



Highland Shores
CHILDREN'S AID
Protect Care Empower

Strategic Operating Plan

Approved by the Board of Directors
May 28, 2014



www.hscare.org



Our Vision

Communities in which children and youth thrive, families are healthy, all staff, foster families, caregivers and volunteers feel supported and fulfilled, and Children's Aid is seen as a valued community partner.

Our Mission

To work with families to protect and enhance the lives of children.

Our Core Values

In pursuit of our Vision and Mission and in our work with each other, our Aboriginal and other community partners, we are committed to:

Kids Come First

... ensuring that children and youth are in homes where they experience psychological, physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual safety and the opportunity to develop resilience and a sense of hope and optimism for their future.

Respect

... demonstrating acceptance, empathy, and honesty.

Integrity

... showing genuineness, courage, and mutual accountability for our actions and attitudes.

Advocacy

... giving voice to children and families, ensuring safe solutions, and championing the rights and resource needs of children.

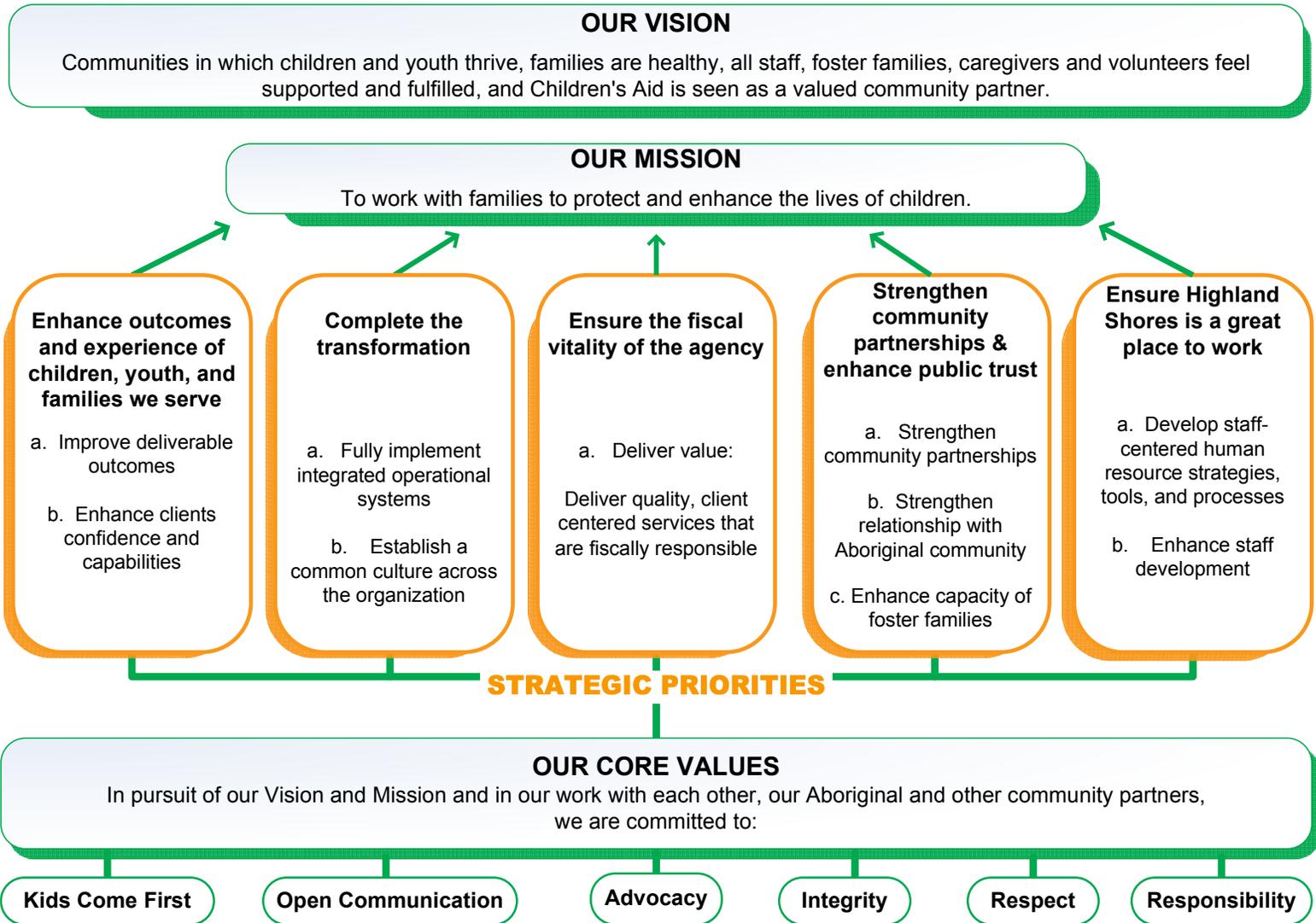
Open Communication

... ensuring that people have input into decisions that affect them, are listened to respectfully and given timely feedback.

Responsibility

... ensuring effective use of resources through systems and processes that are efficient, accurate, appropriate, and accountable.

Strategic Direction	Strategic Priorities
<p>1. Enhance outcomes and experience of children, youth, and families we serve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improve deliverable outcomes. b. Enhance clients confidence and capabilities.
<p>2. Complete the transformation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fully implement integrated operational systems. b. Establish a common culture across the organization.
<p>3. Ensure the fiscal vitality of the agency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Deliver value: Deliver quality, client centered services that are fiscally responsible.
<p>4. Strengthen community partnerships and enhance public trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengthen community partnerships. b. Strengthen relationship with Aboriginal community. c. Enhance capacity of foster families.
<p>5. Ensure Highland Shores is a great place to work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop staff-centered human resource strategies, tools, and processes. b. Enhance staff development.



OUR JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE

OUR MISSION is to work with families to protect and enhance the lives of children.

OUR VISION is to help create communities in which children and youth thrive, families are healthy, all staff, foster families, caregivers and volunteers feel supported and fulfilled, and Children's Aid is seen as a valued community partner.

In pursuit of our Vision and Mission and in our work with each other, our Aboriginal and other community partners, we will use our values to guide us. **KIDS COME FIRST** for us and we will ensure that children and youth are in homes where they experience psychological, physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual safety and the opportunity to develop resilience and a sense of hope and optimism for their future. We will treat others with **RESPECT**, demonstrating acceptance, empathy, and honesty. We will have **INTEGRITY** by showing genuineness, courage, and mutual accountability for our actions and attitudes. We will engage in **ADVOCACY** by giving voice to children and families, ensuring safe solutions, and championing the rights and resource needs of children. We will demonstrate **OPEN COMMUNICATION** and ensure that people have input into decisions that affect them, are listened to respectfully and given timely feedback. Finally, we value **RESPONSIBILITY** through ensuring effective use of resources through systems and processes that are efficient, accurate, appropriate, and accountable.

We will be severely challenged to achieve the results we want expressed in our Vision; most significant for the Society, is the current reality of our funding. We will be experiencing an overall \$9,000,000 decrease in funding, reducing about \$900,000 per year. In order to be able to provide the services necessary to our children and families and fulfill our Mission and Vision in keeping with our Values, and still live within our funding envelope, we have identified some key Strategic Directions and Priorities.

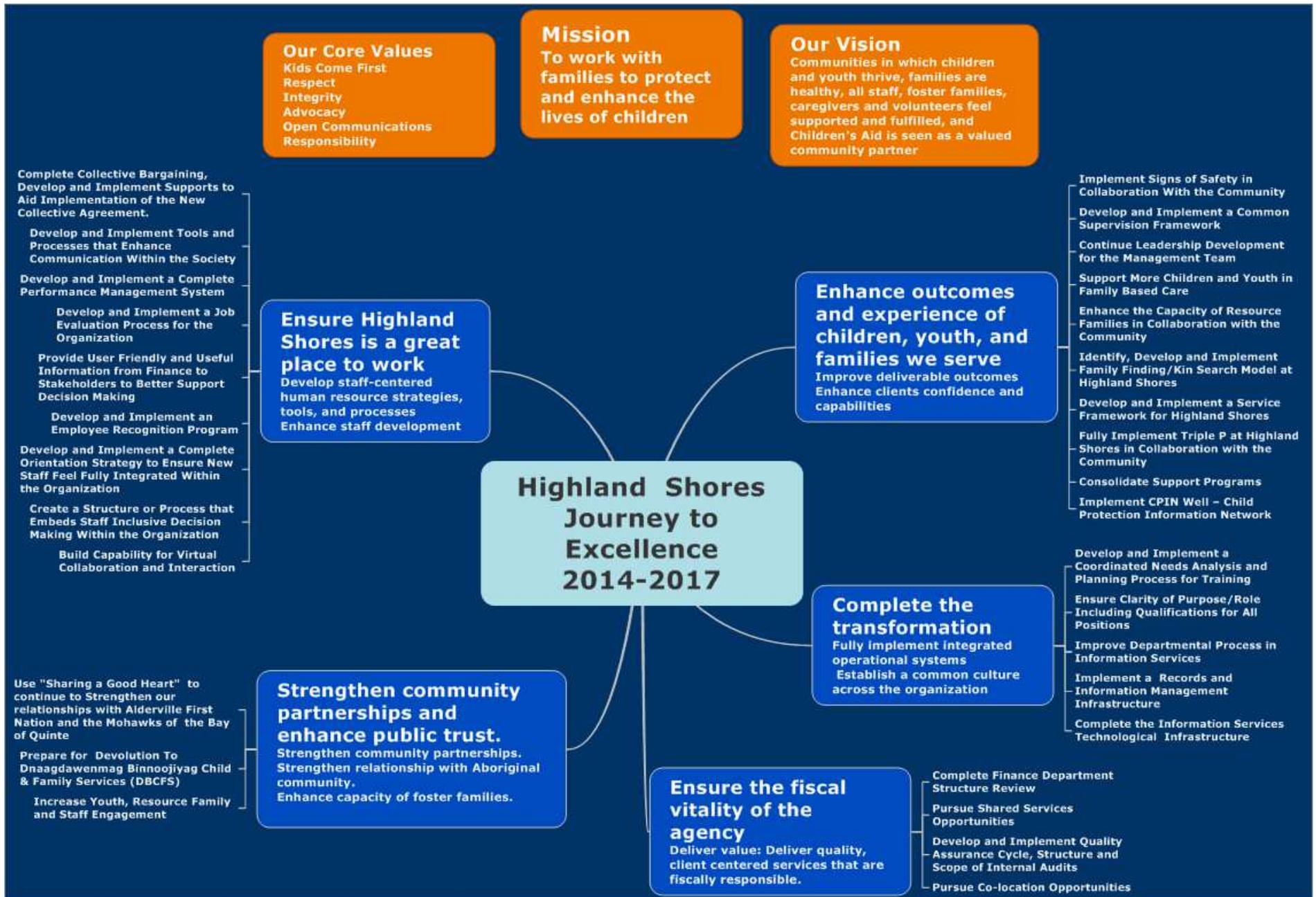
Above all, we have decided that our best approach is to get better at our work. We are proud of what we do now and have confidence that we can be even more effective. We believe that if we become more effective our costs will reduce. We also believe that the best way of accomplishing this is by investing in our staff and making Highland Shores a great place to work. These fundamental beliefs, embedded in our Strategic Directions and Priorities, along with our Mission Vision and Values, will guide us in the coming years.

OUR KEY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITIES

- A. We will enhance the outcomes and experience of the children, youth, and families we serve by improving the deliverable outcomes and enhancing our clients' confidence and capabilities.
- B. We need to complete the transformation including fully implementing integrated operational systems and establishing a common culture across the organization.
- C. We will ensure the fiscal vitality of the Society by delivering value and quality client-centered services that are fiscally responsible.
- D. We will strengthen community partnerships and enhance public trust including within the Aboriginal community and we will enhance the capacity of foster families.

- E. We will ensure Highland Shores is a great place to work by enhancing staff development and by developing staff-centered human resource strategies, tools, and processes.

Delivering on our Strategic Directives requires specific activities to accomplish them. Many of these activities support the achievement of multiple Strategic Directions and Priorities and therefore leverage our resources and efforts toward our success.



KEY STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES

We have selected specific inter-related activities that point us to what we believe are our best opportunities to achieve our goals.

Strategic Priority A: Enhancing outcomes and experience of children, youth, and families we serve by improving the deliverable outcomes and enhancing our clients' confidence and capabilities.

Strategic Activities:

1. Implement the Signs of Safety model in collaboration with the community.

Signs of Safety have demonstrated direct improvements in the outcomes of children and families including:

- reduced rates of child removal
- reduced duration of cases open to the Society
- fewer investigations
- less repeat child maltreatment
- less court-ordered involvement
- less children in placements
- fewer days of foster care
- more family involvement
- increased practitioner clarity and decision-making
- increased worker morale
- improved and focused relationships between practitioners and families
- improved collaboration between child protection and other professionals

Implementing Signs of Safety well will take time and dedicated resources. Because of this, and the training time required for staff as a result of the implementation of the Child Protection Information Network (CPIN), most of 2014/2015 will be devoted to developing our plans and engaging the community. Most of the training and Society-wide implementation of the model will happen during the next two fiscal years.

2. Develop and Implement a Common Supervision Framework

By developing and implementing a common supervision framework, we will build consistency across the organization. The additional benefit of greater consistency in our supervision model will lead to more consistent results as staff are supported in their casework. Research and consultation with staff will be conducted in 2014/15. The supervision framework will be researched, finalized and implemented in 2015/16 and an audit and evaluation of the framework will be conducted in 2016/17.

3. Continue Leadership Development for the Management Team

We will continue our process of leadership development. Effective leadership will translate not only into a stronger organization but it will also improve outcomes for clients as we develop a broader array of skills and approaches to support staff in the achievement of their work.

4. Support More Children and Youth in Family-Based Care

We want children who need to come into care to be placed in families rather than in group homes. Best practice and research shows us that children and youth are best served in family-based settings. We will develop creative and flexible partnerships and supports to increase the number of children supported in family-based settings using the Provincial Family-Based Care Model as our guide.

We will prioritize this activity and its various tasks in 2014/15. We will create an approach and expertise in child-specific specialized recruiting and overall recruitment plans. To further support this we will implement internal, flexible support service coupled with identifying external community partners and programs, both public and private, to support identified gaps within our resource family system.

Finally, we will work with our Treatment Foster Care Program to determine how current services meet our needs and find creative ways they can support identified gaps.

5. Enhance the Capacity of Resource Families in Collaboration with the Community

Because we want family-based care for every child who needs our care, we need to ensure we enhance the capacity of our Resource families so they can be successful.

In 2014/15, we will implement the Family Development Plan, a written plan describing a resource family's competencies, annual training goals, methods for reaching those goals, and how to determine if goals have been met. It helps caregivers and agencies determine how to get the right training to the right caregivers. To further support this, we will implement in 2015/16 Parenting Resources for Information Development Education (PRIDE) in-service training to support the needs identified through the Family Development Plan. We will then also determine specified training needs not supported by PRIDE in-service and develop planning to address the needs we have identified.

6. Identify, Develop and Implement a Family Finding/Kin Search Model at Highland Shores

Using our internal data, we have identified that youth aged 8- 14 coming into our care and who are subsequently made Crown Wards are the youth who are generally those still in our care at age 21. Therefore, if we increase the options for permanency without becoming Crown Wards for these youth, this will decrease the number of youth remaining long- term in the child welfare system.

To accomplish this we will Identify and select a Highland Shores Family Finding Model, including resource and staffing requirements in 2014/15, along with an implementation plan. In 2015/16 we will implement the model which will be reviewed and evaluated in subsequent years.

7. Develop and Implement a Service Framework for Highland Shores

The Society will develop its Service Framework in 2014/15, and implement it in 2015/16. This framework will describe the services and method of service we provide at Highland Shores and will be complementary to the Provincial Service Framework. This is important as it will capture what we do and how we do it and will help ensure clarity and consistency for our clients. It will also help in our discussions with the community.

8. Fully Implement Triple P at Highland Shores in Collaboration with the Community

Highland Shores is a partner in this important community program that originated in Australia and is now in place in many jurisdictions globally. It is one of the few parenting programs that

have an evidence base that supports its effectiveness and, in particular, it has also shown significant success for parents who come to the attention of child welfare.

We will begin in 2014/15 by refocusing our current Triple P involvement and use through our Family Support Program. We will follow this in year two by re-engaging our involvement and partnership within the community, as per our previous commitments. We will also be making this a central part of our Service Framework and sorting out how we ensure we have this service provided for all families who need it across our jurisdiction.

9. Consolidate Support Programs

In order to continue to provide effective and efficient interventions in support of children and families the integration of our support service function is one strategy being implemented. Having one support worker for the child and family throughout their involvement with the Society will allow for a seamless delivery of support services as part of the overall permanency plan. These interventions will be based on the application of the Triple P parenting program, managed access plans, and continued support to foster parents.

In 2015/16 we will complete the program review preparation using our Results-Based Accountability approach which includes:

- confirming the scope of the programs
- identifying outcome measures
- clarifying resources and unit costs
- confirming monitoring and reporting processes
- community consultation

The existing program structures will remain in place while planning occurs to merge job functions into one.

10. Implement CPIN (Child Protection Information Network) Well

CPIN is a Ministry Initiative that will enhance the sharing of information across the province. We expect to implement CPIN in November of 2014, but work will continue with the enhancement of the application and the rollout of CPIN to other agencies across the province over the next few years.

This is a major cornerstone of work for the Society in 2014/15 and along with the completion of collective bargaining will be our primary focus beyond our day-to-day work. We have created, and are working from, a detailed project plan and have deployed the necessary resources for successfully implementing this major initiative.

Strategic Priority B: Complete the transformation of legacy Northumberland, Prince Edward and Hastings Children's Aid Societies, including fully implementing integrated operational systems and establishing a common culture across the organization.

Strategic Activities:

1. Develop and Implement a Coordinated Needs Analysis and Planning Process for Training

In order to support some of the other activities we need to enhance our training system. This will begin in 2014/15 with identifying training requirements by position. We will then develop a

more robust process, likely starting in 2015/16, that also takes advantage of our training partnerships with other Societies.

2. Ensure Clarity of Purpose/Role Including Qualifications for All Positions

We need to connect the Mission Vision and Values to job descriptions to ensure staff understand the importance and expectation of living our shared Values. This helps us complete the transformation by ensuring consistency of job descriptions and helps make it a great place to work by enshrining our shared Values. We will complete this in 2014/15.

3. Improve Departmental Process in Information Services

Information Services has been heavily involved in the amalgamation of the three agencies in order to integrate various databases and technologies. This work allowed us to standardize in some areas but we are now at a point where we need to standardize and improve the department in order to support Highland Shores more effectively. This will require more standardization in applications, hardware, tools for staff and technical training for Information Services staff. These steps are necessary for us to be more efficient and effective in our approach to supporting our stakeholders. Our focus will become more solutions-based and less reactive. This will in turn reduce downtime for our stakeholders and allow them to be more effective in their work.

A comprehensive plan for the various tasks is being created and will guide this work with detailed priorities set for each of the years, starting in 2014/15 with an overall departmental design and purpose statement. These priorities will cover such areas as:

- revised departmental procedures
- tools for supporting our internal stakeholder community
- technical training program to ensure Information Services (IS) staff have the necessary skills and structure to support the Society
- dialogue with other CASs for shared expertise/services/ group purchasing/ resources
- standardization of hardware and software
- expanding internal stakeholder involvement in the prioritization of IS projects, involvement in the selection of hardware and software
- implementation of satisfaction surveys with stakeholders

4. Implement a Records and Information Management Infrastructure

We benefitted from a consultant during amalgamation who reviewed our current records and information management practices across the three legacy agencies. The outcome from this work was the development of a list of recommendations to improve the use of information at Highland Shores. We are now able to move forward with this work and complete an implementation plan for Highland Shores in 2014/15 which will start with work associated with CPIN. Once the plan is developed we will start implementing practices which will improve the access and storage of information. This will include physical records, email, video recordings and all electronic information across Highland Shores. Our plan will also describe how we will stage and pace our implementation.

5. Complete the Information Services Technological Infrastructure

During amalgamation much work was completed by Information Services, but during this process it was determined improvements could be made on the Infrastructure. Infrastructure includes servers and network and voice communications. These improvements will stabilize and

provide a more reliable environment with improvements in security for our stakeholders. Currently we are operating various servers at each location which creates additional administration and cost. The strategic initiatives will complete some of our transformation while improving our efficiency and reducing some of our hardware and software costs. We will continue wireless improvements in coverage at all sites.

Strategic Priority C: Ensuring the fiscal vitality of the agency by delivering value and quality client-centered services that are fiscally responsible.

Our primary method of ensuring the fiscal vitality of the agency is to get better at our work. We believe that if we become more effective that will also mean that our costs will go down. We also believe that the best way of accomplishing this is by investing in our staff and making Highland Shores a great place to work. Many of the activities identified in other areas, particularly in the areas of enhancing our outcomes and making Highland Shores a great place to work will also help us become more sustainable. In addition, the completion of our transformation and working more effectively with the community will yield an additional benefit of helping us remain sustainable. As well, any of the activities we undertake and indeed any decisions we make will necessarily have the lens of how we achieve value and support sustainability as we arrive at a solution. Our purpose as a Society is to serve our clients well, and we have to do so within the funding we are provided.

We have also identified the following Strategic Activities that we believe will help us ensure the fiscal vitality of the agency.

Strategic Activities:

1. Complete Finance Department Structure Review

We will review the structure and role distribution within the Finance Department to ensure it is optimally configured for efficiency and effectiveness to support the Society's financial operations. In 2014/15, we will complete this review and begin implementing any necessary changes. Areas in scope beyond the structure and role distribution include:

- increasing automation of manual and labor intensive processes
- moving to common pay and benefit platform following completion of collective bargaining
- identifying further opportunities/new technology to provide better service to clients, providers and staff

2. Pursue Shared Services Opportunities

We will continue to explore opportunities for reciprocal shared services with other agencies and/or community partners (e.g. CPIN training). As well, we will continue to participate in the provincial shared services project led by OACAS.

3. Develop and Implement Quality Assurance Cycle, Structure and Scope of Internal Audits

We believe that one of the key supports necessary for the Society to improve outcomes is to ensure we have a robust and coherent quality assurance cycle within the Society. We currently have most, if not all, of the component parts but they are not currently as coherently organized and structured as they need to be to achieve what we need. Therefore a plan will be developed

and deployed in 2014/15 that will examine internal quality assurance structure and requirements to:

- ensure the continued development of performance indicators measurement capability
- ensure our ability to fulfill performance management aspects of accountability agreement
- continue the development and usefulness of scorecards and gap analysis
- continue the use of Results Based Accountability methodology for program review
- help us begin to use process improvement strategies
- begin organizational preparation for cyclical reviews
- determine our internal service and financial audit approach and requirements
- continue to measure outcomes

4. Pursue Co-location Opportunities

We will continue to explore possibilities for co-location with community partners, either by having community partners co-locate with us in Belleville, Cobourg and Picton, co-locate with them in Quinte West and either with us or us with them in Bancroft.

Strategic Priority D: Strengthening community partnerships and enhancing public trust including within the Aboriginal community and enhancing the capacity of foster families.

A cornerstone Strategic Direction for Highland Shores is to strengthen our community partnerships. Many of our activities that are connected to other Strategic Directions also have a connection to strengthening our community relationships. Many of them explicitly list that we will complete the activity in collaboration with our community partners. This is purposeful. Indeed, working with the community to achieve our results has to become a way of being rather than an afterthought or even seen as a burden. We cannot be successful if we don't dramatically improve our collaborations and ensure integration and access to community services. This will involve negotiation and discussion with our community partners, but it needs to start internally with the realization that we cannot do everything on our own, and that others are better positioned, have the mandate, or have the skill to provide the service. It will require us to be willing to let go of the past and genuinely commit to working constructively toward a different future. It will also require a more visible presence by senior leadership, which has already started. It will also likely require additional supports for the Society and the community to change some of the unhelpful pathways that currently thwart the higher level of service that might be possible for our shared clients.

In addition to improving our general community reputation and relationships, we have specifically identified continued work in strengthening our relationships with the Aboriginal communities we connect with in our jurisdiction.

Strategic Activities:

1. Use "Sharing a Good Heart" to continue to strengthen our relationships with Alderville First Nation and the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.

We will use the provincial "Sharing a Good Heart" document created in partnership with Aboriginal and field representatives. Our Aboriginal Advisory Committee will be our forum for doing this work. Through this work with Mohawk Family Services and Alderville we will identify the gaps in serving families and supporting children through foster care, customary care and adoption with a view to increase First Nations care of their own children.

We will also create a shared learning experience between HSCA & Northern First Nations to enable us to provide better support when First Nations youth are placed in our area.

2. Prepare for Devolution to Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child & Family Services (DBCFS)

We will focus on working with Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child & Family Services on their journey to becoming mandated as a Child Welfare Agency. We will ultimately work in partnership as we devolve services from the Society to DBCFGS once they become mandated.

3. Increase Youth, Resource Family and Staff Engagement

Beyond our work with our Aboriginal communities, we have recognized that youth, resource families and staff have identified a desire to have additional ways and opportunities for shared engagement, learning and development.

To accomplish this we will complete a variety of tasks starting in 2015/16 which include:

- working with the Youth Advisory Committee on a survey of youth in care and resource families
- creating opportunities for joint staff, youth and caregiver training
- creating opportunities for joint staff, youth, resource families interaction and engagement
- using provincial and local Ontario Looking After Children data

Strategic Priority E: Ensuring Highland Shores is a great place to work by developing staff-centered human resource strategies, tools, and processes and by developing our staff.

Improving our outcomes, and ensuring the vitality of the Society will only happen if we ensure Highland Shores Children's Aid is a great place to work. We need to continue to invest in our people and the processes that support them in their work. This connects to each of the Strategic Directions and supports their accomplishment. It involves continuing to evolve and building on the good start we have made to create a strong and positive organizational culture. There are some specific Strategic activities that we have identified, but making our organization a great place to work requires all of us to commit to making it happen, living our shared values and continuing to use every opportunity to evolve our culture. There will be many such activities and efforts in the coming years. The following activities list the Strategic elements that will help to keep us moving forward.

Strategic Activities:

1. Complete Collective Bargaining, Develop and Implement Supports to Aid Implementation of the New Collective Agreement.

Along with CPIN, the successful achievement of our first collective agreement will be a major focal point in the beginning months of 2014/15. It will help frame the organization's future and will support the successful achievement of the Strategic Directions. While it must ensure the fiscal vitality of the Society, it must also create the conditions to make it a great place to work by ensuring good, supportive processes and fairness for our unionized staff.

2. Develop and Implement Tools and Processes that Enhance Communication Within the Society

We have made great strides in improving our internal communications and will continue to place a high degree of emphasis on clear, timely, honest and transparent communications. The development of an internal staff portal will be a key element of improving communication beginning in 2014/15 and rolling out in 2015/16. We will also be implementing a portal for foster parents starting in 2015/16 with roll-out later that year, or early in 2016/17.

3. Develop and Implement a Complete Performance Management System

We need to support our staff in their performance by ensuring that we have supportive processes and clear information about their performance. One step towards this is the achievement of a complete performance management system for all staff, with the consolidation of one common set of performance appraisal forms in 2014/15. Following in 2015/16, we will revise performance appraisal forms to incorporate Highland Shores competencies and in 2016/17 will make them available on-line.

We will also continue our training and support for the management team to help them become even more effective in their support of staff performance and in their own performance.

4. Develop and Implement a Job Evaluation Process for the Organization

To ensure fairness and consistency in our organizational job evaluation process we will further develop and implement a job evaluation process for unionized positions once we have a collective agreement.

5. Provide User Friendly and Useful Information from Finance to Stakeholders to Better Support Decision Making

We have an opportunity to review the methods and content of information provided by Finance to support organizational decision making. In conjunction with CPIN, new opportunities will exist that will help shift decision making to service staff and managers with decision support coming from Finance.

6. Develop and Implement an Employee Recognition Program

One element that we want to make sure is established in order for Highland Shores to be a great place to work is to formally recognize staff for their accomplishments. This will start with a harmonized long service recognition program to celebrate year of service for 2014 and the development of what is likely to be an ever evolving program for roll-out starting in 2015.

7. Develop and Implement a Complete Orientation Strategy to Ensure New Staff Feel Fully Integrated Within the Organization

One key way of building an organization that is a great place to work is by starting people out right when they join the Society. When this is done well, they are not only more likely to succeed, their contribution to the work needing to be done happens more quickly. In order to achieve this we will develop and implement a comprehensive orientation and standard organizational training process. It will include the clarification of a consistent departmental/job specific orientation and the development of a process for delivering training on core areas like:

- Workplace Hazardous Materials
- How to use our information system
- The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Health and Safety
- Mission, Vision, Values

8. Create a Structure or Process that Embeds Staff Inclusive Decision-Making Within the Organization

A theme coming from our organizational cultural assessment and subsequently embedded within the organization is empowered and inclusive decision-making. This has been built into our Values and into our structure through things like our policy and procedure process, as well as the policies and procedures themselves, where decisions are kept close to those in the best position to make them, typically those closest to the client. We need to continue building

structures that embed this approach in the organization and a new process will be introduced to support this starting in 2015/16.

There are a variety of methods that we will explore and choose from that provide this kind of structure. Self-directed work teams, quality circle and design teams are just three of the many approaches that could be used. The intent is to create a structure or process in the organization that explicitly delegates important decisions to groups of pertinent staff to make on behalf of the organization while being supported by the Agency. It will explicitly help de-link hierarchal decision-making and the importance of decision-making and instead will link together those with the skill, knowledge and interest regardless of their position within the decision process. This will augment rather than replace other Society decision-making processes and the work will be to clarify the scope and best use of such a process.

9. Build Capability for Virtual Collaboration and Interaction

Due to our large geographic area there is a need to increase our use of technology to create flexibility and increase efficiency when we need to connect. Each site has one room set-up for video conferencing, but we need to take this to another level in which staff can use technology to meet with anyone, no matter if they are in the office or on the road. Information Services will work with stakeholders to provide the tools that allow us to connect when needed and reduce travel time for meetings. We will expand video conferencing into smaller meeting rooms as well. Some other tasks we envision will be to:

- start to collaborate through desktop applications such as WebEx
- start to provide mobility and connectivity tools for front line workers
- enable voice to text technologies to gain efficiencies in the creation of case notes
- improve remote access to agency resources and infrastructure so that working remotely will be comparable to working in the office