



Sevenside Housing
ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16



In March 2016, we were delighted to welcome David Orr, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation, to officially open our Rowland Court development.

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Front cover: Tenant David Casewell shows considerable skill in growing vegetables and maximising his garden space.



Paul Smith, Chair of the Board, and Sarah Boden, Chief Executive.

WELCOME

For Severnside and other housing organisations, 2015–16 has been a challenging and eventful year, largely as a result of changes in the external environment but particularly because of shifts in public policy, which, as a business, we have had to respond to.

Building on past achievements and thanks to the hard work of staff, Board members and the Executive team, Severnside has had a very positive year with strong performance in all areas of the business. We have also made plans and taken steps to secure our future.

During the year, following consultation with our customers and stakeholders, Severnside agreed to become a registered charity. In making this change, we have improved our

financial position and our ability to provide excellent services to our customers.

Following the Summer 2015 budget, we assessed the impact the budget proposals would have on Severnside and took some hard decisions. We re-focused our business and financial plans, we identified yet more efficiency savings and re-phased delivery of some programmes and projects. In doing this, we built financial resilience ensuring we could meet the expectations of our customers and communities across Shropshire, whilst also providing new homes across a range of tenures.

We take our responsibility to providing new homes very seriously. In 2015–16, we built 127 new homes, our largest development programme ever, providing homes for social

rent, sale and market rent. Our prudent financial planning also ensures that we will build more homes into the future. We anticipate housing at least 165 families in new homes during 2016–17.

As a strong, forward looking organisation, we are always open to opportunities. The profound shifts in government policy linked to welfare reform, home ownership, rent reduction and the introduction of voluntary right to buy are still to unwind. However, we know they will impact on Severnside and its customers.

When we were presented with the chance to enter into merger discussions with a like-minded, financially sound organisation with very similar values, the Board decided that this was something that must be explored. Our merger talks have progressed extremely well. Discussions have been frank and open and we found we shared a similar vision for the future.

We quickly recognised that in a merged business we would be able to do more for our customers. The benefits of a merger, particularly the capacity that we will release to do more for the communities we serve, are compelling. We are confident that in taking the decision to merge our business with Housing Plus, we are setting strong

foundations for future success. We are now taking steps to finalise the merger and look forward to Severnside, its customers, partners and stakeholders, reaping the rewards of this decision in coming years.

Finally, our staff are key to achieving all that we do as a business for our customers. We would like to express our thanks to all of them for their hard work, dedication and commitment during what has been a difficult year for everyone. Our staff recognised the challenges we faced and, with a willingness to embrace change, through their efforts, Severnside has had a very successful year. Our thanks also go to our involved customers, partners and our wide range of stakeholders for their invaluable support and the contribution they make to Severnside's success.

Paul Smith
Chair of the Board

Sarah Boden
Chief Executive



Paul Smith and Sarah Boden with Phil Morris-Jones MBE, the Mayor of Wellington, officially opening Stretton Court, Wellington.



Paul Smith
Chair

The former Chief Executive at the City and County of Swansea, Paul has extensive strategic management experience including governance, corporate and business planning, performance and risk management. He has a life-long interest in housing and community development and a passion for delivering excellent, value for money services. Paul is also a Parish Councillor in Munslow.



Malcolm Price
Council Director

Malcolm is an Executive Member of Shropshire Council holding the Cabinet Portfolios for Planning and Housing. First elected in 2002, he represents the Battlefield Ward in North Shrewsbury. A former member of the Fire Service, Mal is particularly interested in the safety and well-being of Shropshire residents.



Gareth Evans
Independent Director

A retired banking professional, Gareth worked in the banking industry for 42 years, principally at Barclays Bank where he was a Corporate Manager. Gareth has particular expertise in business funding with considerable experience in funding residential and commercial property development.



Rory O'Byrne
Vice Chair

Rory is a Partner at Wace Morgan Solicitors in Shrewsbury and is a Social Housing and Development specialist. Rory focuses upon residential development and has over twelve years' experience in delivering social housing, strategic land acquisition, stock transfers and regeneration projects for housing associations, local authorities, and the private sector.



Sarah Boden
Executive Director

With 30 years' housing sector experience, Sarah has been Chief Executive of Severnside since 2006. Under her leadership, Severnside has made significant improvements in service delivery, to governance arrangements and developed the range of housing offered. Sarah is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing and the NHF West Midlands Regional Committee.



Elaine Ganderton
Independent Director

Elaine is a strategic consultant with over 30 years' experience in the social housing sector both as an Executive and Non-Executive Director. She has extensive experience of strategic management, governance, housing services and maintenance. Elaine has been involved in national policy making through the National Housing Federation and is passionate about providing quality services for tenants and residents.



Alyson Lanning

Independent Director

Alyson is a former journalist, the holder of a law degree and the recently retired Director of the Hive Music & Media Centre. She has a lifelong passion for the arts – particularly music. Alyson is committed to community development and making the arts accessible to everyone, including Severnside customers.



Peter Price

Independent Director

Peter is a qualified chartered accountant and spent the major part of his career in the health service. Previously Director of Finance with NHS Telford and Wrekin for over ten years, prior to that, he was Finance Director at the Shropshire Community and Mental Health NHS Trust and Princess Royal Hospital.



Mike Roughan

Co-optee Independent Director

Mike, a qualified engineer, worked in the automotive industry for over 48 years. He is an experienced Senior Executive, having held Directorships in a number of blue-chip Companies. He is actively involved in the community, Mike chairs Adoption Panels in Shropshire and Leicestershire and is on the Board of Governors of a local Primary School and his local Parish Council.



Andy Parkes

Independent Director

A former Superintendent of the West Mercia force, Andy began his career in uniform, in community policing, rising to senior management and completing his career by leading the West Mercia Equality and Diversity Team. With particular interests in leadership & IT, Andy now runs his own company offering business development and is also a mentor for start-ups through the 'Young Britain' programme.



Paul Williams

Independent Director

Paul is an electronics engineer with over 30 years' experience in start-up and blue-chip companies in the telecommunications, test and semi-conductor industries. Paul is passionate about delivering excellent services that meet our customers' needs. Having retired from senior positions in industry, Paul now runs his own electrical business in South Shropshire.

Board Committees

Audit and Risk Committee

Elaine Ganderton (Chair)
Malcolm Price
Gareth Evans
Peter Price

Nominations and Remuneration Committee

Rory O'Byrne (Chair)
Paul Smith
Alyson Lanning
Mike Roughan

Resident Senate

Andy Parkes (Chair)
Alyson Lanning



We take the time to ensure our customers are happy.

Supporting our Customers

OUR CUSTOMERS

We aim to:

1. Deliver the excellent services customers want.
2. Strengthen customer involvement and communication.
3. Support the most vulnerable and isolated in our neighbourhoods.
4. Help customers manage their finances and to understand and plan for the impact of welfare reform.
5. Provide well maintained homes.

Customer Services

We have an experienced team of Customer Service Advisors who provide help and advice to customers, whether they contact us by phone, in person or by email.

Throughout 2015–16, the team answered 69,055 calls, 95% of which were answered in an average of 30 seconds, with 85.74% of these calls being dealt with at the first point of contact.

The team also welcomed 13,797 customers to our reception and answered 7,004 email enquiries.

Customer Involvement

We are passionate about providing our customers with opportunities to 'get involved' and have a real say in the service they receive.

We have a large number of involved customers who have met on a regular



basis, throughout the year, to share their views and help shape service delivery.

Our involved customers are encouraged to raise any issues or concerns they may have and to engage with customers in the wider community to ensure they are well-informed on any neighbourhood issues.

In 2015–16:

Resident Senate worked on a number of projects, including recruitment, communication review and resident involvement. Members continue to make recommendations to our Board on how we plan and deliver services.

Customer Panel is an open group which everyone is welcome to attend. The panel is consulted on proposed changes to services and how our customers will be affected by them.

Resident Inspectors have been involved in our Estate Walkabouts to identify any issues that affect our local communities, as well as

reviewing our void properties to ensure we consistently meet the ready to let standard.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Group ensures our services are tailored to meet the diverse needs of our customers.

A project is currently underway to review our Customer Involvement Strategy to make sure we are fit for the future and our customers' views continue to influence everything we do.

Digital Inclusion

As only around 40% of our customers have internet access at home, it is vitally important that we provide digital inclusion opportunities.

Throughout the year free access to wi-fi and computers has been available at our Digital Dens in Meole Brace and Castlefields, and in our Tenants' Resource Centre.

During 2015–16 our digital inclusion initiatives provided 2,000 hours of customer support



Severnside is proud of the range of courses available on the Learning Programme and receives lots of positive feedback.

and access to the internet. Four hundred and three certificated modules of Learn my Way training were completed and a further fourteen customers completed City & Guilds qualifications, helping to build computer skills and knowledge.

Job Clubs

Over the last year, more than 1,000 attendances were recorded at our popular weekly job clubs and drop-ins at our Digital Dens in Meole Brace and Castlefields and the Baptist Church in Monkmoor.

These sessions offered people help and advice to get online, update CVs, search for jobs and assist with evidencing claimant commitment hours for the Job Centre. Ten people found employment as a direct result of the support they received at our Job Clubs.

All job clubs and drop-ins are free and available to anyone to attend on a casual or regular basis.

Welfare Reform

Benefit changes, introduced as part of welfare reform, continue to have an impact on our customers and, with more changes still to come, managing the effects of welfare reform continues to be a priority.

Our teams have provided on-going support and assistance to our customers to manage these changes, including help to get online to complete benefit applications, understand benefit entitlement and get better deals on utilities.

Money Advice

Our Employment and Money Advice team received 318 referrals in 2015–16, with customers contacting the team directly, or via our Neighbourhood Officers who identify when a customer needs financial assistance. This is usually when a customer has debt issues or is not accessing eligible benefits.

The team aims to support customers in understanding and managing debt and

ensuring that priority bills are paid, to keep their home safe.

As a result of the team's work, 90% of all the benefits applied for were successfully achieved; totalling £258,600 and nearly 90% of all customers supported were able to reduce their rent arrears.

Tenancy Sustainment

Our Neighbourhood and Supported Housing teams deliver the Tenancy Sustainment Service (TSS) which supports new probationary tenants, who require low to high level support in sustaining their tenancy.

This support involves regular contact with new customers and signposting them, where appropriate, to other Severnside services, such as our Employment and Money Advice team.

In 2015–16, we supported 684 customers, 381 of which were in our general needs homes. Of these, 225 were assessed as requiring high level support and 156 as low level support.

One hundred and seven tenants successfully reduced their need from high to low level, as they became more able to manage their tenancy and 110 customers no longer required the service.

We also supported 303 sheltered customers, 287 of which were assessed as needing high level support and sixteen at low level.

We measure the success of our service by the number of customers who are able to move from needing high level support to low level and also the success rate of tenancies in the first, often crucial, year of the tenancy. Of the 381 general needs tenancies only nineteen customers terminated their tenancy, with five choosing to return to their family home.

Ok Each Day Service

In 2015–16 we introduced and successfully integrated a well-being service for our sheltered and vulnerable customers.

The Ok Each Day large button phone is an ordinary phone with an 'Ok Each Day' button that customers can press at a time, chosen

by them, each day. If they don't press it there is an automatic reminder call. If the resident still doesn't press the button then our Care and Support team is alerted so we can check the customer is safe.

At weekends and Bank Holidays the customer's relatives, or nominated contact, are alerted giving peace of mind 365 days a year.

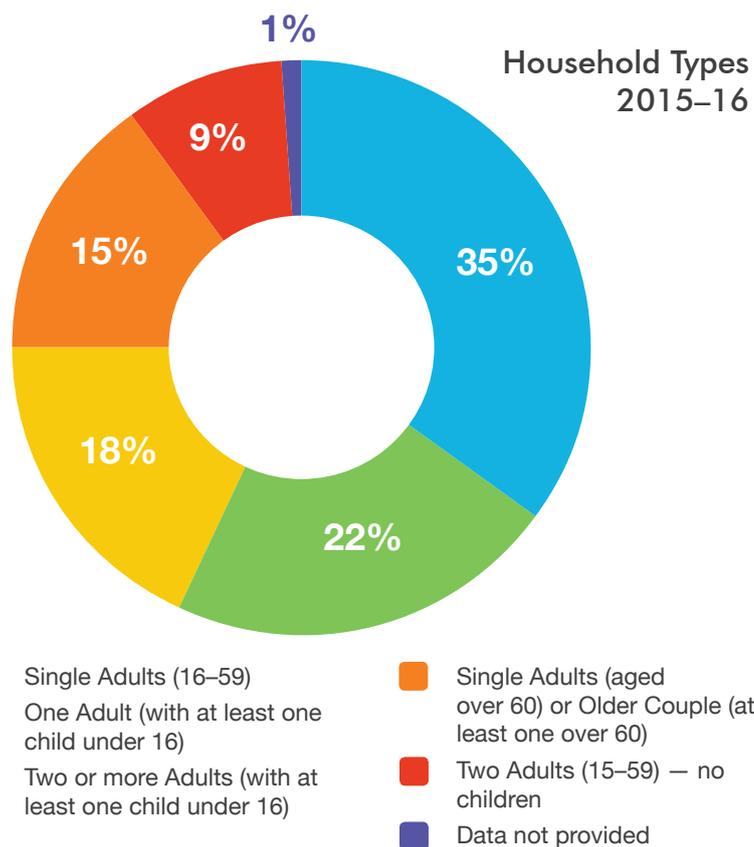
Home Allocations

A total of 495 homes were allocated during 2015–16, including 53 newly built properties.

To help customers maintain their tenancies extensive pre-tenancy work is undertaken. This includes tenancy sustainment assessments, Experian credit checks and payment of rent in advance.

Mutual Exchange

We successfully helped 90 families to exchange their homes in 2015–16 and continue to work in partnership with Homepoint. Homepoint is Shropshire's one-stop housing solution where customers can register for housing and apply to transfer or mutually exchange.



Ethnicity of our new tenants 2015–16

Ethnicity	No. of Properties
White British	466
White (Other)	12
Black, African Caribbean or Black British Caribbean	3
White & Black Caribbean (mixed)	2
White & Black African (mixed)	2
White & Asian (mixed)	1
British Asian	1
Gypsy/ Irish Traveller	1
Undeclared	7
Total	495

Well Maintained Homes

During 2015–16, £10.03m was spent on repairing, maintaining and improving our homes, £5.17m of which was used for planned improvement works.

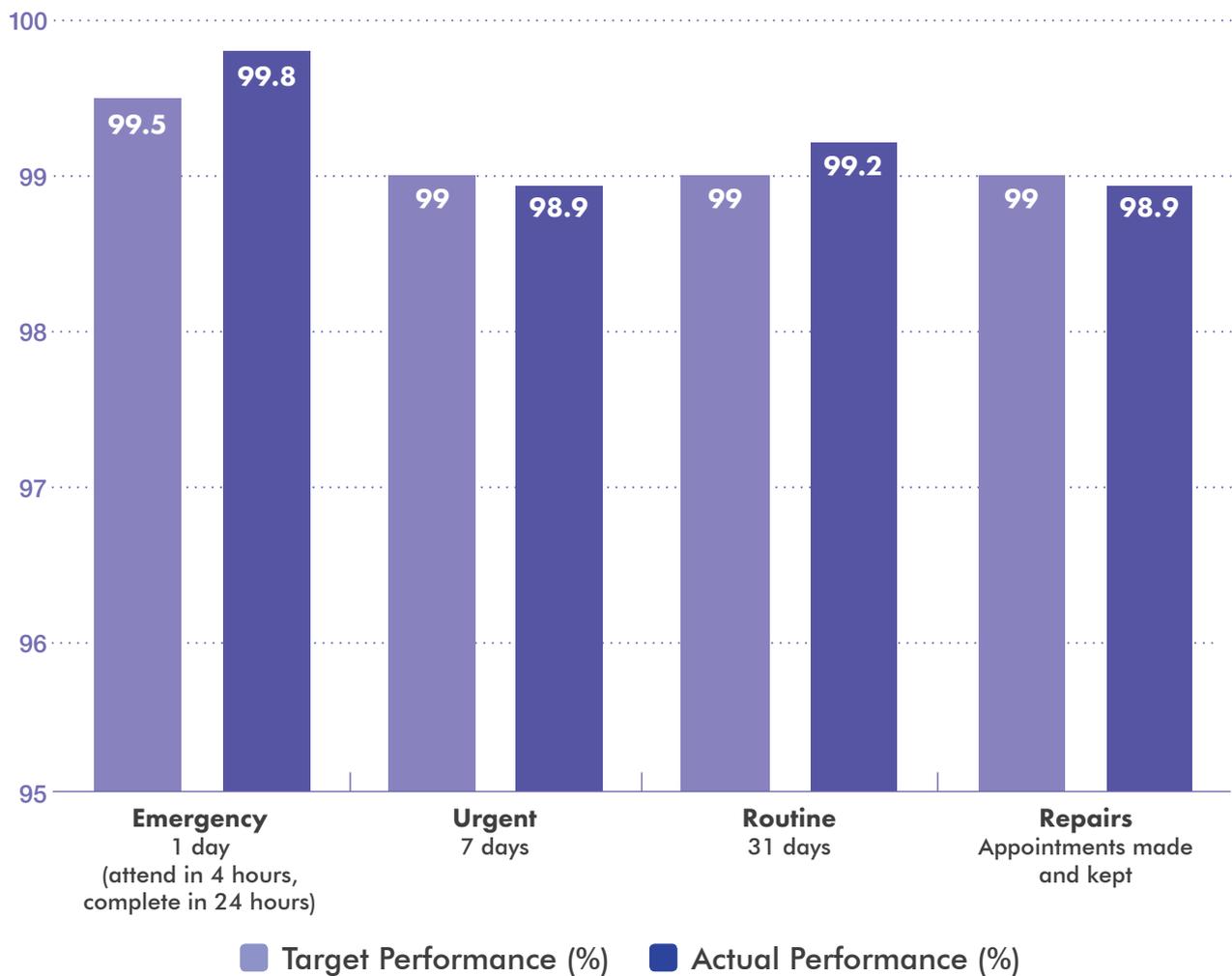
We completed in excess of 18,800 repairs to our properties. The table below shows how we performed on repair timescales against our targets.

Customer satisfaction across the year indicated that 87% of our customers were happy with the repairs service they received.

Major works completed in 2015–16

Item	Quantity
Kitchens	280
Bathrooms	108
Central Heating Systems	287
Electric Heating Systems	32
Rewires	180
New Roof	51
Fascia and Soffit	48
New gas supply	90

Performance of repair timescales



OUR CUSTOMERS

TRAE'S STORY

The Prince's Trust programme gave 19 year old Trae's life new direction.

In partnership with the Prince's Trust, Severnside supports young people to take part and successfully complete a twelve week programme. Those who participate can really make a positive change to their life and Trae is someone who has done just that!

At 18, Trae left care and started living by himself. He wasn't sure in what direction his life and career were heading.

However, after visiting a local Job Centre for his Job Seekers review, he was told about the Prince's Trust and hasn't looked back since. He took part in the twelve week programme and impressed the staff at the Prince's Trust so much he was offered the role of Apprentice Youth Worker.

Trae explained he had finished studying Outdoor Education at college and was thinking of joining the army when he heard about the Prince's Trust. He thought the programme sounded really

interesting, particularly the team leadership and structure, so he decided to give it a go.

"I had always wanted to work outdoors so absolutely loved the residential trip, which involved lots of physical activity and team building events. Although already fairly confident, over the week I started to see what I could achieve and realise my full potential.

When the Prince's Trust offered me the Youth Worker Apprenticeship I was delighted and since taking up the role, I have enjoyed helping to guide young people in the right direction and find it extremely rewarding seeing them gain confidence."

Kevin Faulkner, Team Leader at the Prince's Trust, told us Trae completed the course strongly and we decided he deserved an opportunity to progress himself. We are very proud to provide Trae with an apprenticeship and hope he will progress to Assistant Team Leader in the near future.



“I started to see what I could achieve and realise my full potential.”



Supporting our Communities

OUR COMMUNITIES

We aim to:

1. Develop training, skills and employment opportunities for Severnside customers.
2. Develop health and well-being initiatives that benefit local communities.
3. Encourage and develop greater individual and community responsibility.
4. Ensure that we operate in a manner that respects our environment and reflects Severnside's values.

Learning Programme

Delivered in partnership with local organisations, our inspirational Learning Programme helps our customers gain new life skills and develop existing ones.

In its sixth year, the Learning Programme continues to offer a diverse range of courses suitable for everyone, no matter what their age or ability.

Courses are free of charge to our customers and are open to the wider-community at a nominal charge of just £3.50 per course.

In 2015–16, 387 people attended 49 different training sessions and from those surveyed 95% told us that their course was either excellent or good.

Prince's Trust

In partnership with the Prince's Trust, Severnside has supported 38 young people, aged 16–25 years, to take part and successfully complete a twelve week programme. Out of the 38, 22 are now in employment or

college, on an apprenticeship, volunteering or work placement.

Those who participate in the programme can make a positive change to their lives by taking part in community events, community projects and enjoying an action-packed residential week away from home.

In week nine, Severnside delivers a 'getting work ready' programme. Students attend a tailor-made job club where they receive guidance and support on writing a CV, job searching and completing job applications. Mock interviews, in a real-life office atmosphere, allow them to gain much needed interview experience and techniques.

You can read our customer's story about the Prince's Trust on page 12.



Partnership working between Severnside Housing, the local Police, Councillors and Ground Force.

Work Placements

Severnside works in partnership with Jobcentre Plus to help young people develop skills, gain appropriate work experience and assist them in gaining employment.

Each work placement lasts eight weeks and we are proud to have provided five placements during 2015–16. We offer a range of placements including office based experience at Severnside, digital and technical experience at Social Telecoms, painting and decorating with Novus and gardening with Ground Control.

Neighbourhood Standards Agreement

Severnside has successfully used Neighbourhood Standards Agreements (NiSAs) for a number of years. NiSAs are drawn up in partnership with local agencies and all residents who live in the community, whether or not they are a Severnside customer.

During 2015–16 we delivered new NiSAs in Meole Brace, Bomere Heath, Hanwood/Pontesbury and Moston Green (Sundorne). Twenty one NiSAs remain in place across our communities.

Evidence shows that our NiSAs develop and encourage greater individual and community responsibility in the areas they have been delivered.

Estate Walkabouts

Estate Walkabouts are led by Severnside's Neighbourhood Officers in partnership with key local agencies, including the Police and Council. They are held regularly, throughout the year, and customers are encouraged to take part so they can raise any concerns they may have about the area in which they live.

OUR

In 2015–16 we held seventeen Estate Walkabouts in our local communities. The Walkabouts aim to highlight and address issues such as grounds and highway maintenance, street lighting, graffiti, litter, dog fouling, vandalism and parking problems.

Following each Walkabout, action plans are drawn up to ensure that any identified issues are logged with the correct responsible agency, with a timescale for the issue to be addressed.

Data Warehouse

Sevenside's Data Warehouse holds our customer and property information together with externally collated data from other agencies, including the Office for National Statistics, Shropshire Council and the Police.

The Warehouse, which is similar to a library, enables us to respond to areas of need, manage information and also evidence the great work our teams are doing to address local issues.

Local Groups and Surgeries

We hold weekly surgeries and actively participate in neighbourhood meetings across our communities, including the Grange Urban Safety Group in Harlescott Grange. With our support, the group secured £5,000 grant funding from the Shropshire Resilient Communities Fund to undertake improvements in their local community and won a Mayor's Community Award.

Community Chest Fund

Sevenside's Community Chest fund continues to invite grant applications from any voluntary, community and recreational group working in the Shropshire area, whose work will directly benefit our customers and the communities in which they live.

Over the year, six grant applications were awarded a total of £1,235 Community Chest Funding by our panel made up of Sevenside customers and staff.



The Grange Urban Safety Group, based in Harlescott Grange, were delighted to be awarded a Mayor of Shrewsbury Community Award.

COMMUNITIES

The grant received from Severnside has enabled us to promote the services we offer and help us reach out to people who really need our help.



SUPPORTING LOCAL GROUPS

Sevenside has worked in partnership and supported The Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) for a number of years. SDN is a registered charity, wholly run and supported by volunteers, who welcome anyone with a disability, who cares for someone who is disabled, or is a family member of a disabled person, to join them.

During 2015–16 we awarded SDN with Community Chest Funding to assist them in purchasing promotional items to publicise their vision of giving disabled people and carers in Shropshire a voice.

Sevenside also signed up to a great SDN community led initiative, supported by the Police, called ‘Safe Places Shropshire’. Safe Places are short-term safe places for vulnerable people. If a vulnerable person feels threatened or has a crime committed against them, whilst they are out in the community, they can go to any registered Safe Place to ask for help and support. Statistics show that vulnerable people are often the victims of crime – as many as nine out of ten have had a hate crime committed against them.

Organisations who sign up to the initiative receive specialist training from SDN and the Police and are given Safe Place stickers to display in their windows.

Ruby Hartshorn, Chairperson of SDN told us “The Shropshire Disability Network was formed in 2008 to provide a powerful collective voice for disabled people across Shropshire. The grant received from Sevenside has enabled us to promote the services we offer and help us reach out to people who really need our help.

We are also delighted that Sevenside signed up to Safer Places. While Shropshire is a relatively safe place to live, this community initiative gives confidence to anyone who is feeling vulnerable, and may need assistance when they are out, to feel safe and know where they can go to get help.”

Our Senior Community Development Officer, Melanie Pilliner added “SDN’s request for grant funding received unanimous support from our Community Chest Fund panel. We know that a number of our customers access the excellent support and advice they offer and hope that the grant funding will help them support more people across our communities. We are also extremely proud to be part of Safe Places Shropshire. Our Brassey Road Office and Digital Dens in Castlefields and Meole Brace are signed up as Safe Places so anyone out in the community, who feels vulnerable, can call in to seek our help.”

One of many friendly voices in the Customer Service Centre.



Supporting our Business

OUR BUSINESS

We aim to:

1. Grow the business of the Group.
2. Positively promote all members of the Severnside Group.
3. Deliver high quality business performance.
4. Ensure excellent governance.
5. Maximise income.
6. Demonstrate and continuously improve value for money.
7. Develop and acquire new homes.
8. Have skilled, motivated staff who engage with our business and our customers.

Headlines

Our Group enjoyed strong performance last year which was evidenced by Severnside out-performing against both its financial plan and covenants.

A major element of this out-performance was due to the completion of Severnside's first open market sales properties at Rowland Court, Shrewsbury.

- △ Turnover: +16%
- △ Operating Surplus: +23%
- △ Surplus After Tax: +116%

We improved our business performance by:

- △ Earnings before interest, depreciation and amortisation: +64%
- △ Asset Cover Ratio: +20%
- △ Debt per unit: decrease of £3.2k.

Our Group

Severn Homes

Launched in 2015, to manage our private rental properties, private sales and shared ownership properties, Severn Homes has a growing reputation for providing exceptional quality homes in excellent locations.

During 2015–16, Severn Homes' portfolio of properties grew to include:

- △ 79 shared ownership properties
- △ 103 market rent homes.

Severn Homes' flagship development, 41 new homes at Rowland Court in Shrewsbury, was completed in October 2015. It was our first successful venture into building homes for sale on the open market.

The revenue received from the sale of these homes, along with the income from the market rent properties, helps to subsidise the provision of more affordable housing.

Work is already well underway on a further mixed development site at Curlew Meadows in Baschurch, which will provide 40 new homes, 26 of which will be for open market sale.



AW Electrical

AWE is a national electrical contractor that undertakes work for clients outside of the Severnside group. Last year, AWE worked across many different sectors including leisure, office, education and restaurant projects as well as individual residential clients. It saw significant expansion of its London based work that built on its established Shropshire based workload. AWE had a turnover of £626,333 and gift aided £22,182 to Severnside in 2015/16.

AW Electrical Contractors

AWEC undertakes the electrical works to our Severnside properties. It has exceeded the number of rewires required and met the number of electrical inspections needed in the year. AWEC provide a 24 hour call-out service for our Severnside homes as well as delivering our non-urgent electrical repairs service.

Shrewsbury Homes for All

Shrewsbury Homes for All (SHFA) is a small local registered charity that helps many of the most vulnerable people in Shropshire.

During the year it was agreed that, in order for SHFA to continue delivering a range of services to its customers and strengthen its financial base through receipt of grant funding, it would need to once more become a stand-alone organisation. Accordingly, SHFA left the Severnside group on 1 April 2016. However, we continue to work in partnership on a range of projects.





David Orr, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation, and Miles Kenny, Mayor of Shrewsbury, cut the ribbon to officially open Severn Homes' flagship development, Rowland Court.

Our Partnerships

Sustain Consortium

Sevenside is proud to be the leading member of the Sustain Consortium, a cross-county partnership that delivers individual and group support services to vulnerable people in Shropshire, along with thirteen partner agencies.

In 2015–16, Sevenside was able to deliver support to 967 people, 813 of which were Sevenside customers, while Sustain partners delivered floating support to over 4,073 people, delivering 9,644 outcomes.

Through the partnership and their services, Sustain came into contact with 35,671 older people across the county and 3,235 people attended drop-ins. Sustain assisted customers in claiming over £20k in benefits/Personal Independence Payment assessments and grants.

S3 Consortium

Launched in 2013, the S3 Development Consortium has secured £7.8m of social housing grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency to provide 381 new affordable homes.

S3 has three members: Sevenside Housing, Stafford and Rural Homes and South Staffordshire Housing Association (part of the Housing Plus Group).



OUR BUSINESS

Governance

The Severnside Board is responsible for the effective governance of Severnside and its subsidiaries. Members have a broad range of skills and experience matched to the needs of the business. The Board's key responsibilities are to lead, control and monitor the overall performance of the Severnside group of companies. The Board sets the Corporate Plan and approves business plans and budgets of subsidiaries. It is assisted in its work by two Committees: Audit and Risk and Nominations and Remuneration.

The Board receives reports from Severnside's Resident Senate which is a key element of our resident involvement structure. This ensures that the customer voice is considered when decisions are taken by the Board.

Severnside has adopted the National Housing Federation Code of Governance and complies with its requirements.

The Sector Regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), now requires all registered providers to confirm compliance

with the Regulatory Framework, Governance and Financial Viability Standard. The Board is pleased to confirm that Severnside complies with this standard. Severnside's also holds the HCA highest ratings for governance and viability: G1 and V1.

Charitable Status

During 2015, the Board decided that Severnside should explore and discuss with its customers and stakeholders whether or not to become a registered charity.

The main advantage of becoming a charity was it would increase the amount of money we had to spend on homes, neighbourhoods and services. As a recognised charity, we would also be able to raise funds from other sources such as The Big Lottery.

Following consultation, it was agreed that Severnside would apply to become a registered charity. The necessary consents were obtained and, with effect from 1 April 2016, Severnside became a registered charity with the Charity Commission.



Sod cutting at Brook Close, Condover. Left to right; Nick Wood, (Communities and Housing Policy Officer, Shropshire Council) Cllr Claire Tolley (Condover Parish Council), Sepp Sargeant (Head of Development, Severnside Housing), Andrew Copson (Director, Saxonby Homes), and Paul Bennett (Site Manager, Saxonby Homes).



Two of our trade apprentices on site.

Rent Reductions

In the 2015 budget, the Government announced that all social landlords must reduce their rents by 1% per annum, for four years, starting in April 2016. For Severnside, this reduction in rent meant an accumulative loss of income of £30m over the next 30 years.

A fundamental business review, to give year-on-year budgetary savings of £1.8m, was developed and adopted. As a result, Severnside is able to withstand the impact of the rent reductions and will continue to be financially robust organisation.

Value for Money

Severnside is committed to securing year-on-year improvements in value for money for our customers. This commitment is reflected in our Corporate Plan, with a specific objective to demonstrate and continually improve value for money across the group.

During 2015–16, our efficiency register recorded over £380,000 of savings, including major procurement projects.

Procurement

Severnside undertook two major tender exercises during 2015–16.

Mobile phone and landlines

The procurement and IT teams worked to jointly tender a converged telecommunications contract covering mobile and landline calls for both Severnside Housing and Shropshire Housing Group. Awarded to local social enterprise, Social Telecoms, the contract consolidated 500 mobiles and 150 landlines, reduced Broadband from five suppliers to just one and has resulted in:

- △ Annual savings of over £60k for both organisations.
- △ Improved contract management and customer service dealing with just one provider.
- △ Working with a local social enterprise that also support Severnside's digital inclusion activities, such as the Digital Dens.

Gas Service and Maintenance

As Severnside’s five year gas service and maintenance contract was at an end in 2015, an option appraisal was conducted. It was decided to negotiate a new contract with our existing supplier, PH Jones, via the EU Compliant Procure Plus framework, which built upon the success of the previous contract, which has seen PH Jones co-locate with our staff. The benefits of this approach were:

- △ Continuity of staff and performance
- △ Cost savings due to re-negotiated rate
- △ Savings in staff time and risk reduction.

Spending the Shropshire Pound

£9.7m, which equates to 75% of our budget, was spent in Shropshire during 2015–16. This helps to support the local economy and deliver our corporate objective to contribute to the development of sustainable communities.

Development

We are committed to providing quality, affordable homes for our local communities. As well as maintaining our existing housing stock,

we have an extensive development programme to build new homes across our areas to meet local housing need.

All of our new homes are built to the highest standards of quality and energy efficiency.

During 2015–16, Severnside built 127 new homes with a range of tenures. These are shown in the charts below.

We also have a number of sites where new homes are still being built. These will add an additional 190 homes to our portfolio and can be seen on the map on page 29.

Vacant Properties (Voids)

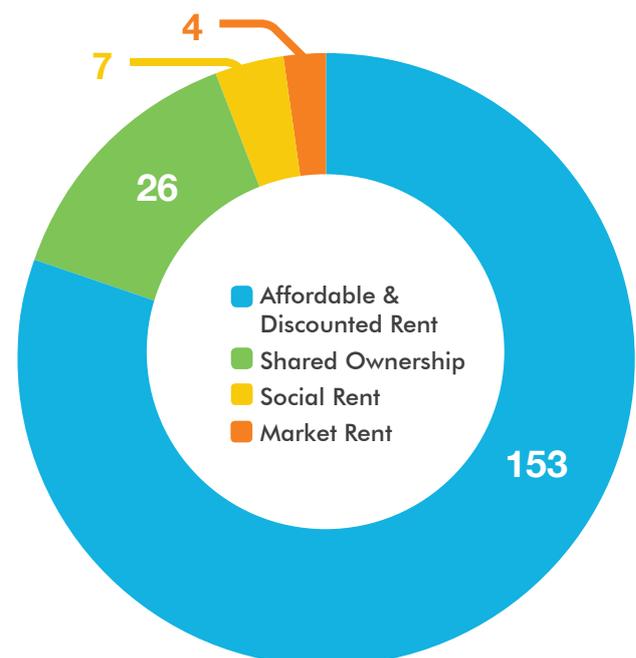
Void performance, as indicated in the chart on the right, is measured in average calendar days from the time the keys are returned following a tenancy termination, to the time the keys are issued at the commencement of a new tenancy.

Improvement works and repairs were carried out, at a cost of £764k, to 442 properties that became vacant during the year, ensuring they met Severnside’s Lettable Standard before being re-let to customers.

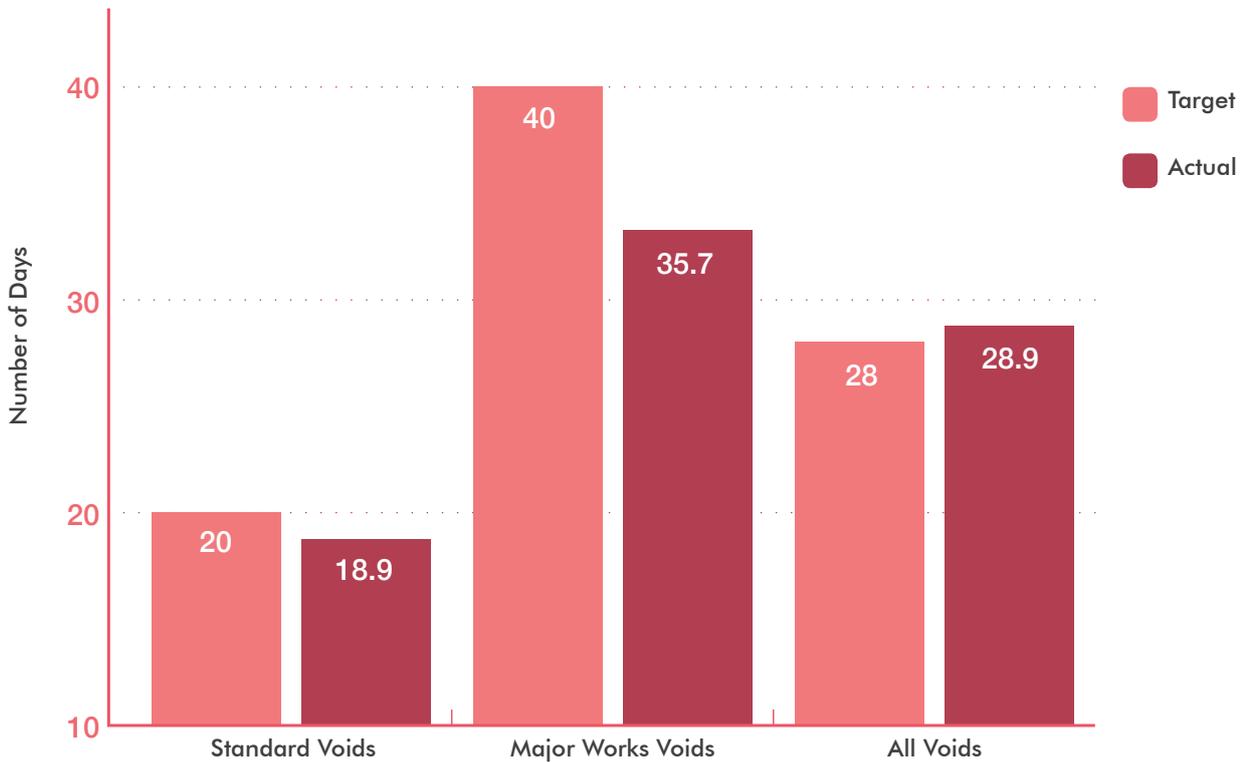
Tenures of Completed Properties



Tenures of Future Properties



Vacant Properties (Voids) Performance



Our Colleagues

Sevenside employed 235 staff in 2015–16 with 229 being employed full time. The average sickness absence was 4.45%, reduced from 4.83% in the previous year. Staff turnover was 8.29%.

Colleague Development

We are committed to developing and training our staff to ensure we have a highly motivated and skilled work force.

During the year, 2006 training days were undertaken which equates to 8.75 training days per colleague. A range of training initiatives also took place including Health & Safety specific courses for our trade colleagues, IT courses at all levels and Stress Awareness courses for our managers to help them identify and minimise stress in the work place.

Our e-learning training programme continued to grow in 2015–16. Four hundred and four online training courses and assessments were completed, including Fire Safety, Display Screen Equipment and Data Protection and

new courses were rolled out covering Social Media and New and Expectant Workers policies.

In early 2016 we launched our new Aspire Programme; a year-long management programme to help managers address their interpersonal needs, improve their personal effectiveness and deliver our policies and procedures.

Learning Month

Following the success of the 2014 Sevenside Learning Week, we extended the event to run for a month during 2015.

Colleagues were given the opportunity to take part in a range of activities including sign language and conversational French and Spanish sessions.

The Learning Month was a celebration of life-long learning based on research which shows that adults who continue to learn throughout their lives are healthier, happier and have greater self-confidence and self-esteem.



Staff training day in September 2015.

Health Month

As part of our commitment to reducing staff sickness absence rates we delivered a Health and Well Being Month to promote being a healthy organisation.

Colleagues were invited to attend a number of activities that focused on mental and physical health, well-being and relaxation. Sessions included Tai Chi, talks from a life coach and a Chiropractor.

Apprenticeships

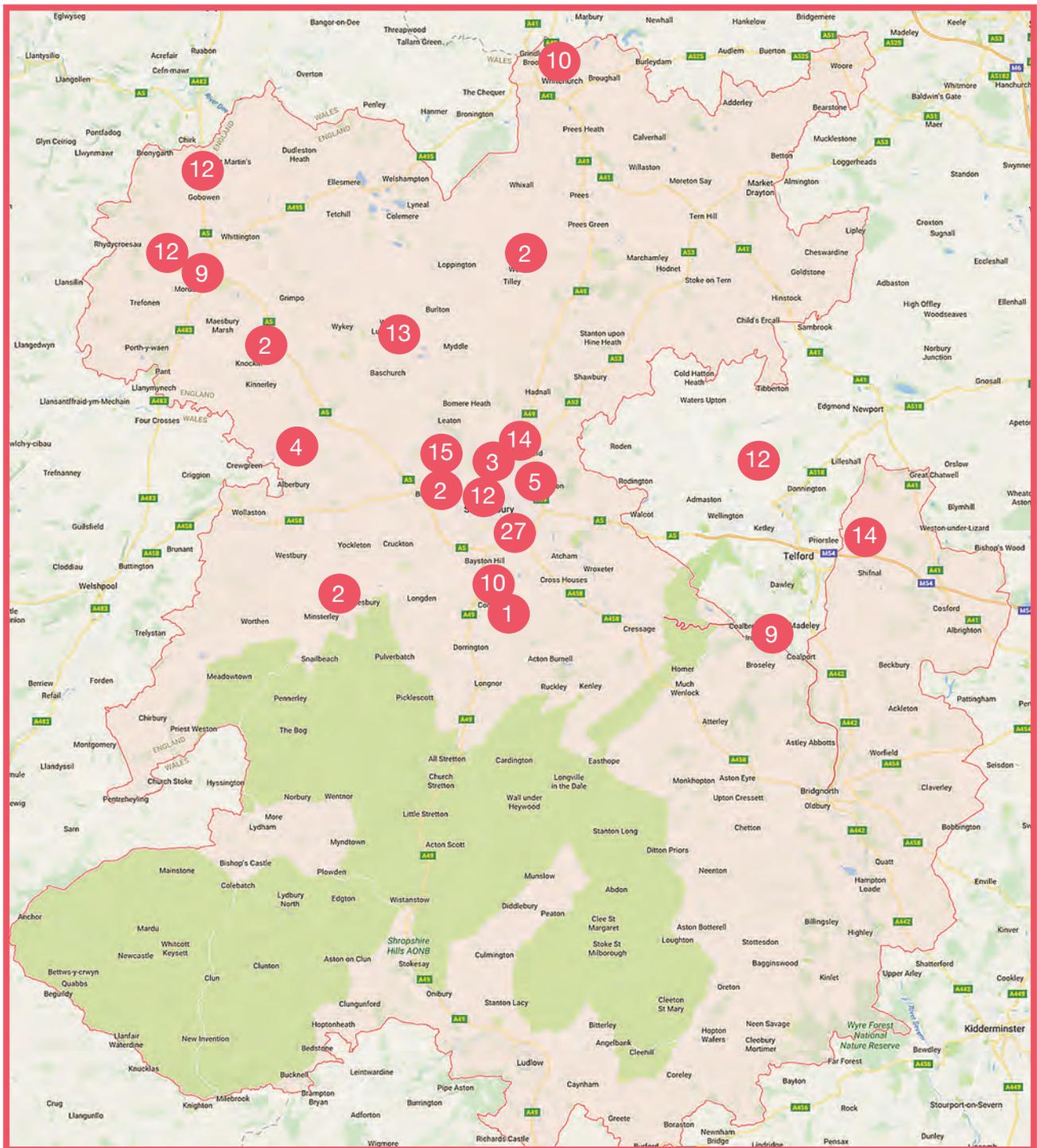
We are proud of our apprenticeship programme. During 2015–16, there have been seven apprentices at Severnside working across different areas of our business. Two of our apprentice carpenters worked with a number of our building contractors to gain valuable training and expertise working on a number of our development sites.

Staff breakdown per department

Department	Male	Female
Chief Executive	2	6
Community Services	9	27
Development	5	1
Direct Labour Services	80	5
Finance	6	7
Housing	15	32
Human Resources & Marketing/Communications	3	7
Investment Services	12	4
Legal	0	5
Procurement	1	1
Severn Homes	0	2
UnITE	4	1
TOTAL	137	98

New Homes in progress

Number of new homes being procured in each location for completion between May 2016 and March 2017.



OUR BUSINESS

ANDY'S STORY

Ex-Police Officer Andy loves his new role at Severnside

We aim to attract, develop and retain the best people to work with our customers. Our colleagues are passionate about everything they do and come from a variety of different backgrounds.

We work in partnership with a number of local agencies, including the Police and, for many years, worked with Andy Hawkins, a Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team Officer at Harlescott Grange.

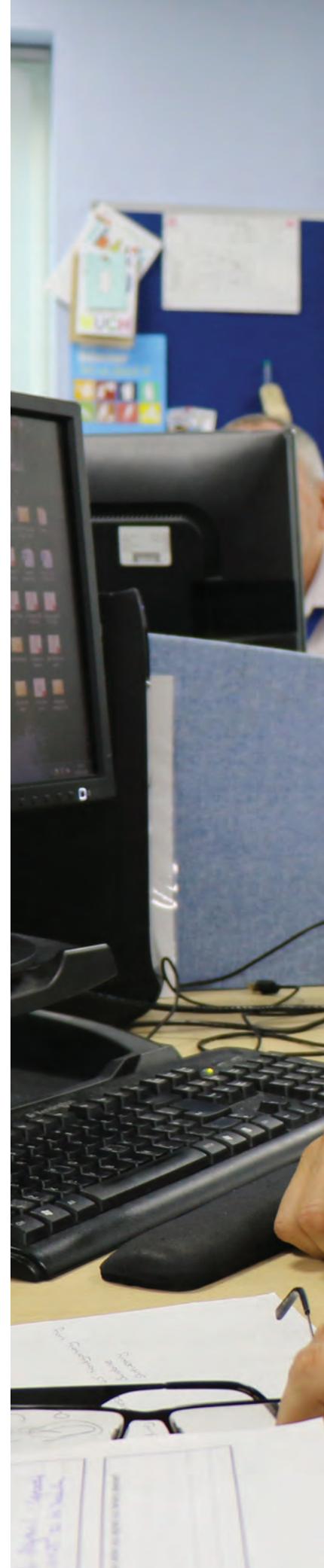
After working for the Police for over 25 years, Andy was due to retire. However, he felt he still had a lot more to offer and wanted to continue working in the local area.

Andy applied to become a Neighbourhood Officer at Severnside and was delighted

when he was appointed in February 2016.

Andy told us he felt too young to retire and really wanted to use his expertise and experience to help people in the local community. He says, in lots of ways, the work he does now, as a Neighbourhood Officer, is very similar to the community policing work he previously undertook. He's thoroughly enjoying his new role and getting to know his customers.

Paul Forsythe, Severnside's Head of Neighbourhood Services, explained that Andy's depth of knowledge and transferable skills were evident during the recruitment process, so they were more than happy to welcome him to their Neighbourhood Team.





I am thoroughly enjoying my new role and getting to know my customers.

OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM



Sarah Boden

Executive Director

With 30 years' housing sector experience, Sarah has been Chief Executive of Severnside since 2006. Under her leadership, Severnside has made significant improvements in service delivery, to governance arrangements and developed the range of housing offered. Sarah is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing and the NHF West Midlands Regional Committee.



Sue Groom

Neighbourhood &

Community Services Director

Sue was appointed Neighbourhood and Community Services Director in July 2006 and has over 30 years' housing sector experience. She has worked at a senior level covering all areas of housing services including spending several years in consultancy with HQN. Her particular strengths lie in strategic organisational development, engaging customers in developing the business and ensuring services are accessible, fair and equitable.



Peter Donovan

Resources Director

Peter was appointed Resources Director in October 2001. He has over 20 years' housing experience. Previously Peter worked in the banking industry, private sector companies and commerce. He has helped the organisation through major challenges and change. His particular strengths lie in corporate and financial planning, treasury management, organisational excellence, and business and performance management.



Nick Hampshire

Asset Management Director

Nick Hampshire was appointed Asset Management Director in July 2015. Nick qualified as a Chartered Quantity Surveyor whilst working in private practice before gaining over 25 years of housing experience managing development, maintenance and asset management functions for both traditional housing and stock transfer organisations.

Merger with Housing Plus



The Boards of Severnside Housing and Housing Plus Group have approved the Full Business Case for merger and, subject to consents, we are working towards the launch of a merged larger Group, for customers in Shropshire and Staffordshire, in October 2016.

This will be a stronger, more resilient Group able to shape the agenda for housing and care services in our area and ensure that our customers continue to receive support locally from a dedicated Severnside team. Together, the new Group will have an unshakeable social purpose and increased resources to build the homes our communities need.

The new Group will provide exciting opportunities for our people and our partners

without compromising locally delivered and personalised services.

The merged Group will be known as Housing Plus Group. With around 12,000 homes and 500 employees it will be a very significant employer and ethical housing provider in the region. The Group will be led by chair Rolf Levesley and chief executive Sarah Boden.

The merged Group will offer homes for rent, sale and shared ownership, meeting the changing needs of our urban and rural communities. With customers at the heart of this organisation and the principles of fairness and social inclusion in our DNA, we will offer care and support for people to live independently and provide affordable housing for people on low incomes.



Financial Summary

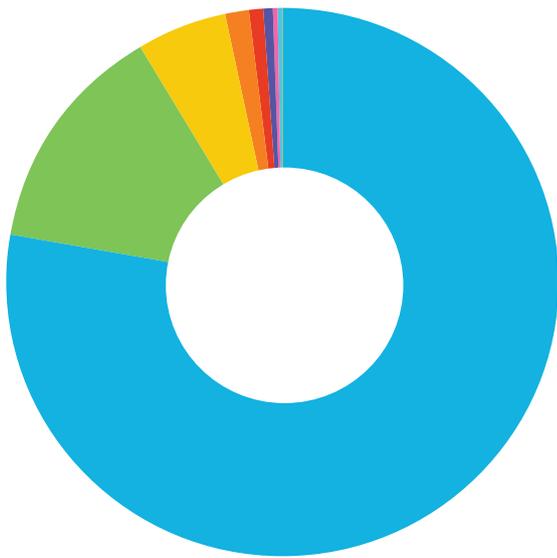
Group Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 March 2016

	2016 £'000s	2015 £'000s
Turnover	31,694	27,291
Less: Operating costs	(22,120)	(19,484)
Operating surplus	9,574	7,807
Surplus on sale of housing properties	389	325
Deficit on disposal of other tangible fixed assets	(15)	(2)
Interest receivable and other income	16	40
Interest payable and similar charges	(6,440)	(6,445)
Other financing costs	(365)	(306)
Increase in valuation of investment properties	28	54
	(6,387)	(6,334)
Surplus on ordinary activities after taxation	3,187	1,473
Tax charge on surplus on ordinary activities	–	–
Surplus for the year	3,187	1,473

OUR FINANCES

COURT



Severnside Housing Group Income for 2015–16 (£'000s)

Rent, net of voids	£25,019
Non-social housing activities	£4,412
Other social housing activities	£1,696
Surplus on disposal of properties	£389
Service charges	£282
Other housing-related income	£175
Grant income	£110
Increase in valuation of investment properties	£28
Interest earned on balances	£16



Severnside Housing Group Expenditure for 2015–16 (£'000s)

Housing Management	£7,395
Interest on improvement loans and other charges	£6,440
Depreciation (properties)	£3,373
Planned Repairs & Maintenance	£3,325*
Routine Repairs & Maintenance	£3,287
Non-social housing activities	£3,137
Other social housing activities	£1,508
Pension Costs	£365
Bad debts	£110

*An additional £3,160k was spent on major repairs, which was capitalised to the balance sheet.

Group Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2016

	2016 £'000s	2015 £'000s
Intangible fixed assets	—	117
Tangible fixed assets		
Housing Properties — NBV	132,765	129,054
Tangible fixed assets	3,196	3,174
Investment Properties	13,472	8,690
Total fixed assets	149,433	141,035
Current Assets		
Stocks	1,830	574
Debtors	1,009	796
Cash at bank and in hand	8,000	5,084
	10,839	6,454
Creditors:		
Amounts falling due within one year	(6,578)	(5,393)
Net current assets/(liabilities)	4,261	1,061
Total assets less current liabilities	153,694	142,096
Creditors		
Amounts falling due after more than one year	(138,825)	(130,571)
Pension liability	(10,579)	(11,638)
Net assets/(liabilities)	4,290	(113)
Reserves		
Revenue	14,869	11,525
Pension	(10,579)	(11,638)
Total Reserves	4,290	(113)

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Sevenside Community
Association Ltd.

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