

Annual Report 2015/16

Building neighbourhoods,
creating thriving and
empowered communities



Helm

HOUSING



*building neighbourhoods
and creating thriving &
empowered communities
for over 40 years*



Helm

HOUSING

**Helm Housing Association's Annual Report and Summary of
Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016**

Date: 6th July 2016

A word from the Chair



It is my very great pleasure to pen these introductory words to the 2015/16 Annual Report and Summary of Accounts.

This is my 4th year as Chair and it has been an eventful year for the association as it celebrated 40 years as a provider of affordable housing and housing services to a diverse range of single people and families with housing needs.

From humble beginnings we have grown to become one of the largest housing associations in Northern Ireland, and we have thrived through the determination of our staff, the commitment and support of our partners, and our ability to adapt to an ever changing operating environment. We pride ourselves in being passionate about what we do, and how we do it, because at Helm Housing we believe that making a difference is at the heart of our business.

Our tenants are at the heart of what we do and we strive to do the right thing for them and for the communities in which they live. Our vision is to build neighbourhoods and create thriving and empowered communities, which means we recognise that housing is not just about the provision of new homes – although that is undoubtedly important. But in pursuit of our vision, the provision of new housing may well be a necessary condition, but is not a sufficient condition in itself. That is why during this our 40th year we have sought to develop and broaden our service offering in what we call the 'Bricks and More' approach.

'Bricks and More' is our Board's explicit recognition that building neighbourhoods and thriving and empowered communities requires a commitment to push the boundaries beyond simply providing a home, and into areas such as tenancy sustainment, financial inclusion, and employability training. And alongside this work, we have sought to create opportunities for volunteering, work placement and paid employment. Such work, whilst worthwhile and rewarding, is also expensive in terms of manpower and financial resources. Therefore, we have started at a small scale and with a commitment to evaluate the impact.



Our Journey2Jobs scheme is an example of this type of work. This is a partnership project with Bryson FutureSkills. The project was designed to provide an opportunity for participants, including some of our tenants, to gain both a recognised qualification and realistic work experience. A key element of the scheme is the provision of work placements within Helm Housing, and thus far places have been provided for 6 participants, including 2 tenants. We acknowledge that this is a small

scale project but the early results are very encouraging.

Helm Housing is a people business. Our results are achieved through the efforts of our people. And so in addition to doing the right thing for our tenants and their communities we want to do the right thing for our staff.

I am delighted, therefore, that Helm has achieved IIP accreditation at its first attempt, and I am very pleased that the assessor reported that ours was a particularly strong first time assessment. I am also delighted that we have been accredited as a Living Wage employer, the largest housing association in Northern Ireland to achieve this recognition. This is especially noteworthy as it comes on the foot of accreditations under the EFQM Gold Star Service Excellence framework and the ISO 18001 Health and Safety Standard. Taken together, these various accreditations signal Helm Housing's commitment to providing a working environment for our staff that is safe, secure, supportive and rewarding.

Of course none of these things would be possible if Helm Housing was not run on an efficient and an effective basis, because it is only by delivering a surplus that is reinvested in our services that we can continue to make a difference to the communities that we serve.

In terms of the financial performance for the year, we have significantly exceeded our budgeted expectations. The accounts have been prepared under the new accounting rules, FRS102, and the new Housing SORP which became mandatory for Housing Associations for the year ended 31st March 2016. The figures for 2014/15 have been restated to reflect the new rules. Turnover for the year was £31.3m, an increase of 8% over the previous year's figure of £29.0m. Surplus on ordinary activities was increase by 21% to £5.8m from £4.8m and reflects sound financial management. This is hugely important to both exploit future opportunities and to mitigate the impact of austerity measures.

The Association and ultimately our tenants have benefited immensely within the year from improvements in the availability of homes for letting, quicker change of tenancy, and the introduction of a sector-leading response maintenance service. We had loans outstanding of c£73m at 31st March 2016 and our total capital and reserves position remains strong. The Association's interest cover ratio for 2016 was 2.33 times, broadly in line with the previous year. Our gearing ratio was 23% at the year-end, up from 22% at 31st March 2015. Both of these measures comfortably exceed our financial covenants.

A total of 66 new homes were started within the year with a total of 5,601 homes under Helm's ownership at the year end.

For comparative purposes, the figures for income and surplus under the previous accounting rules are as follows:

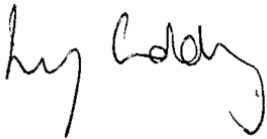
- net income for the year increase by over 10% to £24.6m; and
- the net surplus on ordinary activities for 2015/16 was £3.6m (2015: £2.8m).

As noted earlier, 2015 marked Helm Housing's 40th birthday and a personal highlight of the year for me was to attend the stakeholder and staff conferences followed by the 40th anniversary dinner. This was an opportunity to celebrate our success and our achievements

and to thank our stakeholders and other partners for their continued support.

One of the most significant events of the year as our decision to enter into merger discussions with the Fold Group to create a new larger housing association. Like Helm, Fold has a long history of delivering high quality housing and housing related services and it shares our commitment to making a difference for the tenants and communities we collectively serve. It is important to acknowledge that merger is not required to secure the future viability of either organisation; both are well run, well governed and financially strong. However, both associations also recognise that together we will have the capacity to do more than either can do on its own, and both believe that together we can be more than the sum of the parts.

In closing, I want to thank my fellow Board members for their continuing hard work and support. One of the strengths of the housing association movement in Northern Ireland is the voluntary nature of the board and the committee membership. As a movement we owe a debt of gratitude to those who freely give of their time and expertise, and this is particularly true for those who already have demanding day jobs. I also want to pay tribute to Michael McDonnell, who left us in December to join Choice Housing Ireland as their new Group Chief Executive, and to welcome John McPeake, who took up the position as Interim Chief Executive at Helm Housing in January 2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Cuddy'.

Liz Cuddy
Chair, Helm Housing
6th July 2016



Our Year at a Glance

5 6 0 0
HOMES IN
MANAGEMENT

 **89%**
OF TENANTS
SATISFIED WITH
OUR SERVICES

60 NEW
HOMES
STARTED ACROSS 6 SITES
IN NORTHERN IRELAND



 **£48k**
INVESTED IN EMPLOYEE
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

 **£9m**
SPENT ON MAINTAINING &
IMPROVING OUR HOMES

47 NEW
HOMES
COMPLETED AND
HANDED OVER



33,500+
RESPONSE REPAIR JOBS CARRIED OUT

WINNER
OF THE **CIH NI**
CHAIR'S
AWARD



40 TENANT
CHAMPIONS



Our Year at a Glance



**1,800+ HOUSEHOLDS
PARTICIPATED IN OUR
CUSTOMER SURVEYS**

SURPLUS

£5.8m



975

**EVENTS HELD IN
SHELTERED SCHEMES**

£10.3m

ADDITIONS TO

PROPERTY ASSETS



1 6 1
DISABLED
ADAPTATIONS



**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
ACCREDITATION**

95%

**SATISFACTION
WITH THE
ALLOCATIONS
PROCESS**



**COMPLETED
CYCLICAL
MAINTENANCE
TO**

**1,100
PROPERTIES**

Governance Statement & Value For Money Statement

Governance Statement

We are resolutely committed to good governance, and communicate regularly with our stakeholders, including residents, investors, regulators, employers and business and other partners to inform and engage them in our plans.

Helm Housing has adopted the principles and provisions of the NHF Corporate Governance Code, Excellence in Governance Code 2010. In fulfilling our obligations under that we make use of good practice drawn from guidance to that code, and also the Department for Communities (DFC) Housing Association Guide, and, where relevant, the Northern Ireland Charity Commission. In 2015/16 Helm complied with the provisions of the code.

Value for Money (VfM) Statement

Our focus on VfM continuous improvement remains a key element of our business strategy. We aim to maximise our capacity and better utilise our assets and resources to meet the needs of existing and future tenants and residents. It is important that our focus is not just about cost savings and financial improvement, but that VfM is integrated into our culture as a matter of course. Value should be defined from the perspective of our customers in any service or process.

Our approach to VfM is to consider economy, efficiency and effectiveness in everything that we do whilst having regard to quality of service.

Some of the highlights of our 2015/16 VfM approach are as follows:

- Effective procurement, having completed 246 procurement exercises in 2015/16 (total award costs circa £6.7 million) across the Association;
- Invested £0.6m and staff resources in a major ICT programme including the use of the latest technologies and streamlined infrastructure which (when complete) will improve efficiency in processes to support planned growth, facilitate a greater ability to work remotely and update information, support improvements to asset management and provide improved customer service through a contact centre;
- Net operating margin of 30.7% in 2015/16 (31.0% in 2014/15);
- Invested £2.4 million in planned and cyclical maintenance to ensure that housing assets continue to meet the expectations of customers.
- Invested £10.3 million in the development of new homes during the year which are expected to provide a positive financial return and act to strengthen the financial position of the Association;
- Helm's development activity for 2015/16, as part of the planned development of 143 social homes, provides the opportunity to stimulate economic growth and positively impact the NI construction industry.

We will be adopting regular performance monitoring of contractors across all services to ensure that an improvement in tenant satisfaction levels is achieved. We will also be revisiting our customer feedback strategy and our approach to tenant data collection.

Corporate Plan 2014-17

OUR VISION:

**To build neighbourhoods and
create thriving & empowered communities**

STRATEGIC AIMS:

To build neighbourhoods

- To provide a range of quality homes in a choice of tenures
- To promote neighbourhood regeneration by working with all relevant stakeholders
- To progress partner initiatives that improve the lives of our customers
- To attract appropriate investment for development that addresses housing stress
- To address the complex housing needs of customers and their communities
- To reduce the reliance on public subvention through new, sustainable and profitable services
- To ensure effective governance and management of our assets
- To influence and inform policy makers, regulators and relevant stakeholders

To deliver excellent services

- To build trusted relationships with our customers through enhanced engagement
- To promote the respective rights and responsibilities of customers
- To ensure that our units are let, paid for and maintained
- To work with valued partners to deliver excellent services to customers in Supported Housing
- To expand our communication channels and improve our accessibility to customers
- To benchmark our services against 'best in class' organisations both locally and nationally
- To embed a continuous improvement culture across Helm
- To improve customer satisfaction across all aspects of our business

To demonstrate value for money

- To prioritise customer facing resources to build trusted relationships
- To ensure good governance, proactive risk management and compliance
- To build our brand as one that is valued by our customers and across the sector
- To build a high performance and collaborative culture
- To value and support our people
- To ensure that structures, processes and systems enable our vision
- To ensure that our operating model delivers sustainability
- To embrace partnership working where this enhances customer service and optimises resources
- To demonstrate openness, flexibility and a 'common sense' approach

OUR PRINCIPLES:

Being Trustworthy

Integrity
Accountability
Equality

Customer Focused

Accessibility
Anticipating need
Listening & acting

Target Driven

Performance management
High performance
Leadership

Quality Services

Consistency
Value for money
'Best in class'

Continuous Improvement

Setting standards
Performance measurement
Benchmarking

Working Together

'One team'
Stakeholder engagement
Partnerships

Helm Housing Ltd (Helm) was founded in 1975 as Belfast Improved Housing, and later BIH. It is a not-for-profit organisation providing affordable social housing and associated support services. It is a charitable Industrial and Provident Society, is registered as a housing association with the Department for Social Development (DSD), and is a registered charity with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Helm celebrated 40 years as a registered provider in 2015. A programme of events took place for sheltered and general needs tenants and business partners to mark this key milestone throughout the year including staff and stakeholder conferences, a Family Fun Day and Tea Dances.

Helm's key role is to develop and manage social rented accommodation for single people, families and older people, and various models of supported housing people with special needs. We currently own, manage and maintain approximately 5,600 homes located throughout Northern Ireland.

Helm has formed key strategic relationships with the DSD and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), which have responsibility for housing policy and for inspecting, funding and allocating the social housing development programme. We have Joint Management Partnerships with several voluntary bodies designed to deliver high quality housing and support services. We provide development services to other housing providers. Helm's housing provision is funded by a combination of grants allocated from public funds and commercial loans taken out with private sector bodies. Helm is required to meet stringent terms and conditions in order to gain access to and retain its sources of funding. Helm is governed by a voluntary Board comprising 11 members who come from a range of backgrounds in both the public and private sectors. The Chair of the Tenants' Forum sits on the Board. The Board is supported by a number of sub-Committees.

A Chief Executive, supported by a Senior Management Team comprising the Directors of Finance & Resources, Property, and Housing Management manages Helm on a day-to-day basis. Helm's office is located in Belfast, just south of the city centre.



Our People



September 2015 saw Helm achieve IIP accreditation achieved against the standard, as well as meeting eight of the extended framework evidence requirements. The assessor reported that this was a particularly strong first time assessment and that Helm could potentially achieve a higher level IIP accreditation in the future.

In February 2016 Helm became a Living Wage accredited employer. This is a voluntary initiative which Helm have committed to and means that all directly employed staff and some employees who are contracted via a third party are paid an hourly rate calculated according to the basic cost of living in UK.

Helm facilitated a placement from the Cedar Foundation who as a result of their placement secured permanent employment outside Helm. The Cedar Foundation deliver a range of services that enable people with disabilities to get the most out of life and be fully involved in their communities. Such initiatives support Helm's social corporate responsibility strategy.



Dementia Friendly Training was provided to all staff, as part of Helm's initiative to become a dementia friendly organisation staff were offered the opportunity to receive further training to become a dementia champion.

To enhance Helm's annual staff awards process which is intrinsically linked to the business improvement and performance management process we have introduced quarterly champion awards for staff that have made a difference in their teams.

Staff training included 9 staff members completing Lean Six Sigma training - 8 yellow belt and 1 green belt.





The Board



Liz Cuddy (Chair)
BSc RGN DipEd MEd
MBA ACIPD Clod CIH



**Patrick McClughan
(Vice Chair)**
BSc MRICS



Jonathan Hobbs
BSc FCCA



Conor Mulligan
BSc MCIOB



Kathleen Quinn



Wayne Morris
BA CIHCM
Resigned May 2015



Emma Cooper
LLB



Paul Murnaghan
BEng PGDip



Hilary Kinney



Danny McConnell



Craig Logan

During the year 2015/16 there were 6 Board meetings. In addition to Board meetings, there was the Annual General Meeting held in August 2015. Details of attendance at Board meetings, committees, expenses claimed and length of service of Board members who served during 2015/16 are provided below:

Member	Possible board meetings	Actual board attendance	Number of committees on	Possible committee meetings	Actual committee attendance	Expenses claimed (£)	Length of Service
L Cuddy	7	7	0	n/a	n/a	651.60	4 years
P McClughan	7	5	2	7	7	327.17	4 years
J Hobbs	7	5	1	6	6	0	3 years
W Morris	1	1	1	0	0	0	3 years 4 months
C Mulligan	7	7	1	6	6	0	4 years
K Quinn	7	6	1	6	5	222.20	7 years 9 months
E Cooper	7	3	1	3	3	0	2 year 3 months
P Murnaghan	7	5	1	6	6	0	2 year 3 months
H Kinney	5	5	1	6	6	0	9 months
D McConnell	5	4	1	2	2	0	9 months
C Logan	5	3	1	2	2	0	9 months

Senior Management Team



**Interim
Chief Executive**

Dr John McPeake



**Director of
Finance & Resources**

Mr Patrick Morgan



**Director of
Housing Management**

Mr Kieran Walsh



**Director of
Property**

Mr Michael Foster

Our Services



33,534

Response maintenance jobs carried out

Completed cyclical maintenance to

1,100

properties including:

- 200 loft insulation upgrades
- 171 boiler replacements
- 137 full heating upgrades
- 20 bathrooms replaced

Completed

161

adaptations in the year including:

- 65 shower room installations
- 63 railings
- 10 sanitary adaptations
- 4 stair lifts
- 2 wheelchair kitchens

97%

satisfaction with improvement works carried out to homes

£107,000

spent on ad hoc boiler replacements

Our Services



EFQM Gold Star Service Excellence accreditation



4,063 unannounced Annual Visits carried out



Hosted a Diversity Day for staff to learn about cultures & vulnerabilities in our tenant base



Winner of the Chartered Institute of Housing Chair's Award



117 formal complaints received.
133 formal compliments received.



Highly Commended at the National Housing Awards



Helm achieved EFQM Gold Star Service Excellence accreditation

Our Impact

Mark from Belfast had been living in a homeless person hostel for two years and was deeply unhappy with his living situation. Having no choice but to move into the hostel due to problems with his previous rented accommodation in 2014, Mark felt his quality of life was deteriorating.

He said:

“Living in the hostel was not good for my physical or mental well-being. My room was on the 4th floor which I struggled to reach due to medical reasons. The building was full of alcoholics who were noisy and causing anti-social behaviour. There was a lot of dictation about when you had to leave your bedroom, be back in the building, etc. You lost your independence. I did not have a good experience there. Then my Support Worker told me about the Helm Housing flat available in Blackstaff, West Belfast, and I went through the allocations procedure with a Helm staff member. I didn't want to get my hopes up about getting it. When I found it I got it I couldn't believe my luck!”

Mark moved into the flat in March 2016 and is enjoying having his independence back, and a place to call his own.

He explains the changes to his life:

“I enjoy cooking, so it is great to have my own kitchen that I can cook in. The flat feels like mine, and I can call it my own. Thanks to the Department of Health I was able to get a grant to help furnish my bedroom and living room. Helm's Community Coordinator for the area, Karen, holds housing surgeries on another floor in the building every week where we can go to ask any questions or just have a chat, and as there is a lift in the building I have no problems like I did in the hostel getting to different floors. Compared to living in the hostel I can now get a better nights sleep, do things I enjoy, and feel in control of my own life. I am so thankful to Helm for housing me here, I love it!”



Our Impact



Moving into her new home in Orby Park was a “dream come true” for Brenda.

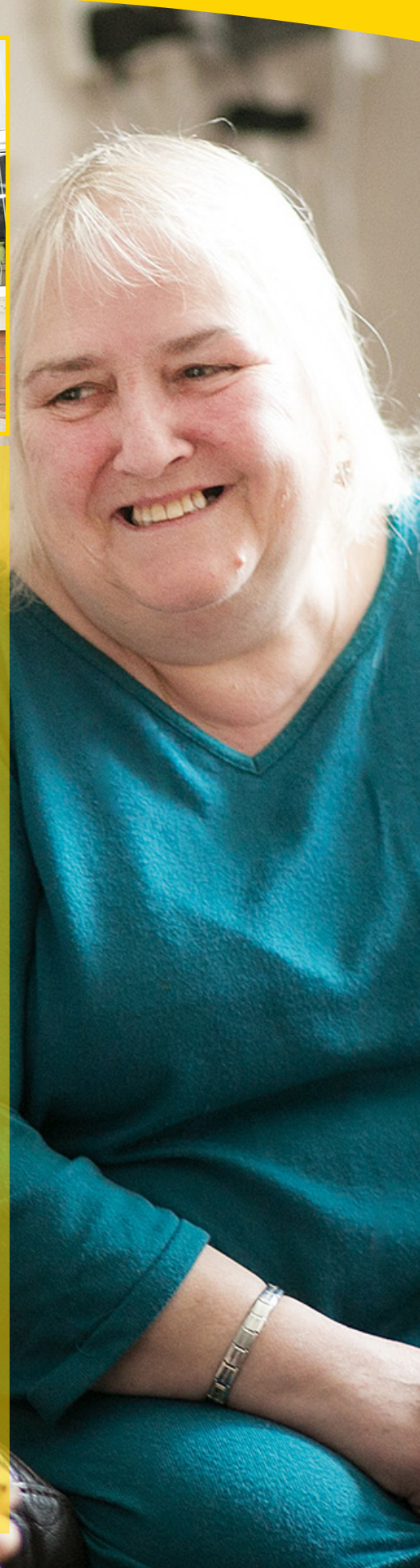
Back in December 2015, Brenda was hospitalised for 3 months due to health conditions. Sadly for Brenda, leaving hospital was not the end of her problems.

She said:

“When I moved back into my house, I was unable to use the stairs. As a result I was bound to the living room to live, sleep, and have carers visit. My physical health was not good, but now my mental health was suffering too. My daughter Lisa got in touch with Helm Housing on my behalf, and that’s when we met Katie. She told me she would get me a home that was more suited to my needs, but to be honest I did not get my hopes up. In no time at all I got a phone call to say a home was available in Orby Park. Katie kept her word, and I am so grateful. The day she made me the offer I was shaking and crying; finally something good was happening. Katie did everything she said she would do. Rosemary from Helm completed the handover and couldn’t have been more helpful”.

The house in Orby Park is fitted with additional support such as emergency pull chords, a Telecare intercom system, and hand rails. Living in a bungalow allows Brenda full access to her home again. Brenda explains the impact on her life:

“Moving into my new home has helped my physical health, mental health, and quality of life. Not only has it helped me; it gives my husband Frank more confidence going to work knowing that I have the Telecare support. My daughter is more content knowing I’m in this house. The neighbours are friendly, the house is lovely; it really is a dream come true”.



Our Impact

Helm operated a number of Joint Management Agreements with a range of other organisations to provide valuable services to tenants beyond just being a landlord. These specialist organisations work with Helm to provide additional care and support to tenants in need.

A recent partnership has been with **MACS**, who work with children and young people who may have had experiences with homelessness, substance abuse, self-harm, and/or mental health issues. Some of their young people may be leaving care, or are generally at risk.

Helm Housing and MACS currently provide 18 one-bedroom flats in the University area of Belfast for 16-21 year olds ready to leave residential or foster care.

Steven is a young person currently living in accommodation provided by Helm/MACS. When he moved in he quickly built strong relationships with staff and other young people. However he continued to struggle with significant substance use which seriously impacted on his health and ability to manage his tenancy. Thanks to the work carried out during his tenancy, Steven turned a successful corner.

Yvonne Picton, Housing Manager for MACS, said:



L-R: Shaunagh Grant (Helm Housing), Chloe (MACS), Steven (MACS), Yvonne Picton (MACS)

"He worked extremely hard and received support from staff to reduce his substance use, keep himself safe, and address difficulties with managing his tenancy. Whilst this was difficult he showed strong determination and started to focus more on his goals and planning his future. Now a year on he is planning his move on from MACS into his own private tenancy and has big plans for how this will look.

We are so proud of him for how far he has come over the last year. We have been through some ups and downs and he has kept us on our toes but now we know he has the skills to move on into your own house and achieve all your goals."



Restoration of Ulsterville Avenue

5 Ulsterville Avenue was a property that was a long term void for Helm. It had previously been a supported housing scheme joint managed between Helm and a charity. It is now made up of general needs apartments.

The building has listed status, and Helm completed rehabilitation worked in January 2016.

The building now comprises of

- 1 x 3-person 2-bedroom general needs apartment
- 1 x 6-person 3-bedroom general needs duplex apartment



Our Homes



5,601

homes under ownership



47

new homes complete
and handed over



60

new homes started



48

new lettings per month



81%

lettable voids
allocated <20 days



95.3%

new tenants satisfied with
the allocations process



Tenant Engagement
Strategy launched



Community Involvement
Officer appointed



48

live cases of ASB at year end



Our Finances

We have achieved continued improvement in our operating surplus as we focus on improving efficiency in the business. We reinvest all our annual surpluses back into services and new homes to deliver thriving and empowered communities.



246 procurement exercises

30.7%
Net operating margin



Successful transition to new NILGOSC pension scheme



£10.3m additions to property assets



Successful transition to new SORP



£5.8m Surplus



New First Trust facility of £25m

Association's statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31st March 2016

	2016	2015
	£	£
Turnover	31,333,466	29,021,977
Operating costs	<u>(21,680,737)</u>	<u>(20,023,263)</u>
Operating surplus	9,652,729	8,998,714
Surplus arising from disposals of housing property	15,501	(217,624)
Transfer to disposal proceeds fund	(59,262)	(30,247)
Interest receivable and similar income	36,132	43,915
Interest payable and similar charges	(3,554,878)	(3,743,931)
Other finance costs	(252,618)	(255,000)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus on ordinary activities before tax	5,837,604	4,795,827
Taxation	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus for the financial year	<u>5,837,604</u>	<u>4,795,827</u>
Other comprehensive income:		
Unrealised gain/(loss) on pension	1,254,000	(809,922)
Fair value gain/(loss) on financial instruments	15,786	(217,012)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total comprehensive income for the year	7,107,390	3,768,893

Consolidated statement of financial position as at 31st March 2016

	2016 £	2015 £
Fixed Assets		
Housing properties - depreciated cost	379,666,104	374,684,242
Other tangible fixed assets	5,688,370	5,471,195
Long term investments	742,770	734,197
Other fixed asset investments	<u>4,250</u>	<u>4,250</u>
	<u>386,101,494</u>	<u>380,893,884</u>
Current Assets		
Debtors	1,892,165	3,594,438
Short term investments	37,773	2,126,280
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>3,074,019</u>	<u>3,869,311</u>
	5,003,957	9,592,029
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	<u>(12,081,535)</u>	<u>(10,823,414)</u>
Net Current Liabilities	<u>(7,077,578)</u>	<u>(1,231,385)</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	<u>379,023,916</u>	<u>379,662,499</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due after one year	<u>(341,516,527)</u>	<u>(349,262,139)</u>
	37,507,389	30,400,360
Capital and reserves		
Called up share capital	14	31
Capital reserve	44	24
Revenue reserve	<u>37,507,331</u>	<u>30,400,305</u>
Total capital and reserves	<u>37,507,389</u>	<u>30,400,360</u>
	<u>379,023,916</u>	<u>379,662,499</u>



Helm
HOUSING

I work at
Helm Housing
because...

I GET TO HELP PEOPLE
AND HAVE FUN

#HelmExcel



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