

Cube Housing Association

Annual Highlights 2016–17



Chair's welcome

Peter Kelly
Chair of Cube

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One of the highlights has been Wheatley, our parent company, becoming joint owners, with Glasgow City Council, in City Building (Glasgow). This gives us a platform to work more closely than ever before with the repairs teams, and others in Wheatley, to create a new model for repairs which can achieve consistently outstanding levels of customer service. People told us they wanted to see local repairs teams and that is our focus as we redesign the service over the next few months.

Another milestone has been the launch of Wheatley Foundation, our new charitable trust which supports our 'Better Lives' programmes.

It is chaired by Sir Harry Burns, former Chief Medical Officer of Scotland, and already it

is supporting 15 different programmes across our communities, all of them designed to offer new opportunities to our customers, and their families. 7466 people have benefited from the Foundation's projects which include apprenticeships, bursaries, cultural and sporting activities and a new money advice service for vulnerable people.

Excellent progress has been made in 2016-17 on our ambitions to increase the supply of affordable housing with 34 new homes for social rent completed by Cube and 46 for mid-market rent. Hundreds more are in the pipeline across our communities.

Many of our tenants still struggle as a result of Welfare Reform and supporting them remains a major focus for us.

Our specialist advisors helped our customers save thousands of pounds on their energy bills, and claim back money they were entitled to in welfare payments.

Our Tenancy Support Service, delivered by our partners at Loretto Housing Association, gave tailored support to our most vulnerable Cube tenants who were having particular difficulties keeping their tenancy.

This year we also gave people living in our homes more opportunities to access apprenticeships than ever before, including environmental apprenticeships, and introduced Changing Lives traineeships for people facing real barriers to employment.



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I am pleased to report that all of this was achieved against a backdrop of strong business performance with improvements across a range of measures.

No review of the year would be complete without paying tribute to Liz Ruine, Cube's Chair for five years until she retired last year. She was a great ambassador for both Cube and Wheatley and worked with great dedication and passion to ensure tenants' needs were met. During her time as Chair, Cube started a programme of major

investment in its homes as well as a project to build hundreds of new homes. She leaves a strong legacy and we wish her the very best.

Turn over for the annual highlights 2016-17

Our highlights

Our homes

We continued our work to modernise and maintain our homes, investing £15m in upgrades right across our communities. The work included replacing kitchens and bathrooms, cladding in multi-storeys in Broomhill, new heating, roofs, doors and windows.

We also invested in neighbourhoods, upgrading communal areas such as entrance foyers in multi-storey flats, backcourts, stairwells and green spaces. We had 3431 affordable homes at the end of the financial year 2016-17 with 98.3% of them meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

Building affordable housing

Our plans to build more affordable homes in our communities made progress with a total of 34 new homes completed for social rent and 46 for mid-market rent. At the end of the financial year we were on site building 122 more and a further 192 are planned to start in 2017-18.

We marked a number of completed developments over the year including 34 in Ruchill, Glasgow, and our 46 mid-market homes in Yoker which are now managed by our sister organisation Lowther Homes.

Cube's work to regenerate communities and build more affordable homes earned recognition including the Herald Property Awards' Best Housing Regeneration Project for our Milncroft Road development in Ruchazie and Homes Scotland's Best Large Affordable Development award for Ellerslie Street in Yoker.



District heating schemes

We completed an improvement project to make hundreds of homes warmer in three Glasgow neighbourhoods.

At Broomhill in Glasgow a new district heating system now serves over 700 homes, including five 18-storey blocks, making them warmer and drier and helping reduce fuel bills for tenants. Insulation and other improvements have also been carried out as part of the project.

It came after two smaller schemes in Gorget in Knightswood and Collina Street in Maryhill which were completed in 2016. In February 2017, Bob Doris MSP, Convenor of the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee, visited the Gorget district heating energy centre, which was part-funded by £1.1 million from Glasgow City Council, to learn more about the benefits it brings.

122

new homes in construction.

700

homes benefit from district heating.

£15m

invested in upgrading our homes.

The overall project was delivered in partnership with British Gas as part of its Energy Companies Obligation (ECO). The Broomhill scheme was part-funded with a £5m SPRUCE Fund loan.

A new repairs service

Our ambition to create a modern, local and more efficient repairs and maintenance service took a major step forward over 2016-17 when we agreed a new joint venture with Glasgow City Council.

Our parent company Wheatley Group became 50/50 joint owner of City Building (Glasgow) on 1 April, 2017. This has given us the opportunity to reshape our repairs service, designing a service which

delivers consistent excellence for customers, and work on this is under way.

The jointly owned company is providing repairs and investment work to Cube homes as well as those of GHA, Loretto, YourPlace and Lowther Homes.

Environmental services

Together with all our partners in Wheatley, we also invested £20million on strengthening our environmental services across the Group, restructuring the teams and recruiting almost 200 new staff including apprentices and trainees. For Cube this has meant an improved service across all the areas we work in.

As part of our mission to create communities people are proud to live in, we also launched a new partnership with Keep Scotland Beautiful which is involving tenants in assessing, grading and improving neighbourhoods.

Involving tenants

Tenants tell us they want clean and cared for neighbourhoods so we also stepped up our efforts to keep our areas free of litter.

We worked hand-in-hand with the people who live in our homes to hold a litter pick at one of our estates every week after Christmas. These events bring our customers, staff, caretakers, Neighbourhood Environmental Teams and other partners together to make our communities great places to live.

During our first session in Wyndford, Glasgow, we filled 90 bin bags with rubbish and in a later session, it had fallen to 14 due to the significant reduction in litter being dropped.

Improving performance

We continued to improve our performance with 15 out of 26 measures which we report to the Scottish Housing Regulator – or 58% – in the top quartile when benchmarked with other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

This is significant progress on last year when 42% of our reported performance measures were in the top quartile.



Performance highlights for the year included:

Customer satisfaction

86.8% 2016-17

85.4% 2015-16

Tenants who feel their rent represents good value

72.7% 2016-17

67.4% 2015-16

Repairs completed right first time

97.9% 2016-17

94.9% 2015-16

New tenants satisfied with the quality of their home when they moved in

99.6% 2016-17

New tenants satisfied with the quality of their home

92.7% 2016-17



Awards and accreditations

Cube's journey to excellence was rewarded with a 3-star Recognised for Excellence award from Quality Scotland in 2016.

We also played a major part in Wheatley, our parent company:

- ▶ regaining Customer Service Excellence accreditation with 19 'compliance plus' marks, a record number and up from 16 the previous year;
- ▶ being ranked no 47 in the Sunday Times list of best not-for-profit organisations to work for;
- ▶ making it into 24 Housing magazine's top 10 social landlords in the UK.



Rent campaign

Our annual rent campaign resulted in our best ever arrears performance over the festive period.

The campaign, which urged customers to Put Rent First, invited people who were facing difficulties to get in touch and access the wide range of help and support we have available. The campaign materials, which included posters, bus stop advertising, newsletter articles and regular content on social media and our website, also made clear to customers what their rent pays for.

It resulted in a reduction of arrears from 5.7% in 2016 to 4.7% in 2017.

More customers go online

We launched our new website in March 2017 as part of our work

to encourage and support our customers to go online. The website was designed in consultation with tenants and within a few months saw the number of online visitors rise to around 4000 a month.

The new website is mobile friendly, easy to navigate and features engaging content. Our target is to see 30% of all customer transactions carried out online and the new website plays a part in increasing the numbers of customers registering and using our online self services.

Over 2016-17, a total of 108 Cube tenants signed up for online self-service bringing the total number of registered users at Cube to 389. £338,769 was paid by customers through the online channel over the 12-month period.

Jobs and training opportunities

The scale of our new-build and investment programmes at Wheatley mean we can create or support opportunities for people from our communities to access jobs and training each year. This year we supported a total of 23 people from our homes into jobs and training opportunities.

These opportunities are funded by our new charitable trust, Wheatley Foundation, and include apprenticeships, traineeships and Wheatley Pledge, a scheme which incentivises our suppliers to do even more for our communities by offering work or training to our customers.

The 23 opportunities taken up by Cube tenants, or their families, included four Modern



Apprenticeships, two Wheatley Pledge placements and nine Changing Lives traineeships, which help people needing extra support to get on the job ladder.

Helping tenants save money

We continue to support our tenants in a wide range of ways.

Cube's fuel advisors provide free expert advice to tenants on cutting their energy bills and keeping their homes warm.

Advisors can help tenants access the cheapest tariffs, arrange low-cost payment arrangements and, depending on their circumstances, help them write-off long-term debt.

More than 294 tenants used the fuel advice service in 2016-17 – and saved more than £63,567 on their bills.

We also helped tenants claim back £173,031 in benefits they were entitled to.

Our My Great Start service which helps new tenants get off to a good start with their tenancy supported 320 Cube customers to develop budgeting skills and manage their money.

Support for the most vulnerable

Bringing care and housing together in Wheatley Group is allowing us to identify and support vulnerable people in our communities in ways we couldn't before. Our Tenancy Support Service, delivered by Loretto Housing Association, launched in 2015 with the aim of helping people maintain their tenancy and get more out of life.

In 2016-17, 224 Cube tenants who were struggling to cope received support for periods of up to eight weeks. 100% of tenants who returned a questionnaire said they were satisfied with the service they received.

294

tenants used the fuel advice service.

£173,031

Claimed back by Cube tenants in benefits they were entitled to.

320

new tenants supported through My Great Start.

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