

BIRMINGHAM CIVIC HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Chairman's Annual Statement 2009

I believe that we had another good year ending on 31 December 2009. We have achieved further improvements to the services which we provide for our tenants, whilst at the same time making a small net surplus on our activities.

I remain confident that we will achieve the government's requirements for 'rent convergence' by 2011.

We are now into the tenth year of our plan to improve all of our properties up to the Decent Homes Standard set by the government. Out of the 217 dwellings that we have in management there are just 6 needing additional work which will be completed by 31 October 2010. This will be within the target date set by the government. After this we will continue to improve our properties on an 'ongoing' basis.

During 2009 again we were tested by an external facilitator against the improvements to the services that we promised to make as a result of being accredited with the "Chartermark" and we were found to have done what we said we would do.

We have again managed to control the amount of rent arrears outstanding during the year, with a slight increase from £20,397 to £20,540. We will continue to take every possible action to ensure that our tenants receive their housing benefit entitlement and it is only right and proper that I should again record that the considerable improvement in processing housing benefit claims by the City Council is being maintained. This has been of great help.

Overall the loss of rent on vacant properties has slightly increased this year which reflects some delays caused by undertaking some major improvement works carried out whilst properties were unoccupied. The loss stands at 1.03% of the annual rent debit for the year, which is well within the nationally accepted target of 2.0% that we are expected to achieve.

I feel that we have now exhausted the list of properties that we want to sell and the acquisition of additional properties can only take place when we have generated sufficient funds through our normal day-to-day operations. It is very important with the global economic recession that we are careful not to overstretch ourselves and I am satisfied that we have taken steps to ensure that this does not happen.

On the overall day-to-day Repairs, Improvement and Planned Painting front, again some 50% of our total income was spent in these areas. Every one of our properties is externally painted every 4 years. We continue to ensure that reported emergency repairs are carried out within 24 hours, urgent repairs within 5 days and routine repairs within 28 days.

We continue to develop our computerised Housing Management package, which was introduced some 8 years ago and our upgraded website is being more frequently used by our customers.

As I look forward to the rest of 2010 I feel sure that by reprioritising our spending plan we can keep within agreed budgets and spending plans even though we were compelled by government directive to reduce our rents by 0.9% to reflect the negative RPI figure for September 2009. Certainly our net 'surplus' projection on our day-to-day trading for the year has been set at a modest sum of £12,585 (before taxation). The budget will be reviewed after 6 months and where practical we will look to invest additional funds into carrying out further improvement work to our properties.

Finally, my thanks to all my colleagues on the Board of Management and to the staff for their continued commitment to the Association and to our tenants.

14 January 2010

Clive Wilkinson – Chairman