

Annual Review

2011



www.castlehillha.co.uk

Financial Review

During the year to 31st March 2011 there were 67 completions of new units for the Association, bringing Castlehill's total stock to 1,730 units.

The completions were located at Arran Avenue & Rona Place, Aberdeen (44) and Abbey Court, Mintlaw, (23). One flat was sold, at Holburn Street, Aberdeen.

The income & expenditure account of the Association showed a surplus for the full year £627,000 before transfers to reserves, compared to 2010's equivalent of just over £1m.

- The Association's level of voids (properties standing empty between tenancies at any one time) stands at 1.71%, which compares with a median figure for Scottish Housing Associations of 2%.
- Castlehill's rent arrears figures have reduced over the last five years from 4.0% to 3.65%, and again compare very favourably with other Associations.



Abbey Court, Mintlaw. May 2011

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Arran Avenue, Aberdeen. February 2011

- The average number of days taken to relet a property has dropped from 44 days to 34 days over the last four years.
- A total of £1.2m spent on planned maintenance, up from £930,000 in the previous year.

"Castlehill should continue as a strong, independent organisation, developing new housing as opportunities arise and providing support services that allow people to live independent lives."

Shauna Reith
Castlehill Convener

Castlehill Solutions

Following discussions on strategy, we are now developing a revised Business Plan and establishing a subsidiary company "Castlehill Solutions" to give us greater flexibility as to how we deliver our objectives in the future. Reduced funding to develop affordable rented housing is likely to be the reality for some considerable time, so we must look at innovative ways of developing mixed tenure housing in order to cross subsidise affordable rent. Castlehill's charitable status means we cannot currently undertake such activities as mid-market rent or housing for sale but "Solutions", as a non-charitable subsidiary, will allow us to consider these options, if appropriate.

Key Project

From 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011, there were 59 new referrals for housing support from the Key Project, 40 of these were tenancies within the Aberdeen City area and 19 within Aberdeenshire.

Over the last 12 months, Key Project housing support staff have generated approximately £17,000 on behalf of tenants. This is mainly as a result of assistance with applications for backdated Housing/Council Tax Benefit, applications for Discretionary Housing Payments, Community Care Grant applications and Trust Fund applications for individual tenants.

"I like having the security of knowing I can call and speak in confidence about any problems I have"

Key Project client

Care and Repair

It has been a difficult year for Care and Repair, with significant cuts in the Aberdeenshire budget and the decision by Moray Council to bring the service "in-house" from next year. Such reductions in local authority funding for services such as Care and Repair mean that we have to look at alternative ways of generating income to provide the core services. As a charity, our scope for such trading activities is very restricted. By setting up Castlehill Solutions, it will allow



Electrical work carried out by Care & Repair

us to maximise the income generating potential of services such as the Care and Repair Handyman service in Aberdeen, by allowing us to undertake fully rechargeable work beyond our traditional client group. Channeling works through a non charitable subsidiary will allow us to carry out various activities that aim to support the core objectives of the Association.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

A highly important piece of work undertaken this year was a full Tenant Satisfaction survey carried out independently by Knowledge Partnership. It is pleasing to note very positive



outcomes with 89% satisfied with Castlehill as a landlord and 88% either satisfied or very satisfied by the services we provide. 87% of tenants were satisfied with their home with 91% describing the condition of their home as good or very good. While the results are encouraging and compare favourably with peer organisations, the survey has also identified a number of areas for improvement and we have now drawn up an action plan to take these forward. Our thanks go to all tenants who took part in the survey and who continue to get involved in ongoing tenant participation activities.

Grampian Community Care Charitable Trust

We are pleased to report that the Association has been able to expand our stock with the transfer of Grampian Community Care Charitable Trust to Castlehill. The Trust will form a further part of our Group Structure and brings 159 tenancies at 35 locations to Castlehill. The Trust provides a range of housing options for people with particular needs and a great deal of work has gone into preparations ahead of the formal transfer date of 1st October 2011.



Development in 2011/12



Goyal View, Dyce. June 2011

2011/12 has already seen the completion of 18 general needs houses in Dyce and will see 6 properties in Braemar completed, of which two will be sold under the Scottish Government's shared equity scheme.

In the current year, the only new money for RSL development from the Scottish Government is a sum of just £20million for the whole of Scotland through the Investment and Innovation Fund. Also, there is a reduction in the grant benchmark to £40,000 per unit, which makes it unfeasible to produce housing at rents that are genuinely affordable. We will continue to lobby for a restoration of a realistic funding regime through the SFHA and progress future models for partnership working with other Associations in the North East.

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Management Committee

at 31st March 2011

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Graeme Ogston

Bill Howie

Ian Thomson

Janice Lyon

John Tomlinson

Kate Mason

Nick Williams

Jack Nicoll

Sandra Williamson

Chief Executive: David Lappin

IT changes



In last year's Report, we stated that the Association had purchased a new computer system from Aareon. Thanks to much effort and patience by staff, the system has been successfully implemented across many aspects of our work including tenancy management, maintenance, finance and payroll and we look forward to ongoing benefits in the quality of business information the system will produce for us in years to come.

Staff update

Castlehill has a significant role as an employer and we continue to offer opportunities for staff training and involvement in our activities. Over half of our housing support staff have now obtained their NVQ qualification and during the year we obtained the Silver Healthy Working Lives Award. We again had a team in the Aberdeen Inter-Company Rowing event on the Dee and staff raised over £2,000 pounds for Alzheimer Scotland through the sponsored walk.



Emma, Stuart, Jim, Carol & cox Mhorag