

ANNUAL REPORT

2010/11



By Housing Society Chair
Trevor Jones

WELCOME to Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society's annual report for 2010/11.

All social housing providers are required under national rules to inform their tenants how they have been performing – and this is the society's report to you.

Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society aims to provide high standards of service for residents in the homes we manage.

Last year we consulted with you as our customers on choosing a new housing association to look after our homes.

The decision to appoint Aspire Housing to let and manage our homes from April 2011 was a major step for the society and its residents.

We hope you have already noticed a positive difference and that services will continue to improve during this current year.

● We always welcome feedback. If you would like to get in touch or help us to improve services, please contact us on 01782 854707.



Neighbourhood officer Kelly Colclough chats with resident Sue Hodnett.

Services will continue to improve with Aspire



The Bottlekiln



Northwood Court

Inside: standards our residents can expect

Welcome to Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society

New partner Aspire values **society independence**



Above, Aspire's headquarters at the Brampton, Newcastle, and right, apprentice Stefan Farr, from Aspire Housing's sister company PM Training.

RESIDENTS of Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society's homes gave a big message of support for the choice of Aspire Housing to manage their homes.

The society decided in 2010 to choose a new housing association to manage its homes after many years of working with Beth Johnson Housing Association and then Sanctuary Group.

Housing associations in Staffordshire and beyond were invited to bid for the contract to manage the society's homes from April 2011.

Aspire Housing beat off competition from four other housing associations and was chosen by the board of Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society.

In choosing an alternative housing provider, the society insisted on:

- respect for the society's independence
- comprehensive services including housing management; maintenance; finance, corporate support and development
- a five year contract
- a proven track record of high performance and improvement
- use of local labour where possible. Tenants were asked what they

thought of the proposal to appoint Aspire. One in five responded to a postal survey and of those 71 per cent were in favour.

Ten residents also took part in the process to select the new housing association, listening to each of the companies' presentations, giving their views and attending the board meeting that made the choice.

In addition 22 residents said they would be interested in helping Aspire to improve and manage the service they receive.

Trevor Jones, chair, said: "It was a major decision for the society to end our contract with Sanctuary Group.

"We wanted to improve services through a new five year arrangement with another housing association.

"Aspire demonstrated to us that they would provide an excellent service for our residents, while respecting and valuing our independence and identity.

"We were also particularly impressed by Aspire's commitment investing in communities, to training



and to helping people into work through PM Training.

"Our residents also clearly supported the decision and many said they would like to get more involved with the society.

"We will now work with residents to involve them more in improving services and in running the society."

New homes update 2010/11: Garibaldi Close

Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society Chairman Trevor Jones hands over the keys to Vikki Cave, the first customer at Garibaldi Close, with Stoke-on-Trent Lord Mayor Terry Follows and Lady Mayoress Jacqueline Pearson looking on.



Did you know?

- Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society had a total of 462 general needs homes at April 2011
- 212 homes are at Park Vista flats, Hanley, 107 homes are at Marchwood Court and Perrymount Court, Penkhull
- Other homes are in Hanley, Longton, Goldenhill, Etruria, Cliff Vale and Burslem
- In 2010/11 we carried out 2,765 repairs
- An average of 2½ homes were empty at any one time
- We let 68 homes – It took us an average of 2 weeks and six days to relet homes after they became vacant
- We evicted one tenant for serious antisocial behaviour

Regeneration in progress as first customers given a **warm welcome**

A prominent new development of 21 homes for Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society was completed during 2010/11.

The scheme at Garibaldi Close, Etruria, comprises 21 two and three bedroom properties, 18 of which are for rent and three for shared ownership.

Work on the development took place during 2010/11 and it was officially opened in June 2011 when their first tenant, Vikki Cave, collected her keys and moved in.

Stoke-on-Trent Lord Mayor Terry Follows officially opened the scheme, along with Trevor Jones and Aspire Housing staff who are letting and managing the new homes.

The development was funded by the Homes and Communities Agency and Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society.

Mr Jones said: "Through this scheme we have regenerated a run down area and provided better quality homes for the local community.

"The unique design of the properties has made the area more attractive as well as improving insulation and reducing heating bills."

The society is now investigating new opportunities to build more homes or provide them as part of other housing developments.

Mr Jones said: "We hope to build on this and develop more new properties and increase social housing in Stoke-on-Trent."

Through this scheme we have regenerated a run down area and provided better quality homes for the local community.

Six standards... the level of service our residents

All housing associations in England must follow six standards, to ensure their tenants receive a high quality service from their landlord.

Three of these standards should also have a “local offer” – a local version of the national standard.

While Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society’s homes were being managed by Sanctuary it was their standards and local offer that were applied to the society.

Now the society’s homes are being managed by Aspire Housing the society and Aspire will work with residents to agree a local offer specifically for the society.

The Tenant Services Authority and the landlord’s customers are jointly responsible for making sure housing associations meet the agreed standards.

The annual report shows to tenants how the housing association are meeting the national standards and the local offers.

HOME STANDARD: improving your home, repairs and maintenance

What we’re expected to do...

- Ensure customers’ homes meet the Decent Home Standard
- Agree a local offer on improving customers’ homes, repairs and maintenance.
- Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas
- Ensure health and safety requirements are met

INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STANDARD: resident involvement, customer care and meeting everyone’s needs

What we’re expected to do...

- Provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the customer’s needs
- Respond to the diverse needs of customers
- Have an approach to complaints that is clear and simple to use and complaints are resolved promptly
- Offer customers a wide range of opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing
- Agree local offers for service delivery

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY STANDARD: your neighbourhood and community, tackling antisocial behaviour and working in partnership

What we’re expected to do...

- Keep the neighbourhood and communal areas clean and safe
- Help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing
- Work in partnership with other public organisations to prevent and tackle antisocial behaviour in the neighbourhoods where customers live



TENANCY STANDARD: managing our properties, rent and tenure

What we’re expected to do...

- To let homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way
- Have clear application, decision-making and appeals processes
- Charge rents in accordance with the Tenant Services Authority
- Contribute to sustainable communities
- Assist with local authorities’ homelessness duties
- Minimise the time that properties are empty between each letting

Baird Court



can expect

VALUE FOR MONEY

What we're expected to do...

- Show how spending has been prioritised in relation to the standards and local offers
- Show how value for money has been secured and tested
- Show plans and priorities for future value for money improvements

HOW WE ARE RUN

What we're expected to do...

- Inform customers of Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society's aims, objectives and intended outcomes for them
- Be effective, transparent and accountable



ARREARS 2010/11

Tenants are provided with advice and support if they have difficulty paying their rent on time.

However, the society uses every effort to ensure that any arrears are paid off promptly. Where tenants fail to pay we take legal action to recover the money owed.

At the end of March 2011 rent arrears from current tenants was £44,540, while former tenants owed £28,878. The total outstanding was £73,418, which is 3.31% of the total amount of rent owed to the society over the year. This places Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society among the top 25% of housing associations for rent collection in England.

The society closely monitors tenants' rent arrears and will take prompt action to help ensure money is paid.

RESPONDING TO REPAIRS 2010/11

We pledge to our tenants that we will carry out repairs in set times, according to whether the job is emergency, urgent or routine.

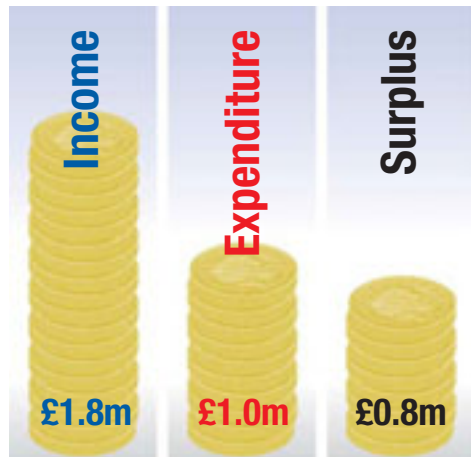
Repair response required within	Target	Actual
24 hours – emergency	100%	94%
7 days – urgent	95%	95%
28 days – routine	95%	98%



Finances 2010/11

Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society is funded through rents, loans from funders, reserves and grants from the Homes and Communities Agency.

The society reinvests income from rents into improving residents' homes and building new homes that can be used to help meet people's housing needs.



A full copy of the accounts is available at www.aspirehousing.co.uk



Perrymount Court



Park Vista flats

CONTACT US

IN PERSON

At our customer service centre in Merial Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre:

9am-5pm Monday to Friday

9am-12noon Saturday

BY PHONE

01782 854707

8am-5.30pm Monday to Friday

9am-12noon Saturday

OUT OF HOURS

● Emergency repairs:

01782 854999

● Emergency housing advice:

01782 615599

● Antisocial behaviour hotline:

0845 6803758

BY EMAIL

enquiries@aspirehousing.co.uk

BY POST

Aspire Housing
Kingsley
The Brampton
Newcastle-under-Lyme
ST5 0QW

For information in another language or format (large print, Braille, computer disc), please contact us.



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