

BIRMINGHAM CIVIC HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Chairman's Annual Statement 2010

I believe that we have had another good year ending on 31 December 2010. We have achieved further improvements to the services which we provide for our tenants whilst at the same time making a modest net surplus on our activities.

We did achieve what was required under the former government's Rent Convergence Policy and are taking account of the possible changes that might follow the change in government during the year. Even though we applied a small rent reduction at 1 January 2010 we were still able to achieve the government's Decent Homes Standard which ensured that our properties were wind/weather tight, properly insulated, had effective central heating with kitchens and bathrooms in excellent condition. We will continue to ensure that the properties are maintained to a very high standard.

We continued to be tested by an external facilitator against the improvements to the services that we promised to make as a result of being accredited with the government's former "Chartermark" and we were found to have done what we said we would do. We were therefore pleased to be awarded the new accreditation "Customer Service Excellence".

During the year we had a further "Customer Satisfaction" survey undertaken by an independent organisation and I was very pleased to see that our overall satisfaction level was 95% which sets the Association in the higher end of the national upper quartile.

We have again managed to reduce the amount of rent arrears outstanding during the year, from £20,500 down to £15,000 as at 31 December 2010. 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.

We have continued to implement tight control on the loss of rent on vacant properties which 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.

We did not sell any more properties during 2010 and there were no purchases either. 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, some 50% of our total income continues to be 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 9 years ago and our upgraded website is being more frequently used by our customers. We expect to carry out further improvements during 2011.

As I look forward to the rest of year, I feel sure that we can keep within agreed budgets and spending plans. Certainly our net 'surplus' projection on our day-to-day trading for 2011 has been set at a modest sum of £27,481. We are trying to get our activities accepted as being of a 'charitable' nature which if achieved would mean a reduction on the amount of taxation that we pay on our overall annual surplus. This would then enable us to look to further improve our services.

On 1 April 2010 there were two new Codes of Practice introduced relating to governance and service delivery and I am pleased to report that we have considered these in some detail and with our approach to both I am satisfied that we are compliant with what is required.

Finally, I want to record 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.

26 January 2011

Clive Wilkinson – Chairman