



Circle Voluntary Housing Association Report 2013 – 2014

Making a difference by providing
quality homes for people in housing need





Circle Voluntary Housing Association Limited 2013-2014

Introduction

Circle Voluntary Housing Association is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital, incorporated in Ireland in 2003 under the Companies act 1963-2012, Registered Number 374693. The company has also been granted charitable status, for taxation purposes by the Revenue Commissioners, charity number CHY 15529. All income is applied only for the promotion of the charitable objectives of the company. Circle VHA has certified status from the Housing Finance Agency.

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Registered Company No. 374693. Registered Charity No. 15529.

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Excellence in Business Awards 2014

Circle VHA



Chairman's Statement

Deich Bliana ag Fás

10 years a-growing

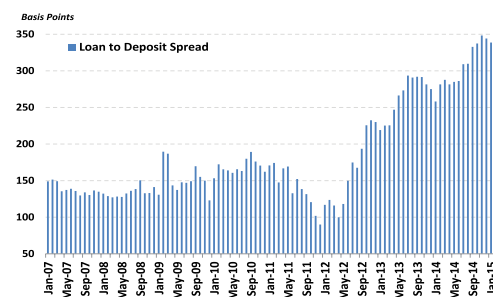
It has been an eventful 10 years since Circle Voluntary Housing Association was founded. In the early years, there was every possibility that Circle VHA would founder, rather than grow and thrive. Firstly, it took grit and determination from our founding Chair, Paddy O'Duffy, our Secretary, Fr. Patsy Carolan and our chief executive, Justin O'Brien, to bring our first major scheme of 148 units at Deerpark into operation. Secondly, because growth in rental income was much slower than anticipated, Circle VHA was dependent on a generous £100,000 stg. start-up loan from Circle 33 (now Circle Anglia): this loan was interest-free and had very flexible repayment terms. Thirdly, Circle VHA could not have made progress without the availability of 100% capital grants for house building under the Dept. of the Environment's Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS). With the onset of depression, the CAS had to be replaced with the current revenue-based model of funding social housing. While this was unavoidable, one consequence is that now it is virtually impossible for new voluntary bodies to start up, as Circle VHA did in 2003. Thus new ideas and new developments in voluntary/social housing will have to arise within existing voluntary housing associations rather than through new entrants: some lessening of vibrancy and creativity in the voluntary housing sector may result.

Looking to the medium-term, the demand for social housing is likely to remain high. This is reflected in the Dept. of the Environment's recent announcement of spending of €500m.+ p.a. for social housing by Local Authorities over the next three years. To enable voluntary housing associations to make a serious contribution to providing new social housing, three roadblocks to their progress should be removed viz. the high cost of capital, the absence of rent controls and the unwillingness to transfer under-performing housing stock from Local Authorities (LA's) to Voluntary Housing Associations (VHA's).

The chart below shows some recent work by the Central Bank on the profit margins of Irish banks i.e. the difference between the cost of funds to the banks and the amount they charge to on-lend these funds. Historically, the Irish banks added c.1.5%, or "150 basis points" to their cost of funds for subsequent on-lending. In early 2012, this margin fell to 1%. Since summer of 2012 it has risen more or less continuously and now stands at 3.5%. Over this period, other EU countries reduced their rates in line with ECB rate

reductions, but Irish banks did not. As a result, at end February 2015, the Central Bank was reporting that its typical 'floating' mortgage interest rate was 3.38% in Ireland but was only 2.09% in the rest of the EU. If housing needs, both private and social, are to be met, then Irish banks must be compelled to find some other way of compensating for their losses on tracker mortgages than by overcharging for variable mortgages.

Loan to Deposit Spread for Domestic Banks



The loan to deposit spread is the difference between new business term deposits and the weighted average rate on new business loans to Households for either house purchase or consumer purposes, with a floating or up to one year initial fixation rate.

Central Bank of Ireland Statistical Release 10 April 2015

In 1881, Michael Davitt achieved the "Three F's" for tenant farmers. Over 130 years later, Fair Rent and Fixity of Tenure are still not available to the descendants of those tenant farmers who are renting private dwellings. They are, of course, available to social housing tenants: one must assure private landlords that their Constitutional sky would not fall in if these basic property rights were also extended to private tenants. Both need to be introduced to keep some restraint on house prices and rents.

Finally, unlike in the UK, there has been no concerted transfer of public housing stock from LA's to VHA's. VHA's sole business is housing, whereas for LA's, housing is only one of their many responsibilities. It would be surprising if VHA's were not more effective and efficient than LA's in their housing management. In a situation where resources for social housing are hugely constrained, a crude political rejection of stock transfer must cede ground to the need to have the totality of the social housing estate managed as effectively and efficiently as possible.

J Jerome Casey, Chair, Circle VHA



Chief Executive Officer's Report 2013-14

This report provides an opportunity for reflection on the growth and development of Circle Voluntary Housing Association over the past 10 years. Circle Voluntary Housing Association was legally incorporated and granted approved status by DECLG in 2003. The origins of the company emerged from the new Part V legislation which had been enacted. This created a new paradigm for the delivery of social and affordable housing in mixed tenure estates which was different to the traditional mono tenure paradigm of owner occupied and social housing. Some Irish developers familiar with the English equivalent of Part V were impressed by what Circle 33 in London had achieved and Circle 33 assisted in the establishment of Circle Voluntary Housing Association via financial assistance and sharing of expertise. Mr Paddy O' Duffy who had recently retired from being chairman of An Bord Pleanála agreed to become chairman of the new company. Board directors with a range of expertise were recruited for the legal incorporation of the company. We were established with the objective of delivering quality homes for people in housing need. I was recruited as Chief Executive in late 2003.

In the 10 year period since our foundation there have been significant changes in our economy, the overall housing market, social housing policy and funding. The one constant is that the scale of social housing need has increased in the 10 year period to 89,872 households nationally in 2013 from 48,413 in 2002. There has been a housing property boom and collapse both in terms of record output of 93,000 units in 2006 to fewer than 8000 units in 2013. The capital programme for AHBs has been radically reduced. DECLG funding policy has been changed from a 100% capital grants to a revenue based funding policy with AHBs being required to secure loans for the acquisition of properties. Assessed social housing need has changed in the past 10 years with the demand for single person housing need now comprising 43% of approved housing need nationally and over 50% in Dublin City Council and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown areas. Non Irish born approved applicants now comprise over 20% of assessed social housing need nationally and in some Dublin local

authority areas constitute a greater percentage of housing need. The demand for single person type accommodation and a new ethnic diversity presents new challenges for all social housing providers. In our schemes non-Irish born citizens consist of 21% of all tenants and we accommodate tenants from over 35 different countries across the world.

The DECLG Housing Policy Statement 2011 recognised the contribution of the AHB sector and stated that "approved housing bodies will be at the heart of the Government's vision for housing provision." The new Social Housing Strategy 2020 provides a new policy and funding framework for the delivery of social housing. It also expects the larger AHBs to deliver a large number of social housing units. DECLG is developing a statutory regulatory code for the sector which we welcome as being a necessary requirement for Circle VHA and the AHB sector. The housing market continues to change in 2015 with increased property prices in the major urban areas alongside an insufficient supply of new housing. In contrast in non-urban areas there is an availability of housing with little social housing need.

Circle VHA has had to develop its expertise in the delivery of social housing and facilities management in an integrated way. In 2006 we first provided social housing in Deerpark, West Tallaght via CLSS capital funding alongside the estate management services to a 635 unit mixed tenure scheme. We currently provide 950 units of social housing in over 26 different schemes alongside dispersed units in the four Dublin Local Authority and Kildare County Council areas. We provide estate management services in 9 different estates, some are exclusively social housing schemes and some are mixed tenure schemes of social, affordable and owner occupied units. Circle VHA is registered with the Property Services Regulatory Authority as an approved managing agent. We also have been granted certified status by the Housing Finance Agency for the securing of loan finance.

Circle VHA has had to adapt to the changed economic, social housing policy and funding environment since 2003.

continued overleaf



We have benefitted from CLSS capital funding from 2005-2009 in securing Part V units in a number of mixed tenure schemes. Our perspective is that this policy has been effective and achieves both the supply of new social housing and the creation of integrated mixed tenure estates.

Our tenants value the availability of social housing in schemes that would otherwise be unaffordable and unavailable to them. The underuse of the Part V provision from 2001-2011 has been a loss for the sector. We welcome the new legislation relating to the Planning and Development Act 2015. We have been enabled to deliver social housing via the management of new schemes on behalf of the local authorities alongside the estate management services.

The tenant satisfaction surveys that we undertook in 2011 and 2013 have been affirming as per the quality of our housing management services with over a 90% satisfaction rating. We have increased the scale of our social housing provision in 2013-2014 by 40%. We have undertaken the management of new build DCC schemes in Thornton Heights, Peadar Kearney House, Heuston South Quarter, Tyrone Court and some 60 units from NAMA/NARPS in Ashtown. We have also secured CAS funding for units for the homeless in DCC and Fingal areas. The accommodation that has been provided in all these schemes is of excellent quality both in terms of size, design and internal fittings. All the selected tenants have expressed their appreciation and thanks for the accommodation provided.

Circle VHA is operating in a changing housing market where there is a limited supply of new housing because of the lack of available finance for development and acquisition, an increased demand for private rented accommodation because of lack of new supply and an increased demand for social housing primarily because of affordability reasons in the major urban areas. We are now having to operate in a very different policy, funding and regulatory framework as compared to 2003. The Social Housing Strategy 2020 presents new funding mechanisms, significant potential opportunity for new developments and a challenge for Circle VHA to increase the scale of its social housing provision. Circle VHA will have to continue to enhance the quality of its current housing services and to deliver new social housing provision in the next period.

The Board Directors of Circle VHA are all volunteers who give their time and professional expertise to the achievement of our vision and mission. Since our foundation in 2003 I have been very fortunate to have had Board Directors with commitment and expertise that they have made available to the company. I have also been very fortunate to have had committed chairman in Paddy O' Duffy and Jerome Casey who have given considerable time and expertise to the establishment, consolidation and development of the company. I would like to acknowledge and express my thanks to both the current directors and previous Board directors for their work over the past. I would also like to express my thanks to the staff of Circle VHA for their good work and commitment in the past two years and before that period.

Justin O'Brien, Chief Executive

Mission and Activities

Circle Voluntary Housing Association was founded in 2003. Our primary objective is to provide housing for persons deemed to be in housing need. Circle VHA vision is "Making a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need".

Our mission is "To deliver quality homes and services in partnership with our tenants and local services to create sustainable communities". As a socially responsible housing association, Circle VHA actively engages with its tenants, other residents, existing statutory agencies and local communities to create socially responsible, environmentally acceptable and sustainable communities. We commenced the delivery of our housing and facilities management services in 2006. We are currently primarily based in the greater Dublin area.

Our Philosophy

The vision of Circle VHA is "To make a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need." We believe that the provision of good quality housing is a foundation for families and individuals which allows adults and children to grow and develop their capacity in parenting, education, work, leisure activities and community contribution. The provision of good quality housing should allow each person to find their space where their potential can be achieved and where they can make a difference for themselves and others.

Our mission statement states that our objective is more than just the provision of a unit of accommodation. We want to engage with our tenants, support tenants and their families where such support is needed. We recognize that individuals and families may experience personal difficulties at different points of their life cycle, unexpected health problems may emerge which will adversely affect them and their ability to sustain their home. As a socially responsible housing association we will aim to engage with our tenants, support them and link them to external statutory and community based services. We want to deliver good quality housing management services to our tenants and to maintain the properties that we own or manage for both current and future use. We want to work with our tenants and all residents in our schemes to create sustainable communities that are balanced in terms of age profile, working and non-working tenants. We also wish to maintain estates which are clean, well maintained and environmentally acceptable. The values that we aspire to are key to how we deliver our housing management services and how we relate to you. The core values that we believe in are listed below.

Values

- Respect** each individual (tenant, resident, staff member, service contractor engaged with the association is worthy of respect for who he/she is and what they contribute.
- Empowerment** We will aim to enable families and individuals by the provision of good quality housing to have the opportunity to grow and develop their potential and to actively engage in their community.
- Integration** We will aim to be inclusive of all persons in housing need and to provide a range of housing solutions in mixed tenure developments.
- Partnership** We will aim to build relationships and partnerships with our tenants, local communities, statutory, voluntary and business agencies so that we can fulfill our mission statement.
- Sustainability** We will aim to create socially responsible, environmentally acceptable and sustainable communities.
- Excellence** We will aim for excellence in the construction, delivery and management of our housing services to tenants and other residents and in how the Association is managed.
- Accountability** We will aim to be accountable to our tenants and all external stakeholders for the management our housing services and the proper governance of the company.

These values are to underpin the delivery of our housing services and our relationship with you as a tenant or as a resident where we are responsible for housing and or estate management services.

Board Governance

Circle VHA is governed by a Board of nine Directors, who are not paid for their services. The Board is responsible for providing leadership, approving strategy for the company to achieve its vision and mission, for reviewing the performance and management of our services, for reviewing risk and ensuring proper probity and compliance with required governance and legal requirements. There is a clear division of responsibility between the Board and the Chief Executive with the Chief Executive being responsible for implementing the strategy and policy decisions made by the Board.

The Directors bring their experience in architecture, banking, commerce, economics, housing policy, housing management and planning to bear on guiding the Association. Nine Board meetings were held during 2013 and 2014. This includes a full day meeting where the Board reviewed the strategy and direction of the organisation. Matters such as policy, strategic planning, budgets, and operational delivery of our housing services are reported on to the Board for their consideration and approval.

Current Board Members:

There are currently eight Board Directors. Anne O'Meara is company secretary. The following is a profile of each Board Director.



Jerome Casey (Chairman): is an economist by profession. He has provided economic analysis for the construction and transport industries over the past 30 years.



Fr. Patsy Carolan: is an Oblate Father in Dublin. He was formerly Director of Conway House in London, a hostel and accommodation centre for Irish emigrants in London. He has established and developed the Basket Ball centre in Inchicore which provides a range of sporting and community activity for the Inchicore area.



Tom Corcoran: is a retired Assistant Secretary of the Department of Environment. As a Principal Officer in the Department he had responsibility for housing policy.



Jane Doyle: is a town planner by profession. She has previously worked in that role with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and was a Board member of An Bord Pleaneala. She is currently a planning consultant with Doyle Kent Planning Partnership.



Chris Ellison: is a senior manager in the Circle Housing Group in England. He has extensive experience of managing and developing both general needs and supported housing schemes,



Jim Murphy: is an architect by profession. He has extensive experience in both Ireland and abroad as a practicing architect and has lectured in the School of Architecture in UCD.



David Williams: is a management consultant in social housing. Previously he was Group Director of Business Growth in the Circle Housing Group which is one of the larger associations in England with over 70,000 units of accommodation. He has extensive experience of both housing management and development over a 30 year period. He is currently as senior partner with Campbell Ticknell.



Aoife Watters: is currently finance director with De Paul Ireland, one of the larger homeless organisations in Ireland. She is an accountant by profession and has worked previously in the private sector.

In 2013 and 2014 nine Board meetings were held, attendance of the directors at these were as follows:

2013		2014	
Jerome Casey	9	Jerome Casey	9
Fr. Pat Carolan	9	Fr. Pat Carolan	9
Tom Corcoran	7	Tom Corcoran	6
Jane Doyle	8	Jane Doyle	9
Chris Ellison	7	Chris Ellison	6
Jim Murphy	7	Jim Murphy	6
Dave Williams	4	Dave Williams	7
Aoife Watters (Joined the Board May 2013)	6	Aoife Waters	8
Martin Walsh (Retired February 2014)	9		

The Board reviews its governance annually and is aiming to be fully compliant with the Governance Code by mid 2015. In 2013 a Board Directors Handbook was adopted and terms of reference of the Board sub-committees were revised and implemented. The Board has also approved a Risk Register which is reviewed twice per year. The Board has committed to review its performance annually and its governance on a regular basis during the calendar year.

The Board is assisted by three committees who are authorised to make recommendations to the Board:

1. Audit and Risk: (Chair, Aoife Watters): The committee members are Aoife Watters, Jerome Casey and Larry Tuomey who is an external member. Their role is to review the internal control systems and reporting, review the external audit and risk management policies. The committee met on two occasions in 2013 and two occasions in 2014 in order to undertake its activities. The committee reviewed our existing financial controls and a risk register. They also met with our auditors and reviewed the financial statements for 2012 and 2013.

2. Finance and Strategy: (Chair Thomas Corcoran): The committee members are Tom Corcoran, Martin Walsh, Jim Murphy and Paddy O' Duffy who is an external member. The role of the committee is to review the proposed strategic and business plans, examine budgets for each calendar year and proposed acquisitions via loan finance. The committee met on three occasions in 2013 and on three occasions in 2014. They reviewed the business plan for 2012- 2015, the proposed budgets for 2014, 2015 and the feasibility of proposed development acquisitions.

3. Human Resources and Succession: (Chair, Fr. Pat Carolan): The committee members are Fr Pat Carolan and Jane Doyle. The role of the committee is to review the company's human resources policies, staffing levels and remuneration of staff. The committee met on two occasions in 2013 and two occasions in 2014 and reviewed and reviewed proposed changes to the staff structures, staffing roles and remuneration.

Circle VHA Staff

Circle VHA employs a range of staff to deliver our housing management and estate management services to our tenants and residents. All our staff has relevant expertise, professional capacity and previous experience of working in their area of responsibility in commercial, statutory and voluntary agencies.

Chief Executive: Justin O'Brien

Finance Manager: Anne O'Meara

Finance Administration Staff:

Anna O'Brien, Paul Maher, Gemma Burtenshaw

Senior Housing Officer: Tom Gifford

Housing Officers: Áine Ni Mhearáin, Neil Brown, Amanda Kavanagh, Tara Breen

Development Manager: Pat Costelloe

Office Manager: Wendy Flynn

Property Manager: Aidan Roth

Receptionist: Emma O'Brien

Operations Administrator: Aideen O'Neill

Maintenance Operative: Lar Hanway

Caretakers:

Ken Smith, Gregor Laskiewicz, Derek McNally

We are currently in the process of recruiting additional staff for the increased scale of our social housing and facilities management.



Peadar Kearney House

Circle VHA Current Housing Schemes

At present Circle VHA's housing stock is spread geographically throughout the county areas of Dublin, South Dublin, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown and Kildare County Councils. Our current housing schemes are located in some 25 separate schemes alongside a range of dispersed units in the greater Dublin area. These schemes range in scale from 149 units to smaller scale provision in mixed tenure schemes to individual dispersed units. Circle VHA has benefited from the Part V planning legislation which enabled the acquisition of social housing in mixed tenure schemes across the Dublin region. In some eight schemes we provide both the social and facilities management services in an integrated manner.

Circle VHA is primarily a general needs housing provider and all the families and persons that we house are approved applicants from the local authority housing waiting lists. We have also provided housing both in designated funded schemes to families and individuals who were homeless. There is an increased demand for social housing in the Dublin area and an increased scale of homelessness which all local authorities and approved housing bodies are struggling to address.

Our current tenant population is primarily in the 25-44 age groups and some 79% of our accommodation is for families with children. These families' children are primarily under 13 years of age. We make determined efforts to provide support to families and children where this is required and we link families to the relevant services. Some 21% of our accommodation is provided to single persons. Some 79% of our tenant population are Irish born citizens and some 21% are families and persons who have the right to reside in Ireland. The latter population come from over 30 different countries across the globe. This trend reflects current social housing need and the in migration of persons into the country in the past 15 years. This diversity of persons from Europe and Africa presents new challenges in our housing management. The diversity also offers considerable vibrancy in our housing schemes. The provision of stable good quality housing has enhanced the life chances and opportunities for all our tenants.

All our housing schemes are stable and settled and there is a small scale void rate and re-letting of our social housing units. In some four of our schemes staff engaged with tenants and organised clean up days and social activities for tenants and their children.

We also work with our tenants to establish Tenant Forums across our schemes whereby tenants' views on collective housing and estate management issues can be communicated to our staff and where activities for tenants can be arranged.

Our housing management services were delivered effectively across our different schemes. During 2013 a postal Tenant Satisfaction Survey was conducted by an external researcher, Taemur Consulting. The summary results were as follows:

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2013: In August 2013 we commissioned a new survey by Taemur Consulting. The response rate was at 46%. The overall findings were very similar to the 2011 survey results

Satisfaction with the Quality of their Home/ Condition of their Property/Neighbourhood: Circle VHA tenants were very or fairly satisfied with the quality of their homes (94%), with the condition of their home (90%), and the neighbourhood in which they live (85%). These findings were an improvement on the 2011 findings.

Satisfaction with Staff for Obtaining Help/Being Respectful: The Circle VHA staff has high satisfaction ratings. This concerns the following- easy to contact (97%), securing assistance (96%), respectful and courteous (96%) and helpful (96%).

Tenant Interview: 99% stated that they were made to feel welcome at their interview, 97% said that they felt respected and listened to and 96% and 94% said that the basis of the interview was explained and that they were given adequate information.

Tenant Induction: A majority (64%) attended Tenant Induction courses and 96% found the courses useful. There has been a reduction in the scale of tenants participating in Tenant Induction processes as there has been an increase in the level of tenants being accommodated on social leasing schemes in dispersed settings on an incremental basis which makes the tenant induction process less viable to undertake.

These results are affirming in terms of the scale of response and the overall positive feedback from our tenants on the delivery of our housing management services. The survey results also pointed to where we needed to improve the quality and efficiency of our housing management services. Circle VHA was also awarded an Excellence in Business Awards 2013 and 2014 by the Public Sector Magazine which is a further recognition of the quality of our housing management services.



Planting Day at Beechpark, Leixlip



Old Chocolate Factory

Scheme Locations

The below is a brief profile of each housing scheme in each local authority area.



Kilmainham Bank, Dublin 8

Dublin City Council

Pelletstown Manor, Ashtown, Dublin 15

CVHA manages 10 units under RAS scheme on behalf of Dublin City Council.

The Old Chocolate Factory, Kilmainham, Dublin 8

CVHA manages 12 social housing units on behalf of Dublin City Council.

Richmond Hall, Richmond Road, Fairview, Dublin 3

CVHA owns 7 social housing units.

Kilmainham Bank, Emmett Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8

CVHA owns 19 social housing units in a 100 unit development.

Dublin City Council Unsold Affordable Units:

Dublin City Council has made an arrangement for us to manage 16 unsold affordable units in different locations within the city. They have been allocated to people who have been homeless.

Royal Canal Court, Ashtown

We own 7 units of accommodation in this development.

Waterways, Rathborne Villas, Ashtown Dublin 15

This scheme comprises 12 social housing units under Circle VHA ownership.

Lansdowne Gate, Drimnagh, Dublin 12

CVHA owns 28 units and manages 28 units under RAS scheme on behalf of Dublin City Council.

Sean Tracey House, Dublin 1

We have undertaken the management of the newly constructed award winning scheme of 53 apartments.

Bridgefoot Court, Dublin 8

We manage 17 RAS units of accommodation for Dublin City Council.

Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8:

We have undertaken the management of 16 units of accommodation in this residential commercial development.

Thornton Heights, Inchicore, Dublin 8

This major regenerations scheme of 75 units of accommodation is now fully occupied. We have worked in partnership with Dublin City Council and the St Michael's Regeneration Board regarding the management of the scheme. This scheme replaces the old St Michael's estate.

Peadar Kearney House, Dublin 1

We have undertaken the management of this regenerated scheme for the old Liberty House on behalf of Dublin City Council. It consists of 56 units of accommodation.

Tyrone Court, Thomas Davis Street, Inchicore, Dublin 8

This scheme is now occupied and consists of 36 social housing units in a 128 residential development.

Royal Canal Ashtown Dublin

This scheme consists of 60 units of accommodation in 2 separate apartment blocks. The units have become available via a leasing arrangement with NAMA/NARPS.



Peadar Kearney House

South Dublin County Council

Deerpark Estate, Kiltipper Way, Tallaght, Dublin 24

CVHA owns 149 social housing units in a mixed tenure scheme of 635 units.

Stocking Well, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14

CVHA owns 40 social housing units and manages 21 units under RAS scheme on behalf of South Dublin County Council.

South Dublin County Council Social Leasing

We are currently managing some dispersed 87 units in the county area.

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

The Rectory, Stepside, Dublin 18

CVHA manages 12 units under RAS scheme on behalf of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

The Cubes 8, Beacon South Quarter, Sandymount, Dublin 18

CVHA owns 17 social housing units and manages 17 units under RAS scheme on behalf of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Harbour Court, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

CVHA manages 4 units under RAS scheme on behalf of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Social Leasing

We have undertaken the management of primarily 31 dispersed units in the county area.



DLRCC Social leasing units,



Deerpark Estate - clean up day

Fingal County Council

Bremore Meadows, Hamlet Lane, Balbriggan

CVHA owns 12 units of accommodation in a gated development.

Holywell, Swords, Co. Dublin

We have entered into an arrangement with Fingal County Council to manage 44 unsold affordable units in the above estate in Swords. This is a leasing arrangement for a 5 year period under the Rental Accommodation Scheme programme. Currently 31 units are occupied.

The Hastings, Balbriggan

This is a similar arrangement to Holywell where we will manage 33 unsold affordable units in the estate for a 5 year period under the RAS programme. Currently 22 units are occupied.

Red Arches Baldoyle

CAS funding has enabled the acquisition of 7 units of accommodation in this development.

Kildare County Council

Beech Park, Leixlip, Co. Kildare

CVHA owns 34 social units in a 300 unit development.

New Schemes 2015

The following schemes are to be occupied before the year end. Circle VHA is exploring the feasibility of acquiring other units of accommodation via loan finance and CAS/CALF loans from DECLG. We are also planning to undertake the design and build of new schemes on sites made available by local authorities.

Statement of Financial Activities

for the Year Ended 31st December 2013

	2013	2012
	€	€
Rent income	1,514,895	1,377,781
SLL grant	162,802	161,467
Management fees	64,437	74,414
Annual agency fee	101,956	78,020
Caretaker services	26,432	26,432
Development allowances	-	14,713
Service charge income	204,829	193,899
Other income	13,973	36,266
Turnover	2,089,324	1,962,99
Resources Expended		
Administrative expenses	(1,483,777)	(1,273,010)
Operating Surplus	605,547	689,982
Interest receivable	33,187	39,535
Surplus on Income and Expenditure	638,734	729,517
Balance Sheet at 31st December 2013		
	2013	2012
	€	€
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	66,010,764	66,003,090
Current Assets		
Debtors	549,464	452,475
Cash at bank and in hand	2,967,918	2,405,715
	3,517,382	2,858,190
Creditors (Amounts falling due within one year)	(269,402)	(241,270)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	3,247,980	2,616,920
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	69,258,744	68,620,010
CREDITORS: (Amounts falling due after more than one year)	(65,974,699)	(65,974,699)
Net Assets	3,284,045	2,645,311
Reserves		
Income and expenditure account	1,845,324	1,513,023
Reserve for future maintenance	1,438,721	1,132,288
Net Assets	3,284,045	2,645,311

Review of Financial Performance

Circle VHA continued to achieve strong financial performance in 2013. The surplus for the financial year was €638,734.

Turnover

The income of the company increased to €2,122,511, an increase of 6% on 2012 results. The primary source of income is rental income (71.4%), which amounted to €1,514,895 in 2013, a 9.95% increase on the previous year.

Expenditure

The expenditure in the year was €1,483,777; an increase of 16.4% from the previous year. This increase is largely due to the recruitment of additional staff for current and planned new housing schemes. There has been no significant increase in our housing unit expenditure costs in the year. This indicates our cost efficiency and management relative to the growth of our housing management in the year.

Reserves

At the year end, total reserves were €3,284,045; within this total reserve balance there is a designated reserve for future maintenance. In 2013 a contribution of €306,433 was made to this reserve, increasing this reserve to 1,438,721 as at 31st December 2013.

Reserves for Future Maintenance

At present Circle VHA sets aside 30% of rental income generated from owned properties and 6% of rental income generated from properties managed on behalf of third parties as contribution to this reserve. 2013 was Circle VHA's eight year providing social rented housing, at present the bulk of our housing stock is relatively young. This allows us the opportunity to establish a strong reserve to enable us to maintain the value and quality of the housing we provide in the future. A new stock condition survey is being undertaken. This will enable us to assess the current conditions of our properties and the appropriateness of our current policy on the contribution made on annual basis to the reserve fund for future maintenance.



President Michael D Higgins, Lord Mayor Christy Burke and Circle VHA Board Members and Staff at Thornton Heights Official Opening, September 9th 2014.

What our Tenants say

Some comments from our tenants 2013-2014



Margaret O'Connor | Heuston South Quarter

It is lovely. I would not swap it for anything. Circle VHA staff give a fantastic service. The affordability of the rent here is superb and the energy rating is great. I came from a private rented sector flat which I could not afford anymore.



Caroline McNulty | Thornton Heights

It is amazing and brilliant living in Thornton Heights. It is like winning the lotto. My home is great and the community is coming together. Circle VHA are so far so good as a landlord. The upkeep of the scheme is well done, it is clean environment and it is being well maintained by Circle VHA.



Janusz Siwicki | Thornton Heights

It is very fine living here in Thornton Heights. It is a very big spacious apartment. We are very happy living here. It is also very affordable compared to the private rented sector. Circle VHA do a very good job managing the new scheme.

Paul Sheridan | Ashtown, Block C

It is great living in Ashtown. The comfort is great, it is a really warm unit of accommodation. My children now have their own rooms. It is great being housed by Circle VHA. The Housing Officer always responds to queries and concerns.

Terry Fagan | Sean Treacy House

Sean Treacy House is in the heart of the city. As the local historian it is great place to live in. It is secure and the neighbours are great. It is a fantastic scheme which is well kept. Circle VHA are a good landlord and if there are any issues or queries they are dealt with and responded to.



Alan Morgan | Thornton Heights

The actual complex is beautiful, spacious and luxurious, it is top quality. We have been provided with a beautiful home. Circle VHA provide a good quality service. They show respect to their tenants and respond back to tenant's queries. Circle VHA care and provide a good service.



Sandra Dunne | Heuston South Quarter

It feels like coming home. It is great apartment. It is very convenient with access to public transport, shops and other amenities. Circle VHA provide a good supportive service and they are accessible. The affordable rent here is great and it takes pressure off and stops me worrying over especially in the current economic environment.

Noel Brazil | Peadar Kearney House

It is excellent for me living in Peadar Kearney House. The consultation on the design and a different design from the old Liberty House has worked. It is now being run for people. Circle VHA are running the scheme well. It is great to have a caretaker there who cleans and tidies the common areas. Circle VHA are doing a decent job.



Elaine McDonald | Rathborne, Ashtown

It is absolutely fantastic living here. We feel at home and we love it here. My children are like new children. There is good public transport and local facilities here in Ashtown.



Khulan Tsend Ayush | Ashtown

Ashtown is a really nice place to live in. Our apartment is really nice. The location is very good with good public transport. I am happy with Circle VHA as my landlord.

Strategic Planning and Direction

In 2014/15 the Board undertook a review of the previous Strategic Plan of 2013-16 and adapted a new Strategic and Business Plan for the 2015-2018 period. The external policy and housing environment was reviewed and the key strategic goals for the next 3 years were defined and approved with a range of key performance indicators. The Board reviewed the Social Housing Strategy 2020 and how Circle VHA could achieve its vision and mission. The Board has established five key strategic goals to direct and guide the company:

- A. Grow the scale of our housing management provision to 1500 units by end of 2017 via acquisitions, design and build, leasing/stock transfer/mergers
- B. Develop the quality and effectiveness of our internal processes and management systems to ensure a robust and adaptable organisation that provides quality housing, facilities and corporate services to its tenants and stakeholders
- C. Improve and develop the quality of our housing and estate management services to our tenants
- D. Promote the brand of Circle VHA as being a trusted social housing provider of good quality social housing and facilities management services
- E. Maintain and develop the financial stability of the company so that the core activities of the company are sustainable for current social housing provision and future growth

Circle VHA wants to engage actively with DECLG, local authorities, NAMA and all other external stakeholders in the delivery of new social housing as outlined in the new social housing strategy. We want to grow our current social housing provision in the existing and the adjoining local authority areas. The current funding framework via loan finance, P&A and CALF has limitations in terms of the increase in acquisition costs and the maximum threshold of 30% CALF funding available – the average CALF funding is around 20%. This places a demand upon our reserves and our borrowing capacity. The available amount of distressed assets for acquisition is reducing and the design and build of new units will be a primary provider of new social housing. The new Social Housing Strategy 2020 provides new strategic directions for the delivery of social housing. This is both an opportunity and challenge for Circle VHA to respond to the new policy and delivery frameworks. Our new strategy is aiming to meet the challenge of delivering new housing and the continued delivery of good quality housing service to our tenants.







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