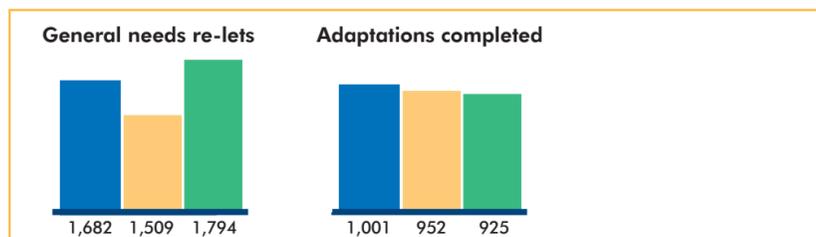
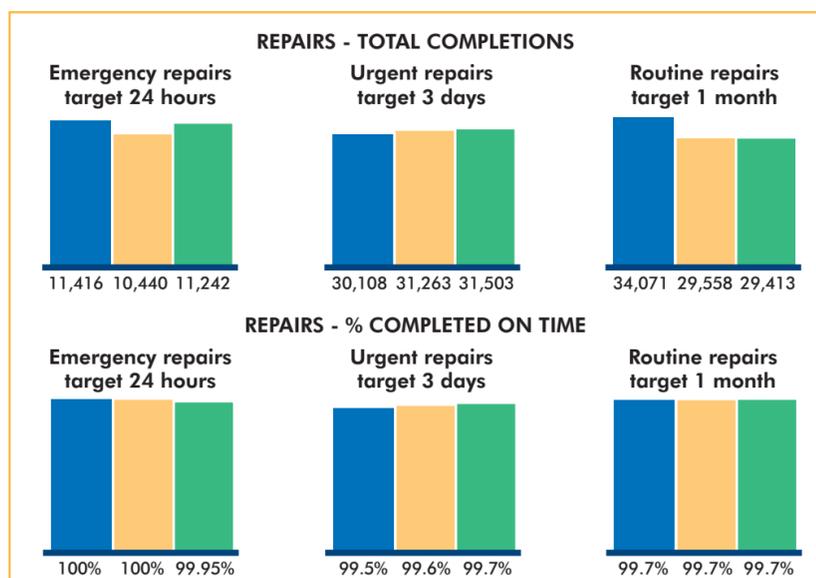
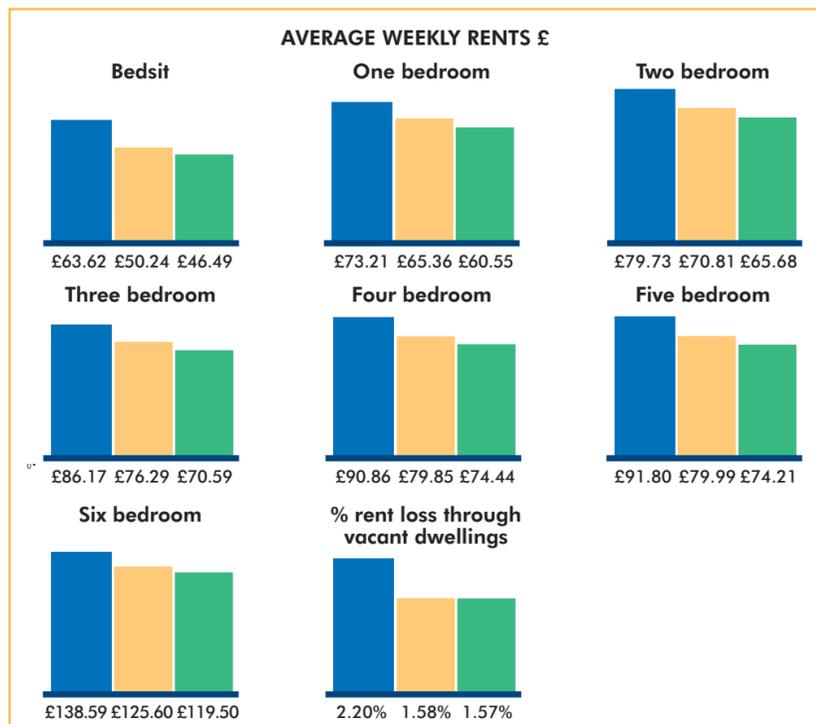
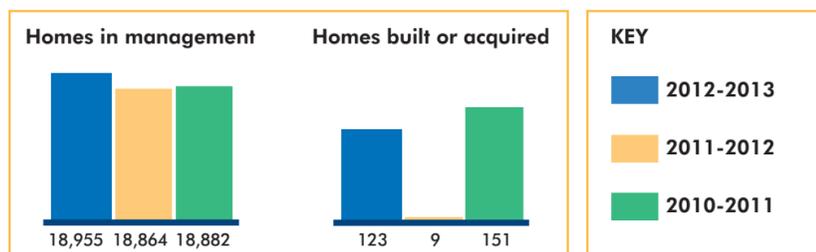


HOW ARE WE DOING?

Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2013	2013 £'000	2012 restated £'000
Tangible fixed assets		
Housing properties at cost		
less depreciation	225,382	209,010
Social Housing Grant	(23,126)	(20,842)
	<u>202,256</u>	<u>188,168</u>
Other tangible fixed assets	16,779	15,130
HomeBuy equity loans advanced	137	137
	<u>219,172</u>	<u>203,435</u>
Current assets		
Stocks	91	89
Debtors: Due within one year	6,435	6,818
Money market deposits	15,188	13,483
Cash at bank and in hand	472	423
	<u>22,186</u>	<u>20,813</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(17,934)	(18,316)
Net current assets/(liabilities)	<u>4,252</u>	<u>(2,497)</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	<u>223,424</u>	<u>205,932</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	208,707	200,024
Provisions for liabilities and charges	1,270	1,869
Pension Liability	7,212	1,489
Capital and reserves	6,235	2,550
Revenue reserve	0	0
Restricted Reserves	<u>223,424</u>	<u>205,932</u>

Consolidated income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2013	2013 £'000	2012 restated £'000
Turnover	80,697	75,518
Operating costs	(63,804)	(58,601)
Operating Surplus	<u>16,893</u>	<u>16,917</u>
Surplus on Sale of Fixed Assets	1,661	1,326
Interest receivable and other income	7,660	8,024
Interest payable and similar charges	(17,291)	(15,668)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year	<u>8,923</u>	<u>10,599</u>



INBRIEF

ANNUAL REPORT
EDITION 2013

Partner, stakeholder,
contractor and board
member news

SEPTEMBER 2013 ISSUE NO 42



Paul Murray

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, PAUL MURRAY

AFTER BEING ELECTED CHAIR OF WHG LAST SEPTEMBER, MY FIRST 12 MONTHS IN THE ROLE HAS BEEN A SMOOTH AND POSITIVE EXPERIENCE. OUTGOING CHAIR FRED BELL LEFT EVERYTHING IN EXCELLENT ORDER AND I HOPE TO HAVE CONTINUED HIS GOOD WORK.

One of my priorities has been to encourage all our Board members to get as involved as they can with what we do and play as full a part as possible in the running of whg.

I would like to take the opportunity to compliment all members of the Board on their hard work and thank them for their tireless commitment.

Working with the Executive Team, the Board has focused its energies on tackling the various challenges of the last year and looking ahead to the future, leaving us well placed to meet whatever challenges the coming year brings.

Over the last 12 months, we have achieved a great deal. We have built 123 new homes and invested considerably in improving our existing housing stock for the benefit of customers.

We have stepped up our commitment to creating warmer, more energy efficient homes through our award-winning work with British Gas.

Our teams have come up with innovative approaches to support customers in coping with the impact of welfare reform and we continue to expand our programme of activities to help people to achieve healthier lifestyles, training and job opportunities.

We are also proud and delighted to have won or been shortlisted for a string of awards over the last 12 months, which recognised such initiatives as our welfare reform work and our dedication to tackling anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods we serve.

As we look to the future, we are in an excellent position to go from strength to strength and build on these achievements.

"Our teams have come up with innovative approaches to support customers in coping with the impact of welfare reform and we continue to expand our programme of activities to help people to achieve healthier lifestyles, training and job opportunities."

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GARY FULFORD

WHG CELEBRATED ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY MILESTONE THIS SUMMER. OVER THE LAST DECADE, WE HAVE ACHIEVED A MASSIVE TRANSFORMATION IN OUR SERVICES AND THE WAY WE WORK. WE HAVE INCREASED EFFICIENCY AND DEVELOPED OUR BUSINESS, INCLUDING BRANCHING OUT TO PROVIDING OUR QUALITY SERVICES TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS.



Gary Fulford

This year, a major challenge was the need to prepare for the implementation of the welfare reform changes. Through a range of forward-thinking initiatives, we have successfully supported our customers through this transition and our teams are well-prepared to support customers when Universal Credit is introduced in Walsall later this year.

You can find out more about the work we have been doing to help customers cope with the impact of the welfare benefit changes later in this newsletter.

In January, we secured £2.6m of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency to build 146 new homes across five residential developments in Walsall. Once completed, this will take the total number of properties we have built or acquired 676.

Looking ahead, our Board has approved over £100 million of construction work to our homes and neighbourhoods over the next 18 months. There are 400 new homes to build and over 3,000

existing homes to benefit from energy-saving retrofit work.

We have led the way with our award-winning CESP (Community Energy Savings Programme) work, in partnership with British Gas, and are now looking to develop this further.

These new programmes of work sit alongside our current range of other ongoing projects. These include the development of new homes, pioneering retrofit work to boost energy efficiency, general home improvements, schemes to spruce up communal areas in our flats and neighbourhood plans to help rejuvenate our communities.

As we forge ahead with such far-reaching improvements, we continue to maintain high standards with the vital maintenance work carried out by our in-house repairs and estates teams.

We have achieved a great deal in the last 10 years and look forward to even greater achievements in the coming decade.



SERVICE DELIVERY – GOING THE EXTRA MILE

WELFARE REFORMS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE 'BEDROOM TAX' OVER THE LAST YEAR THREW UP SOME SERIOUS CHALLENGES FOR HOUSING PROVIDERS AND THEIR CUSTOMERS.

We made sure we were well prepared for the changes by gathering and analysing data to see which of our customers would be affected. We then planned and resourced various initiatives to help them cope with the changes.

Customers were given guidance on what their options were and we offered help with their moving costs for those wanting to downsize. We also gave general advice on the benefit changes, managing debts and budgeting.

As part of this work to help customers manage their money, we have worked with Walsave Credit Union to offer free 'jam jar accounts' to help people budget more efficiently.

We have reviewed our allocations policy to prioritise people under-occupying or over-occupying their home and improved processes to help customers wanting to downsize to avoid the bedroom tax.

The WMBUS (West Midlands Making Best Use of Stock) partnership has been set up to minimise the impact of under-occupancy penalties on residents in social housing. As a member of this group, we have teamed up with local authorities to make it easier for people to move home across the region through mutual exchanges.

whg has been held up as an example of good practice in this arena by the Chartered Institute

of Housing (CIH), featuring in national trade publications for our groundbreaking work.

The online benefits calculator that we developed to help customers understand how they would be affected by the bedroom tax has now been adopted by more than 20 other housing associations and was shortlisted for 'Innovation of the Year' in the UK Housing Awards.

Out in the neighbourhoods we serve, our Community Safety and Estate Management Teams work tirelessly to ensure our estates are safe, clean, peaceful places to live. Their sterling efforts were recognised in October last year when whg became one of the first organisations in the UK to be endorsed by the sector's two leading accreditation agencies.

Our Estate Management, Contract Management, Property Ownership and Neighbourhood Impact Officers teams won Housing Quality Network accreditation for the quality and consistency of whg's neighbourhood services. This followed our Community Safety Team achieving accreditation from the CIH and HouseMark for its work to tackle anti-social behaviour.

"Our Estate Management, Contract Management, Property Ownership and Neighbourhood Impact Officers teams won Housing Quality Network accreditation for the quality and consistency of whg's neighbourhood services."

DEVELOPMENTS – REGENERATING NEIGHBOURHOODS

OVER THE LAST YEAR WE HAVE CONCENTRATED ON DEVELOPING SITES WITHIN OUR LAND BANK TO PROVIDE NEW-BUILD HOMES FOR CUSTOMERS. WE PLAN TO COMPLETE THIS WORK OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, INCLUDING SOME IMPORTANT STRATEGIC SITES WHICH HAVE ATTRACTED SUPPORT FROM WALSALL COUNCIL AND THE HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY (HCA).



whg has developed a strong strategic relationship with the local authority and the Homes and Communities Agency to win £9.2 million of funding in the last 12 months, resulting in 500 new homes being currently under construction. This includes a development package with Kier Developments to build 338 new homes – a mix of properties for affordable rent and outright sale – across five sites.

One major regeneration area is in Harrowby Road, Moxley, where we have teamed up with a private developer to build 216 new houses and apartments – a mixture of 72 homes for affordable rent and 144 for private sale.

Other activity has focused on Brownhills, where we completed the second phase of our High

Street development in March this year. Further developments are under way in Brownhills.

We aim to build on the last year's success to establish our position, by March 2016, as a Developing Registered Provider building up to 300 homes a year. These new schemes will continue to be a mix of properties for affordable rent and owner occupation.

As we move forward, we will look to continue to secure the support of the local authority and HCA, in particular to progress our major regeneration initiatives in Goscote, Brownhills and Willenhall.

In 2012/13, we have completed 123 new homes. In 2013/14, we aim to have started work on 575 new homes – 409 for affordable rent and 166 for sale – and complete 205.

REGENERATION – STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

OUR REGENERATION TEAM HAS ACHIEVED GREAT SUCCESS WITH ITS EVER-EXPANDING PROGRAMME OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES.

We have run a series of confidence-building courses, such as 'Be Who You Can Be', for Walsall residents, tackling issues such as low self-esteem, anxiety and depression to help people on the path to reaching their potential.

Through our work to boost confidence and improve parenting skills, including events such as our 'Keep Calm' summer school for children and their parents, we work to strengthen families and, in turn, our communities. We work with various partners to deliver these schemes, including Walsall Children's Services and the Integrated Youth Support Service.

A number of courses are provided in partnership with Walsall Adult and Community College (WACC). We are proud to be the only non-educational organisation to have such a contract, now in its third year, with WACC.

The last confidence-building course we ran with WACC saw 100% attendance from learners and all of them went on to start voluntary work, further education or training or paid employment.

Our Community Champions scheme – where members of our communities are recruited to help deliver courses and activities within their local area – has benefited hundreds of Walsall residents.

It has proved so successful that we have won a contract with fellow housing provider Beechdale Community Housing to deliver a similar project on its estate.

Our pioneering Health Housing team has just celebrated its first year of operation, developing and delivering a varied range of activities, courses and projects as part of its programme to encourage healthy lifestyles – from zumba classes to cookery sessions, sexual health advice to alcohol awareness.

Transforming lives

LYNNE MARLOW AND LISA EDWARDS ARE TWO PEOPLE WHO HAVE SEEN THEIR LIVES TURNED AROUND THANKS TO THE WORK OF OUR REGENERATION TEAM.

- Former full-time carer Lynne, from Blakenall, undertook several courses – covering healthy lifestyles, confidence-building and parenting – before starting classes to improve her maths and English skills with a view to gaining employment.
- Previously unemployed Blakenall mum Lisa completed various courses with us, winning a National Institute of Adult Continuing Education award, before being appointed as a whg Community Champion.



INSIDE...



REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS – BOOSTING PERFORMANCE **P2**



DEVELOPMENTS – REGENERATING NEIGHBOURHOODS **P3**



REGENERATION – STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES **P3**

This bulletin is available in other formats.

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Repairs and improvements – boosting performance



IMPROVING OUR PERFORMANCE ON REPAIRS AND VOIDS HAS BEEN CENTRAL TO WHG'S WORK OVER THE LAST YEAR.

- We have increased our efficiency and achieved a 13% increase in productivity, beating our target of 10%. This has been achieved through changes in our processes, closer partnership working and an extended contract with our major works contractor Wates.
- Our voids team has also worked hard to increase the number of empty properties brought up to standard and

re-let. Clear targets were set to help reach this goal, and this has paid off.

- Over the last year, whg's in-house team and contractors have carried out work to 1,664 empty homes.

Another priority was to improve the standard and quality of work to vacant homes by looking at customer satisfaction feedback and improving certain aspects of our repair work.

- As a result, satisfaction with the condition of previously empty homes has risen from 81.9% in January this year to 88.8% by the end of March.

Our pioneering, award-winning work to improve energy efficiency in our homes and tackle fuel poverty among our customers is continuing apace.

In partnership with British Gas, we carried out £12 million of work under the government's Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) last year. This included 500 thermal wraps and 2,000 new central heating systems.

The landmark tower block Austin House has been transformed inside and out, with a host of energy-saving features including solar panels, extra wall insulation

and ground-source heat pumps to power a highly efficient heating and hot water system.

Work will save customers around a third on their energy bills and reduce the building's carbon emissions by an estimated 2,340 tonnes over the next 25 years.

Our 1960s tower blocks Humphries House and Severn House, in Brownhills, have also undergone an energy-saving revamp, complete with thermal cladding, double glazing, new roofs, internal redecoration and a state-of-the-art biomass boiler fuelled by wood pellets.

We remain committed to developing our energy saving work, with the resulting benefits for customers, communities and the environment.