

# **Two Saints**

# **Strategic**

# **Plan**

# **2009/14**

**June 2009**

# Contents

Our Vision and Values.....	3
About Two Saints.....	4
Two Saints' Strategic Direction.....	5
Our Operating Environment .....	7
Strategic Objectives .....	9-13

## **Our Vision**

**To significantly improve the lives of those who are homeless or vulnerable through the provision of high quality, effective, reliable housing and support services.**

## **Our Values**

- **Respect for individual dignity**
- **Openness and honesty**
- **Equality and diversity**
- **Efficiency and value for money**
- **Service user involvement**
- **Effective partnership working**
- **Robust governance**

**These values underpin our work. All Two Saints' staff and Board Members uphold these values in the way we work together, and, importantly, in all our work and interactions with service users and partners.**

# About Two Saints

Two Saints Limited was formed in April 2001 through the merger of St Petroc Housing Association (founded in 1972), and the Society of St Dismas (founded in 1961).

Two Saints is a registered Industrial and Provident Society with charitable objectives, a Registered Provider approved by the Tenant Service Authority and a member of the National Housing Federation. Our main aim is the provision of support, housing and learning services for single homeless people.

Two Saints is funded from a variety of sources including

- the Homes and Communities Agency
- HCA's Places for Change Programme
- Hampshire County Council
- Southampton City Council
- Portsmouth City Council
- Fareham Borough Council
- Gosport Borough Council
- West Berkshire District Council
- the Hampshire Probation Service
- Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Social Services
- NHS
- Big Lottery Fund

The Two Saints Trust and the Society of St Dismas are two associated charities which raise funds to support Two Saints' non-statutory work making small but significant contributions.

We have over 225 staff members and provide supported housing services in 380 units of accommodation, plus 'floating support' to 385 clients living in the community.

Two Saints is governed by a voluntary Board of Management, with a membership of 12 people. The Board meets bi-monthly and is supported by a number of Committees: Audit, HR & Remuneration, Finance & Performance and Governance. Our Board Members bring a strong mix of skills and experience with professional backgrounds in business, local government, law, accountancy, housing, care & support services and the voluntary sector.

# Two Saints' Strategic Direction

Two Saints is committed to the delivery of high quality, flexible and responsive housing, support and learning services for our service users, making best use of the resources available to us and offering value for money to our commissioners. Over the life of this five year plan we aim to improve our services by working with all our staff and with service users to develop a strong performance management culture and an ethos of consistency, efficiency and good value across the organisation.

We offer accommodation with support to enable our service users to develop skills to break the cycle of homelessness, poverty, and exclusion. A large proportion of our service users have complex issues, including offending behaviour, substance misuse and mental health problems, and for each individual we develop a unique support plan to help them tackle these issues. Support is intended to help our service users move on from hostel accommodation through resettlement into more independent accommodation. Here there may be 'floating support' for a time until full independence is achieved. Training, education and employment opportunities are a key part of the journey to independence. We offer craft activities and skills training in our workshops and through the Learning Service, which also makes links with colleges, helps service users plan job applications, and seek volunteering and work experience.

We aim to develop our business and increase our capacity, to ensure that Two Saints is a sustainable organisation in the long term. We will do this by developing new support services, either with or without accommodation, in our current areas of operation and in neighbouring counties. We will seek out opportunities to work in partnership with other providers, in order to combine our strengths and expertise to win bids to provide innovative services.

The success of our supported housing services can be hampered by the lack of sufficient move-on accommodation for our service users and we will take positive steps to counter this, by increasing our stock of properties and working in close partnership with other housing providers. In order to develop new properties we will seek Social Housing Grant from the Homes and Communities Agency, and combine this with the judicious application of our own reserves and borrowings.

We are acutely conscious of the financial constraints in the markets within which we work. Although margins are tight, we must ensure that all our services are properly configured and can cover their costs. Robust financial management will ensure that maximum cost efficiencies are achieved. Two Saints financial strategy is to maintain adequate reserves in case of unforeseen circumstances, and for all new services to return a minimum 3% surplus. The few existing services not presently achieving this will be the focus of improvements in efficiency. A summary five year financial plan is attached at Appendix A at the end of this Plan.

Two Saints offers a number of non-housing services which currently run at a deficit and for which we will be developing individual business plans in 2009/10 to ensure that they are put on a firm financial footing for the future. The following paragraphs set out some of the strategies we are adopting to ensure that these important, non-statutory services have a viable future.

Two Saints is pleased to be part of the government's Places of Change Programme, channelling capital investment into some of our hostels and day centre services to make them places which provide the best opportunities for homeless people, to help them to move forward into work and

a settled home. During 2009/10 we will complete a significant refurbishment of the Day Centre in Southampton, and a range of improvements to the facilities at Patrick House (also in Southampton). We are also seeking funding from Places of Change to make a range of improvements to our hostel in Newbury. A number of our Managers are taking part in the Leading Places of Change personal development programme.

Two Saints' Fundraising Strategy, launched in early 2009, sets out a range of plans to enhance our service provision, by bringing in additional funding through charitable and voluntary donations. Fundraising activity is taking place at all levels in the organisation, involving project staff and Board Members working with local contacts in the community, as well as head office staff, directors and Board seeking support from businesses and charitable trusts. We are developing volunteering opportunities with Two Saints to support this work. During 2009/10 we will work with the trustees of Two Saints Trust and the Society of St Dismas to develop a new body, the Friends of Two Saints which will co-ordinate local voluntary effort to raise funds to support Two Saints' non-statutory work.

We remain committed to offering education, training and employment services to as many of our residents as possible, and will continue to seek out sources of funding to enable this. We aim to make this a key feature of our support work with all service users. Our Learning Service, known as the BASE, receives Big Lottery Funding and offers a range of activities to promote skills and readiness for work for our service users. We need to seek additional resources to match and then replace the BLF funding when this comes to an end in 2010/11.

During 2009 we anticipate that Spark Fabrications and Framing (formerly Patrick House Workshop) will become a fully fledged social enterprise, offering increased training and employment opportunities to service users in Southampton. This is the result of a successful bid to become part of the SPARK Programme developed by CLG, The TREES Group, Big Issue Invest (part of The Big Issue group) and Eastside Consulting. The aims of SPARK are to champion social enterprise models that create sustainable opportunities for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to move into independent living. By the end of June 2009 we will know whether our pitch to an investment panel (private sector business leaders and CLG representatives) for £100k has been successful.

At Two Saints we believe that our people are our greatest asset. We are very proud of all our staff, knowing that it is through their efforts and passion for their work that we have earned an enviable reputation for high quality and innovative services. We are committed to recruiting new staff with the right mix of skills, experience, and potential. Training and development are a high priority in order that we can develop potential and create opportunities for career development. During 2009/10 we will be offering a management development programme to all our Project Managers, Deputies and Team Leaders.

As a small organisation we realise that all of our assets are precious and must be properly safeguarded, maintained and programmes of replacement planned. We greatly improved our ICT provision in 2008/09 and in the year ahead we intend to develop an IT Strategy for the next three years. We have developed a planned maintenance programme for all our properties, based on a new stock condition survey, and a programme of works is underway. We are now in a position to carry out better long term planning, cost control and a shift in the proportion of planned maintenance to reactive repairs in line with best practice. During the year ahead we will develop a sustainability policy to ensure that our environmental impact as an organisation is minimised.

# Our Operating Environment

Two Saints operates in a specialist area of social housing provision, at a time when homelessness and unemployment are rising rapidly. The supply of accommodation alone to vulnerable people is widely accepted as insufficient and can lead to failure and repeat homelessness. However we are in a period of economic and policy change which is likely to see a shift in emphasis by central and local government and other funding authorities – away from the supported housing model funded through Supporting People budgets and towards an agenda of ‘personalisation’ and ‘choice’. These changes present risks to Two Saints and the homeless people to whom we offer services.

In the current economic climate, the organisation faces significant cost pressures across all areas of service delivery, asset management and business development, and yet it is difficult to contain increasing service costs: the resulting pressure on margins is severe. Ongoing efficiencies and robust financial management are the only ways we can combat this. The cost of providing support staff is the principal element of our expenditure and we need to work hard to minimise absence, high turnover and over-reliance on agency or temporary staff. During 2009/10 we are introducing revised terms and conditions to enable us to be fully in control of our staffing costs.

We acknowledge the financial constraints on our funders, but are very mindful of the fact that Two Saints is heavily dependent upon Supporting People (SP) income. In 2009/10 all four of our current SP commissioning authorities are facing the withdrawal of the SP ‘ringfence’ on top of having suffered large reductions in their SP budgets in recent years. The local authorities are now working in line with their Local Area Agreements and have set out LAA targets to drive their strategic priorities – these in turn will influence their spending priorities. Consequently, Two Saints must work closely with SP teams to show how our services contribute to their LAA target outcomes, as well as ensuring that our services continue to be well regarded and flexible, responding to necessary changes in the environment. We will increasingly be expected to make our services more efficient and will need to submit tenders which are both competitive and offer high quality services.

A revised Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) comes into force in April 2009 and raises the bar in terms of all aspects of the QAF. The original purpose of the QAF remains: to continue to drive up quality standards across the sector and to ensure that services evolve to meet the changing needs and aspirations of clients. The revised five core objectives are:

- Assessment and Support Planning
- Security, Health and Safety
- Safeguarding and Protection from Abuse
- Fair Access, Diversity and Inclusion
- Client Involvement and Empowerment

The most significant changes to the core objectives themselves are the broadening of the protection from abuse objective to include safeguarding principles and obligations to children, and the inclusion of a new core objective on client involvement and empowerment.

Homelessness, and particularly rough sleeping, are relatively high on the government’s agenda with a target to end rough sleeping by 2012. Contributions from speakers at our 2008 Staff Conference from CLG and Homeless Link confirmed that the Rough Sleeping Strategy and Places of Change Programme place a strong emphasis on the prevention of homelessness, action to work with

outreach teams to get rough sleepers off the streets, and sustained work to help homeless people rebuild their lives. Two Saints' work already contributes quite clearly to all three of these key priorities for the national agenda and our local authority partners. During the next few years we will work closely with officials from central and local government to ensure that we can access any funding attached to these strategies, as well as making sure they appreciate the contribution Two Saints is making in tackling rough sleeping and other forms of homelessness.

National policy agendas in relation to housing and support services also have a greater focus on 'worklessness', and expectations around outcomes for our service users in terms of readiness for work, training and education will increase. Specific funding is not yet following these expectations, but we will be actively seeking out funding opportunities in order to further develop our services and partnerships in providing training and education to our service users.

New legislation is being introduced in relation to equality and diversity. The Equality Bill introduced in April 2009 aims to create a modern, single legal framework, providing clearer, streamlined law that is more effective at tackling disadvantage and discrimination. Two Saints is responding by drawing together the action plans already in place to cover its responsibilities in relation to gender, disability and race. In 2009/10 our combined Equality & Diversity Action Plan will ensure that we properly take account of the wide range of needs amongst our service users, and offer fair and accessible services to all. We also apply the same principles to our duties as an employer. We will carry out equality impact assessments of relevant policies, ensure that all staff are well trained and implement good practice in equality monitoring across all activities.

We cannot underestimate the importance of the new regulatory regime for the social housing sector which was introduced in 2008. The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) and Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have been created to replace the Housing Corporation. The term 'registered social landlord' – of which Two Saints is one – is being replaced with the new Registered Provider status. For us as a small organisation the regulatory regime is relatively 'light touch' but nevertheless there are important changes on the horizon which we must embrace. The TSA has announced that its expectations and standards will be put in place towards the end of 2009. The new regulator has already expressed its expectation of a new spirit of 'co-regulation', which means that for our part we must be able to actively demonstrate high quality outcomes for our service users. A far higher standard will be set in relation to service user involvement, and Two Saints will respond to this by developing the structures and involvement activities currently in place through the Challenge Group, Project Assessment Team and local service user forums.

# Our Strategic objectives

## First Class Services

**We aim to be the provider of choice for service users and commissioners alike. We will maintain, and build upon our reputation for first class service delivery to enable every one of our clients to achieve their maximum potential through increasing both our stock and our specialist services.**

In order to achieve our stated aim our Board have approved the following strategic objectives for the next five years, to be read in conjunction with the current year's Business Plan;

### I. Excellence in Service Delivery

**We will ensure that services to our clients are first class by:**

- Achieving at least “B” ratings for all our Supporting People funded services, in line with the 2009 revised Quality Assessment Framework
- Developing a robust performance management framework, setting and achieving realistic but stretching targets for our key performance indicators (KPIs – including voids, planned departures, arrears, staff turnover and sickness, and maintenance)
- Ensuring that all policies and procedures are regularly updated and consistently complied with at all projects
- Benchmarking our services against a range of similar providers with a target of upper quartile performance in all areas
- Analysing the structure and profitability of all of our services to achieve maximum cost efficiencies and value for money, ensuring that we do not run loss-making services
- Continuing to provide as many education, training and employment (ETE) opportunities as possible for our service users, through our workshops, the Learning Service and links with external providers (colleges, employers etc.)
- Developing our commitment to equality and diversity, offering high quality training to all staff, and developing our Equality Action Plan and Impact Assessments
- Putting in place a revised Service User Involvement Strategy with clear steps for the development of links between a service user involvement framework and Two Saints Board and Committee structure

- Providing a safe, healthy living environment for service users
- Revising our Business Continuity Plans to ensure that we do not have any interruption to services

## **2. Business Development**

**We will become a sustainable organisation in the long term, offering a greater range of services across a wider geographic area, by:**

- Raising the profile of Two Saints, particularly with key commissioning authorities and agencies, demonstrating how we can contribute to their strategic priorities (e.g. Local Area Agreements, prevention of homelessness) – a Communications Strategy will be developed in 2009
- Securing our core business through competitive, high quality tendering when contracts are up for renewal
- Maximising our move-on provision for service users by working with other providers of rented housing and developing our own stock of housing by implementing a strategy of stock acquisition through a mix of private finance/borrowing and Social Housing Grant from the Homes and Communities Agency, in partnership with local authorities
- Expanding our geographic areas of operation by developing services in neighbouring counties
- Developing new services for vulnerable people, through actively pursuing opportunities for SP and non-SP funded initiatives, (e.g. probation, refugees & asylum seekers, young single parents or vulnerable families, mental health, learning disabilities, drug and alcohol services)
- Working in partnership with other providers to develop joint bids
- Delivering the Places of Change Programme:
  - at the Southampton Day Centre to create a ‘community hub’ offering a range of services to homeless or potentially homeless people
  - at Patrick House in Southampton
  - potentially at 210 Newtown Road in Newbury
- Securing funding from the national SPARK programme and developing Spark Fabrications and Framing (formerly Patrick House Workshop) into a fully fledged social enterprise, offering increased training and employment opportunities to service users in Southampton
- Having robust risk and financial appraisal systems in place for all new and retendered business

### **3. Developing our People**

**We will recruit, support and retain an effective, motivated workforce and Board, through;**

- Reviewing our recruitment process, setting high standards and training our managers to ensure that we attract and recruit the best people
- Implementing a new salary and benefits structure, based on the 2009 job evaluation exercise, with revised terms and conditions for all staff
- Reviewing our supervision and appraisal processes, with updated job descriptions in place
- Effective induction, together with provision of a Core Training Programme and individual training opportunities for all staff, in order to support strategic objectives and high quality service delivery
- Developing leadership and management skills for operational managers, deputies and team leaders
- Continue with our two yearly staff surveys (next one to be conducted in September 2009 ) and implementing change in response to staff feedback
- Implementing revised terms of reference and holding elections for new representatives to be part of a well publicised, properly resourced Staff Council
- Continually improving communications methodologies, e.g. staff bulletins and briefings, staff web pages and a regular staff conference
- Providing a safe, healthy working environment for all staff
- Providing a programme of Awaydays, training, development and networking opportunities for Board Members

### **4. Building our Financial Base**

**We intend to grow our income streams and reserves over the life of the plan, through;**

- A robust 10 year financial plan with regular reviews of key business plan assumptions and scenario testing
- Implementation of a new Treasury Policy and annual treasury management strategy
- Accurate budgeting and robust financial management, involving all directors, operations and project managers

- Risk appraisal of new services, ensuring all return minimum 3% surplus, and remodelling of any loss making services
- Analysing the profitability of existing services to inform our development strategy and assist in improving efficiency
- Implementing the Fundraising Strategy to increase our charitable and voluntary funding streams
- Continuing to pursue statutory funding initiatives to support our aims.
- Maintaining an appropriate ratio of borrowings and cash at bank to fulfil our business plan.
- Reviewing our Financial Regulations and Procurement Strategy

## **5. Asset Management**

**We will develop strategies to ensure the safeguarding of our assets, and appropriate systems and infrastructure to support the business, through;**

- The development of a three year Information & Communications Technology Strategy to ensure appropriate servers, hardware and software to maximise operational efficiency and to facilitate compliance with regulatory requirements (e.g. the National Register of Social Housing)
- Maintaining an up to date stock condition survey, and planned maintenance programme to ensure a good quality environment and the long term sustainability of our housing
- Pursuing grant funding initiatives where available to maximise stock improvement and enhancement
- During the year ahead we will develop a sustainability policy to ensure that our environmental impact as an organisation is minimised.

## **6. Strong governance**

**We will ensure that Two Saints complies with regulatory and statutory codes and standards for good governance, by:**

- Compliance with the regulatory standards issued by the Tenant Services Authority, based on clearly evidenced self assessment of service quality
- Reviewing Standing Orders and Terms of Reference
- Compliance with the 2009 NHF Code of Good Governance

- Building strong and meaningful service user involvement with clear links to governance structures
- Effective scrutiny of performance in line with service standards and KPIs by SMT, Board and Committees
- Ensuring an effective and diverse Board through appraisal, skills audit, succession planning