and identify any skills, knowledge, and behaviour gaps, in order for us to develop future training plans.

The commitment to internal improvement will remain a key piece of work for the remainder of 2022/23 and beyond.

Four priorities will underpin the approach to internal improvement at Torus:

1. **Customer-centric** – always putting the customer first and developing services for current and future need
2. **High performing** – working at pace, to a high standard, with a focus on Value for Money
3. **Future ready** – embracing change, new ways of working and emerging technologies
4. **Inclusive employer of choice** – respecting difference and supporting progression for all

3.3 Business and Customer Intelligence

To enable more informed decision making, Torus set out to develop and implement a Business & Customer Intelligence Strategy as a key objective in 2021/22. The Strategy has transformed our Business Intelligence (BI) team into one that now operates under a business partnership model. Working in this way has allowed for targeted expertise development and business stakeholders to have a consistent point of contact for analytics and insight.

Furthermore, the Strategy has unlocked investment for our BI team to expand the capabilities of our data management and visualisation software. This has opened up significant amount of capability in dashboarding and reporting functionality. These enhancements have also made tactical insight reporting possible; this allows the BI team to respond more effectively to both operational and strategic business problems with valuable insight to aid decision making.

The Strategy has also allowed the BI team to use application technology to engage our tenants directly. This – coupled with effective data protection risk management – has allowed the team to collect valuable and robust customer insight data first-hand. In early 2022/23, an application will be used as part of our “Tenancy Checks” initiative, ensuring our tenants are happy with the maintenance of their home. This technology will continue to be leveraged to provide as much value as possible.

In addition to this, our operative staff have been able to start using “Delighted” software. This provides our operatives with a platform that allows them to collect and analyse customer feedback in real-time. It is being found to produce more insightful customer satisfaction data when compared with traditional feedback methods.



Delighted
by qualtrics.^{XM}

3.4 Service Charges

A comprehensive review of service charges, including General Needs and Sheltered & Supported Homes was delivered in 2021/22.

This was implemented to ensure our approach was financially robust, in line with wider market conditions and consolidated into a consistent position across our heartlands.

An immediate result from this review was a change to our service charges in Sheltered Schemes. New tenants will pay full-service costs from April 2022 and existing Torus Tenants will have these costs phased in over a six-year period starting in 2023.

We do not take any decisions regarding increased costs for our residents lightly and understand the concern they can cause. We therefore handled this issue with due care and hosted an open consultation with residents in each of our sheltered schemes from January – March 2022. Local councillors were also engaged and invited to discuss the issue with us.

Furthermore, to help mitigate the impact on those affected, all self-payers were, and will continue to be, offered advice and support from Torus Foundation's Financial Inclusion Team. This involves Housing Benefit Checks and one-to-one financial support sessions to ensure income and benefits are being maximised.



3.5 HMS : Community Wealth Building

Whilst the UK construction and contracting sector continued to experience substantial challenges and uncertainty in 2021/22, HMS was able to reaffirm both its financial resilience and profitability, and to extend its commitment to social value generation across its property repair, maintenance and construction activities.

This £89m turnover business forms an integral part of Torus' operating model, yet has the freedom to pursue commercial opportunity beyond, as well as within, the group. All profits made are reinvested for social purpose and, in its first 11 years, more than £20 million has gone into meaningful community-level initiatives – the majority delivered by Torus Foundation.

HMS is a social entrepreneur in its own right. Operating across, and on behalf of, Liverpool, Warrington, St Helens and the wider North West, the business strives to generate a positive and lasting legacy for local people, communities and business partners.

As a result, commercial highlights for 2021/22 including 200 new-build completions (as well as over 250 starts on site), 110,000 emergency and responsive repairs completed (more than 99.9% on target) and 200 major adaptations undertaken (plus 2,800 minor adaptations) are closely linked to social value.



HMS people

HMS is a local employer and recruiter. Of its 450 operatives, 87% live in St Helens, Warrington and Liverpool. The remaining 13% lives in immediately adjacent areas. In 2021/22, HMS employed 211 new people and established 45 apprenticeships, offering initial paid training and longer-term career opportunities to local residents.

In the future, the aim is for 95% of new recruits to come from a core Torus geography, with an emphasis on attracting the workforce of tomorrow from areas of low employment and/or deprivation, and from under-represented groups, including women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Women in Construction is an established Torus Foundation and HMS initiative. To date, 40 women have started apprenticeships or moved into employment – many with HMS – as a result of the programme, which provides classroom and hands-on sessions over a three-week period. One of the latest recruits is Vicky, a Women in Construction graduate who is now undertaking a trade apprenticeship as a Joiner.

“When I started Women in Construction with Torus Foundation, I never thought it would lead anywhere in particular, but here I am an apprentice with HMS! I’m really enjoying learning new skills. The team have been great and I’m looking forward to qualifying as an Apprentice Joiner.”

Vicky discussing her apprenticeship

At least 60 more apprenticeships will be created in the next two years. Everyone who successfully completes their apprenticeship at HMS is offered full-time employment and ongoing, structured training and development programmes. On a broader basis, the focus is on providing clear paths of progression, training, and ongoing development for directly employed staff, supporting long-term career opportunities, earning potential and prosperity.



Partners and suppliers

Every year, HMS spends in excess of £20 million on materials, products and subcontractors. The supply chain strategy prioritises local spend wherever possible and this currently results in over 80% of the contract value spent directly within Liverpool, St Helens and Warrington. The aim in the coming years is to increase this figure to 90%.

In 2021/22, HMS continued to build a diverse supply chain with a mix of start-ups, small, medium and large organisations. By working with micro and SME organisations, the team provides hands-on support to help enterprises build capability and capacity.

This, in turn, creates a stronger local economy. Additionally, the expectation is that larger subcontractors will work with other local SMEs and social enterprise partners, for example by including criteria in the selection and evaluation process when appointing approved suppliers.



Turnover is expected to increase at HMS in the years ahead as the new-build programme escalates and clients increase investment in existing stock - particularly retrofitting work to enhance sustainability and energy performance, and move towards regional and national net zero targets. From a social value perspective, this will open further avenues to stimulate inclusive growth at a local level and build resilience at community level.



4. Delivering the Plan – Year One



INFLUENCE

We need our call for change where it's most needed to be heard, supported and acted on. We achieve this by maximising our influence at community, regional and national levels and developing strategic partnerships that can leveraged intelligently and effectively.

Strategic Goals

1. Be a catalyst of change to transform places
2. Influence people, networks and markets to unlock opportunity
3. Be seen as a dynamic growth and regeneration business that delivers
4. Use the Group's voice to shape the external policy environment



4.1 Group's First ESG Report

In late 2021/22, Torus began the process of adopting the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS). The SRS is a voluntary framework that provides an accepted and sector-wide approach for housing associations to demonstrate their environmental, social and governance (ESG) credentials.

Launched in 2020, the SRS was developed by housing associations, funding bodies, regulators and residents to provide greater levels of transparency and consistency in environmental, social and governance reporting. It provides 48 criteria under 12 themes for housing providers to report against. These criteria are derived from internationally recognised initiatives, such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and require either a quantitative or qualitative response.

As a vital anchor institution and place-maker for communities across the North West, Torus has adopted an integrated approach to addressing environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors for a number of years and it is a positive step that we are now able to report on this activity in a consistent and structured manner. We will publish our first Group ESG report in early 2022/23 and look forward to seeing how this report evolves year-on-year.

The reporting criteria are diverse and cover complex challenges, and whilst we are addressing many of these in the short-term, some will take years to fully address. With that in mind, it is important to state that this is just the beginning of our ESG journey and our commitment to the addressing the SRS criteria (and beyond) is concrete.



A Year of Firsts: Torus' first ESG report can be viewed and [downloaded here](#)

4.2 Integrated Care Partnership

St Helens Cares was launched in 2018 as a unique and integrated local health and social care system for all ages. Made up of a wide number of public sector providers, including Torus, St Helens Cares supports people to remain independent for as long as possible. The model is distinct as it is much broader than just health and social care, it also includes services and support around housing, education and arts and culture. The model is award winning and as result Torus has committed to exploring opportunities to implement new Integrated Care Partnerships across our other heartlands.

As a North West anchor institution, Torus is well placed to drive a joined up and strategic approach to improving the health of our customers, many of whom are worst affected by care inequalities. Furthermore, we already have existing relationships that can be leveraged to help achieve this ambition. Existing partners across our heartlands include: the NHS, local councils, community and voluntary organisations, service users and their carers and representatives.

In 2021/22, Torus Foundation deepened its relationship with care partners across Cheshire and Merseyside, particularly with the Children and Young People's Transformation Programme, by actively pursuing projects. Foundation has been successful in securing funding for an indoor air quality monitoring project and also for a parent champion project in Warrington. Torus has established itself as the go-to partner in housing for both of these programmes. Torus Foundation has also been a delivery partner for the Cheshire and Merseyside Physical Activity Strategy consultation.

In 2022/23, Torus, led by Torus Foundation, will continue to deepen relationships at place level in St Helens, Liverpool and Warrington, ensuring that we are involved in discussions and decisions about population health from the beginning.

ST HELENS CARES



A Look Ahead To 2022/23

Another year of progressive and developmental change lies ahead in 2022/23. It will be the second year of our current corporate plan and we will be working hard to ensure the successes of year one are capitalised upon.

Strategic ambitions and focus areas will remain the same but underpinned by a new set of operational priorities and actions. **These include:**

- A complete catalogue of business process reviews across the group, ensuring we are operating as efficiently as possible
- Beginning to deliver on objectives in our “White Paper Ready” action plan
- Moving forward with year two of our Environmental and Sustainability Strategy
- Pursuing growth opportunities
- Procuring our core repairs and maintenance contract

Furthermore, 2022/23 will be the first year of having our Social Impact Framework in place, unlocking our ability to uncover social value outcomes across the group. We are looking forward to sharing the results this produces.

We also are aware of the many challenges that our communities will face throughout the next year, including the worsening cost of living crisis, and are currently putting support measures in place. The effectiveness of these initiatives will be disclosed in the next edition of this report.

If you wish to work with us, comment on this report or discuss any of the topics raised, we hope you get in touch. Please email info@torus.co.uk and your message will be forwarded to the correct team.





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