



St. Matthew's Housing Association Ltd.

A Non Profit-making Housing Association

Annual Report 2015



On a journey to become a model of excellence for community based housing associations in Northern Ireland

St Matthews Housing Association Ltd. 58 Harper Street Belfast BT5 4EN

Registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 (No.IP177).

Registered with the Department for Social Development (No.R18).

HMRC registered charitable status (XT28085). Registered with the Charity Commission for NI (NIC 10291)

Board of Management	Number attended of 5 Board Meetings in 2014/15
Mr P Devlin – Chairperson	5
Mr K Craig – Treasurer	3
Mr J O'Donnell	3
Mrs P Brennan	4
Mr P O'Ruanai	4
Mr C Devenny	4
Mr P Donnelly	5
Mrs M Flanagan	4

Total expenses reimbursed to Board members in 2014/15 - £0.00

(2 Board members are tenants of the Association)

Staff

Mr Jim Black – Chief Executive & Honorary Secretary

Mrs Sarah Jane Murray – Finance Officer

Mrs Sandra Wright – Housing Officer

Mr Kieran Donnelly – Maintenance Officer

Mrs Deirdre Conlon – P/T Caretaker/Cleaner

Telephone No.:- 02890 451070 / Out of Hours Emergency No.:- 0800 731 3081

A Word from our Chairman

I can report to all on another successful year where SMHA continued to invest in its property, had small growth and manages its service efficiently and to the satisfaction of our residents. I acknowledge the help of my Board colleagues and also acknowledge we are in a place where we are changing relationships of how we work with others, particularly APEX HA in delivering new housing in Short Strand. However I reiterate SMHA's desire to work with strategic alliances and partnerships to the benefit of our service and community and to ensure we remain compliant with our regulators

I welcome our Association's improving performance as we officially re-gained "Satisfactory Assurance" with our regulators the Department of Social Development in 2015. Through our own internal audit, we are maintaining substantial assurance ratings in the some areas which confirm we are continually improving.

In terms of Development – we added 3 additional properties into our stock and hope to add the odd Existing Satisfactory Purchase or rehabilitation property as and when suitable opportunities arise. We hope our continued alliance with APEX HA will afford us some additional development opportunities in the future – notably the former Bryson Centre. There remains the potential for further significant development in and around Short Strand and our priority remains the Short Strand area where we hope to deliver good quality affordable housing in the coming years.

Our Association continues to be conscious of costs and prudent in our management and maintenance expenditure. Partnership working with other housing associations will help us deliver in administration and maintenance more efficiently. Indeed previous group procurement of development and maintenance services has undoubtedly saved us money over the last few years.

We will continue to invest in our housing stock – we spent a total £1.3m of total expenditure in programmed maintenance in the five years after our stock condition survey completed in 2009/10 (completing March 2015). Our homes meet Decent Homes Standard and with regular planned investment will continue to meet Decent Homes Standard.

I am encouraged with the knowledge and experience of our Board and I hope to get stronger in the coming years. I thank all for my colleagues and staff for their time (particularly board member Paddy Donnelly who stands down presently), help and effort and hoped we all share the vision of a successful community housing association in the coming years.

Patrick Devlin

SMHA Chairman

Financial Inclusion - Credit Union Matched Savings Plan

When we talk about “financial inclusion” we mean access to financial services at affordable costs to lower income households, who make the majority of our tenant base. Where people cannot easily access these financial products many of the rest of us take for granted, this is known as financial exclusion which contributes to a wider social exclusion.

Around 80% of our tenants access housing benefit to help pay rents and rates. Recent UK wide statistics record that 47% of those that are “tenants” save money whilst this figure is 70% for “owner occupiers”. In these austere times with further threats of a squeeze on benefits likely, it is important our tenants are able to access financial advice and products wherever appropriate.

SMHA already help facilitate access to debt and budgeting advice and benefits advice. The vast majority of our tenants have bank accounts and we can help facilitate those who have not. However an important gap exists in encouraging saving and in access to lower cost alternatives to money lenders or payday loan lenders.

Local credit unions are an excellent potential source of access to savings and responsible borrowing. Individuals pay a joining fee (normally a negligible amount such as £1) and build up a savings profile which will be used to consider how best placed they are to access lending after a period of time. Access to such lending is important to enable them to meet certain periodic needs (e.g. Christmas, kids' clothes or school trips) or even for everyday living. Such lending will be responsible and affordable and the nature of the CU membership means an annual interest rate and dividend is shared – usually at times such as Christmas.

How SMHA can assist our tenants?

SMHA acknowledge many of our tenants will already be members of Credit Unions. However a significant minority may not be. SMHA would like to offer an incentive scheme to encourage wider take up of CU membership. This would operate in the way of a “matched savings” scheme.

A tenant can join their local credit union (if not already a member) and SMHA would undertake to match savings the tenant is able to manage in the first 12 weeks up to a value of £50. We can also refund any joining fee/expense. This would mean the tenant is able to become a member of a responsible institution and build up an initial savings profile that improves their longer-term borrowing capabilities. If you are not currently a member of a local Credit Union and would like to learn more about this scheme, please contact staff at the office.

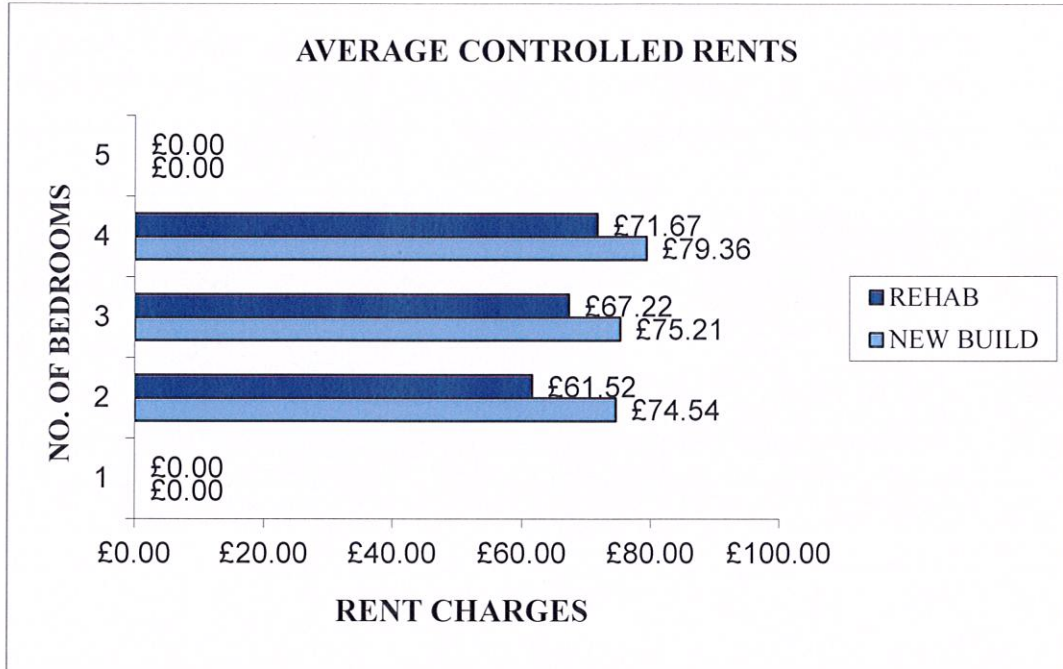
Key Performance Data in 2014/15

SMHA has performed well in the last several years following a period of significant change in the organisation with a new Chief Executive taking over in April 2010. We continue to strive to meet performance objectives set for us and also improving the housing service tangibly for all residents. We carried out a comprehensive resident satisfaction survey in 2011/12 and 2013/14 with excellent results. You will see on the next two pages a summary of some of the recorded key performance data over the last year, with a comparison to the 2 previous years.

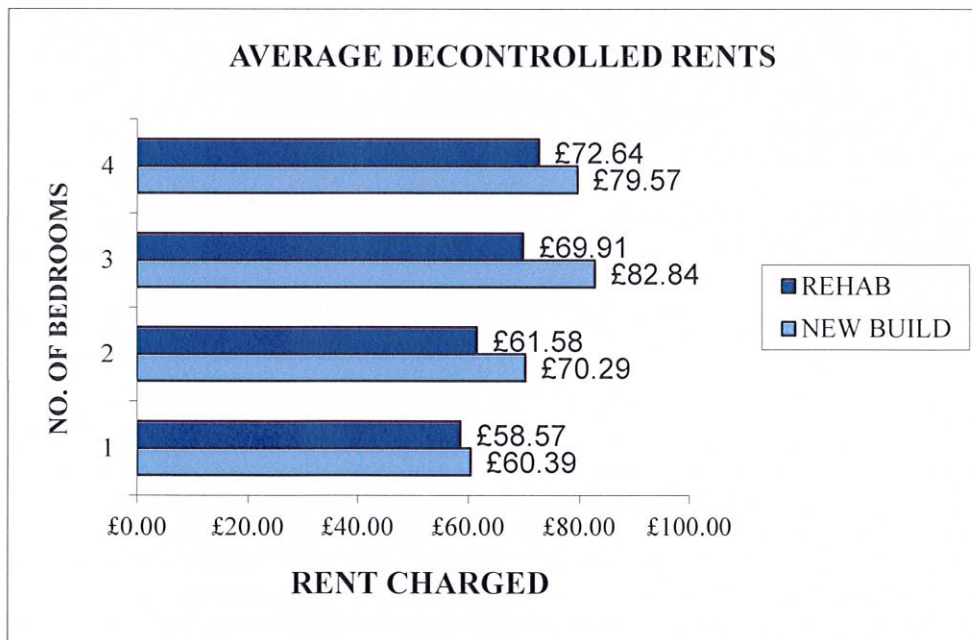
Key Performance Areas	2012/13 Performance	2013/14 Performance	2014/15 Performance	Target
% of total rent receivable actually collected	100.1%	97.75%**	99.16%	98%
% of rental income that comes from Housing Benefit	75.72%	73.81%	74.61%	-
Voids as a % of rent receiveable	0.46%	0.29%	0.22%	<1%
No. Of new lettings	0	11	1	-
No. Of relettings	13	9	11	-
Total No. Of units of occupied accommodation	187	197	198	-
Average Relet Times (in days)	22	13	13	-
% of emergency repairs completed in 24 hours	91%	94%	96%	>85%
% of urgent repairs completed in 4 working days	93%	89%	89%	>80%
% of routine repairs completed in 20 working days	94%	89%	93%	>80%
No. of complaints received/resolved prior to referral to ombudsman	1/0	1/1	3/3	100%
No. of anti-social behaviour complaints received/resolved	2/2	2/2	3/3	100%
% of residents satisfied with SMHA housing service	-	90%	-	>80%

** figures skewed by additional housing benefit technical debt held for year 2013/14

SMHA has recorded information of the rents charged for different homes in our management. The Association's rent setting policy is broken into two categories. The first is Controlled or Point based rents. Under this system of rent setting, each property is allocated a number of points depending upon the facilities the each property contains.



Decontrolled rents are used for all mixed funded development property. They are based on four-factors: - sinking fund, loan element, management allowances and maintenance allowances.



Tenancy Fraud

Housing tenancy fraud is the use of social housing by someone who is not entitled to occupy that home. In 2013 the NI Audit Office (NIAO) identified the following categories of potential tenancy fraud:-

Giving false information on a housing application to obtain a home – were an individual may provide information on household make-up or factors relating to their current housing situation which can result in the award of more points thus enhancing their priority for rehousing on the waiting list.

Abandonment – were an individual abandons a property leaving it empty or passes on the keys for profit to another party thus depriving the landlord of the opportunity to re-allocate the property in a timely manner to an appropriate case in housing need.

Sub-letting for profit – were an individual effectively becomes landlord to another party who occupies the property and pays rent (sometimes larger than the rent charged by the Association) to them. In many of these cases the third party may not know the owner of the property and thus that the legitimate landlord may be a housing association or NIHE.

Succession fraud – were an individual succeeds a tenancy from a relative by falsely claiming to have resided at the property for an extended period of time e.g. where a young relative succeeds the tenancy of an older relative upon their death.

Right to buy fraud – were an individual may provide false information in the application process of purchasing their home under Right to Buy provisions.

Whilst there is less known about the scale of the problem in NI the Audit Commission in England identified that around as much as 2% of social housing was subject to tenancy fraud of some descript. SMHA is a small landlord and has just short of 200 properties. It is reasonable to state there may be some instances of tenancy fraud not yet detected among our populace. The scale of the problem may not be known to be high presently but increasing awareness may well lead to greater detection in the next few years. If you suspect a case of Tenancy Fraud please contact staff at SMHA.

Residents Satisfaction Survey 2015/16

You will be aware SMHA are surveying our tenants this year. You will have received a Survey Questionnaire and you are requested to complete and return to the Association. Overall results of the Residents Satisfaction Surveys carried out in the 2011 & 2013 were positive and the response rate was good. Sound levels of satisfaction across all performance indicators are indicative of a quality housing service and a solid Housing Association that strives for constant improvement and excellence regarding service provision. If you have any questions or require any assistance please contact Sandra Convery Wright at the office.

Accounts 2014/15**Approved at AGM 25th June 2015****Income and Expenditure Account****Year ended 31 March 2015**

	2015	2014
	£	£
Turnover	756,918	749,064
Operating costs	<u>(432,457)</u>	<u>(464,021)</u>
Operating Surplus	324,461	285,043
Interest receivable	7,203	5,846
Interest payable	(54,973)	(58,938)
FRS 17 past service cost gains	(2,000)	8,000
Other interest charge	<u>10,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Surplus on Ordinary Activities	284,691	239,951
Surplus for the year	284,691	239,951
Actuarial gain (loss) on pension scheme	(129,000)	31,000
Total recognised gains (losses) since last AR	155,691	270,951

Balance Sheet as at 31 st March 2015	2015	2014
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Housing land and buildings:		
Cost	16,688,866	16,317,486
Less: Housing Association Grants	(11,754,572)	(11,632,500)
Depreciation	<u>(1,068,795)</u>	<u>(961,121)</u>
	3,865,499	3,723,685
Other Fixed Assets	<u>21,718</u>	<u>24,744</u>
	3,887,217	3,748,609
Current Assets		
Debtors	36,069	149,426
Cash & bank balances	<u>948,698</u>	<u>887,639</u>
	984,767	1,037,065
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	<u>(203,213)</u>	<u>(182,117)</u>
Net Current Assets	781,554	854,948
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	<u>4,668,771</u>	<u>4,603,557</u>
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due After More Than 1 Year		
Long-term liabilities	829,147	1,040,624
Pension fund liability	<u>203,000</u>	<u>82,000</u>
	1,032,147	1,122,624
Financed By:		
Share Capital	57	57
Capital Reserves	301	301
Revenue Reserves	<u>3,636,266</u>	<u>3,480,575</u>
	<u>3,636,624</u>	<u>3,480,933</u>
	4,668,771	4,603,557