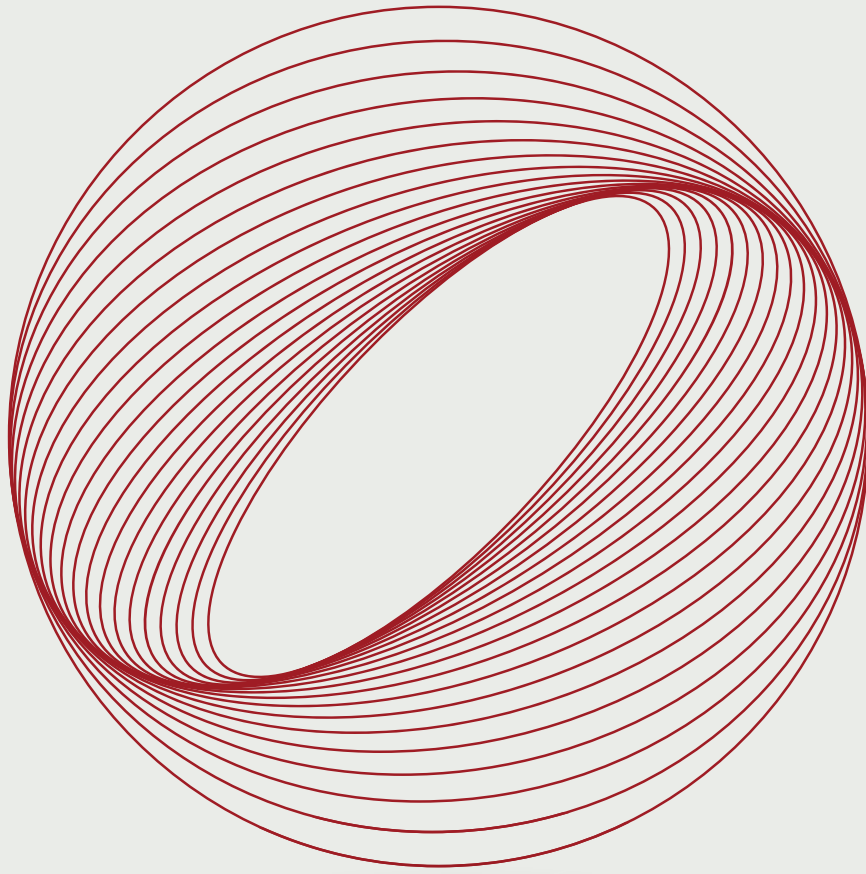


# circle

MORE THAN HOUSING



## ANNUAL REPORT

### 2018

When empowerment meets honesty, excellence, accountability and respect we can accomplish anything.





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CIRCLE | MORE THAN HOUSING  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2018

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CIRCLE | MORE THAN HOUSING

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CIRCLE | MORE THAN HOUSING

STATEMENT FROM  
THE CHAIRPERSON

Aoife Watters

I am pleased to present my second annual chairperson's statement and our annual report for the year ended 31st December 2018 on behalf of the Board of Directors of Circle Voluntary Housing Association.

2018 in Circle has been a year of great change and growth in an environment of ever increasing pressure on the housing sector. In recognition of the rising demand for housing, we have built on the comprehensive change programme initiated in 2017. We have fortified our resources to meet head-on the difficulties facing our sector and with a realigned concentration on our tenants, created the solid foundations that will allow us to achieve our strategic goals and objectives in response to the housing crisis Ireland still struggles with.

*During 2018, we continued our drive for corporate governance excellence and best practice leadership. We adopted a comprehensive governance manual and recruited a significant number of new additional board and committee members. Each of these new members brings strong specialist skills and experience to our leadership group and are strongly aligned to our strategic priorities. It is a testament to the reputation and profile of Circle, that we have been successful in attracting non-executive members of such impressive calibre.*

The transformation of Circle has proceeded in earnest and our team has grown from 20 to almost 40 employees. Their expertise, drive and focus has created an enthusiastic and positive solution-based environment which challenges itself in a clear and transparent manner. The partnership between executive, staff, board and committees is strong and progressive with a clear shared vision that's lived day to day.

Circle will continue to seek innovative solutions to delivering quality homes for people who need them. Our relationships with our Local Authority partners, developers and funders steadfastly underpinned by strong governance will, I feel, continue to enable us to progress as a leader within the sector.

Ultimately Circle is committed to meeting the needs of its tenants and offering them respectful sustainable housing solutions that create communities they can be proud to live in. This remains the organisation's ongoing aim as it looks towards its future.

*Our Tenants have always been the centre of what we do and embedding our "WE HEAR" values will allow us to foster an environment that demonstrates measurable benefits. Willingness, Empowerment, Honesty, Excellence, Accountability and Respect create the canvas for us to ensure our tenants are the focus of our purpose not allowing the business at hand to negate the human element that must prevail.*

Following on from the feedback garnered by the tenant satisfaction survey conducted in 2017 Circle introduced a property services team which regularly seeks feedback on the services provided and allows us to monitor satisfaction levels. Furthermore, our income management team are an innovative solution to tenant requests for assistance and guidance on the financial issues they face. This tenant focus is pivotal to how we operate as a landlord.

I would like to sincerely thank my fellow Board and committee members for their dedication and commitment throughout 2018 and I look forward to their continued support in the year ahead. Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the Executive team and staff, led by John Hannigan for their professionalism, commitment and passion over the past year. I am privileged to work with you all.

Aoife Watters

AOIFE WATTERS

Chairperson of the Board of Circle VHA



CIRCLE | MORE THAN HOUSING

STATEMENT FROM  
**THE CEO**



John Hannigan

This is my second statement as CEO of Circle Voluntary Housing Association and it comes following a year of real transformation. Our Board have been steadfast in their objectives of ensuring better governance, improved services and improved delivery of quality housing.

In 2018 we implemented our action plan for change, a hugely ambitious undertaking which was met with absolute dedication and commitment by the whole Circle team. It also allowed us to take stock of the expertise and passion that has paved the way for the organisation to become a cornerstone of a sector that is consistently challenged whilst rising to meet the needs of a heavily burdened system.

*In 2018 we have recruited a significant number of new staff, building our structure and our skills to enable us to deliver on our purpose (to deliver quality homes and innovative integrated housing solutions to individuals and families in Ireland) with a view to ensuring our vision is attained on a daily basis (making a difference by producing quality homes for people in housing need).*

We now have an organisation that is ready and able to deliver. Our focus over the coming years is to build upon the work we have started and we now have the team to do it.

As active members of the Housing Alliance, a grouping of 6 of Irelands largest AHBs and the ICSH, Circle are facing the difficulties in our sector head on. Over the last 12 months I, along with the CEO's of Cluid Housing, Cooperative Housing Ireland, Oaklee Housing, Respond and Tuath Housing, have brought our organisations together in a collaborative approach to addressing the issues facing the sector and making a concerted effort to find innovative solutions. This cooperation and collaborative approach ensures we can all gain from the excellence within the sector, working together to ensure better practice, innovation and improved delivery.

As a sector there are strong interdependencies and we are actively strengthening our relationships with our stakeholders whilst pursuing a more tenant focused delivery. I'm grateful for the support of our Board in delivering on our organisational objectives and for their support to our management and staff teams in the leadership and integrity they invoke.

*I would like to thank our Board - Circle has a Voluntary Board which is extremely generous in giving of its time and expertise, the commitment of our Board will, I believe, allow us as an organisation to rise to the challenges the continuing housing crisis presents whilst ensuring that our responses are not only practical but considered and compassionate whilst being transparent and accountable.*

And finally I would like to thank the staff and management of Circle for their support and dedication, their passion and professionalism that is always accompanied by compassion and empathy.

JOHN HANNIGAN

Chief Executive Officer of Circle VHA



## CIRCLE | BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Circle Annual Report 2018

### AOIFE WATTERS

#### *Chairperson*

Aoife Watters is CEO of Glasnevin Trust. She is an accountant by profession and has worked previously in the private sector as Director of Finance and Corporate Services in Depaul Ireland and Audit Manager in Brenson Lawlor Chartered Accountants. Aoife holds a Bachelor of Business Studies from Trinity College, is qualified as a Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA) and has completed the Irish Taxation Institute (AITI) exams.



### GRÁINNE NÍ DHUBHGHAILL

#### *Board Member*

Gráinne Ní Dhubhghaill is a solicitor and senior legal advisor with Sodexo Ireland Limited (part of the Sodexo Group, an international integrated service provider). She has previously worked in private practice, as well as in-house in financial services, asset finance and on infrastructure projects, including social housing projects in the UK.

### JANE DOYLE

#### *Board Member*

Jane Doyle is a town planner by profession. She has previously worked in that role with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and was a board member of An Bord Pleaneala. She is currently a planning consultant.



### CHRIS ELLISON

#### *Board Member*

Chris Ellison is a consultant to housing associations. He was 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

#### *Board Member*

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 University College Dublin.



### BRIAN SHEFFLIN

#### *Board Member*

Brian Shefflin is a director with KPMG Corporate Finance. His primary focus is on property and financial services transactions across a wide range of sectors. He works with a range of finance providers and increasingly international non-bank lenders on new development / acquisition projects, debt re-financings, debt buy backs, NAMA exits, and debt / hedging strategies. His previous experience is in audit.



### JOAN GREEN

#### *Board Member*

Joan Green is a career technologist who has worked in finance and technology for the past 35 years. She holds an MSc in IT Security. She is a keen cyclist and watersports enthusiast.



### FR PAT CAROLAN

#### *Board Member*

Fr Pat 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 Oblate Basketball Club in Inchicore, which provides a range of sporting and community activities for the Inchicore area.



### JEROME CASEY

#### *Board Member*

Jerome Casey is an economist by profession. He has provided economic analysis for the construction and transport industries over the past 40 years.



### CHRIS WHITE

#### *Board Member*

A career in the not for profit sector has led Chris to a variety of roles in various charities and not for profit organisations. Chris is currently the Group CEO of the National Council for the Blind of Ireland, one of the largest charities in the country, caring for 54,000 people with sight loss. Prior to that post he was CEO of Boardmatch, Ireland's Corporate Governance Charity. However Social Housing has been the major passion of his career, having been CEO of the Sue Ryder Foundation and Head of Development at the Irish Council for Social Housing.



The Board of Directors *Continued:*



### **GARRET TYNAN**

#### ***Board Member***

Garret has been the European Head of Infrastructure and Project Finance at Kroll Bond Rating Agency since 2017. Prior to this, Garret spent five years with KfW IPEX-Bank GmbH in London, where he was responsible for originating and executing project and leveraged finance transactions in the UK, Europe and North America. Before moving to London, Garret worked at DEPFA BANK in Dublin for nine years where he initially focused on Public Private Partnerships/PFI, Utilities and Leveraged Finance in the UK and, in later years, was responsible for restructuring and winding down the bank's global infrastructure portfolio. Garret is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Ireland and started his career at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Garret holds a BA in Accounting & Finance and an MBS in Accounting from Dublin City University as well as graduate diplomas in International Financial Reporting Standards and Management & Applications of IT in Accounting together with certificates in Directors Duties and Responsibilities (ICAI) and Complex Financial Instruments.



### **MÁIRÍN Ó CUIREÁIN**

#### ***Board Member***

Máirín has a postgraduate qualification in Community Development and a Masters in Business Administration. She has been working with marginalised urban communities and a broad range of stakeholders for over 20 years. Her work has focused on advocating on behalf of the community and delivering supports and resources to families and individuals in areas such as access to employment or training; housing and accommodation and health. She has also been involved in broader environmental and public realm activities, relating back to her undergraduate Degree in Landscape Horticulture. She has recently taken up a new role working in Waterways Ireland as Dublin Docklands Development Manager.

## **CIRCLE | LEADERSHIP TEAM**

*Circle Annual Report 2018*

### **JOHN HANNIGAN**

#### ***CEO***

John Hannigan (MBA), Chief Executive Officer of Circle has extensive experience in the Housing sector and is a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing, Fellow of the Association of Certified Accountants and member of the Institute of Directors. John is also a member of the Governing Board of the Chartered Institute of Housing (UK).



### **ANNE O'MEARA**

#### ***Director of Finance and Corporate Services***

Anne O'Meara, Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Deputy CEO, and Company Secretary of Circle. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Certified Accountants and holds a Degree in Business Management. Prior to her time with Circle Anne was employed in the property and facilities management industry and the financial services sector for over 10 years. Anne is the Republic of Ireland's representative on the Housing SORP Working Party.



### **ELAINE REILLY**

#### ***Executive Assistant***

Elaine Reilly, Executive Assistant to the CEO, has over 25 years of experience in the financial services and not for profit sectors specialising in insurance, risk management and compliance where she has led programmes in the delivery of, amongst others, quality systems, policy, audit and change management.



The Leadership Team *Continued:*



LIZ CLARKE

Head of Housing

Liz Clarke, Head of Housing, has over 18 years’ experience in expanding access to social housing, building sustainable communities and leading and delivery of housing models within the homeless sector and has led on quality standards, mergers, services and housing developments, training and strategic planning services to various charities and non-profit organisations



RUSSELL GRAINGE

Head of Property Services

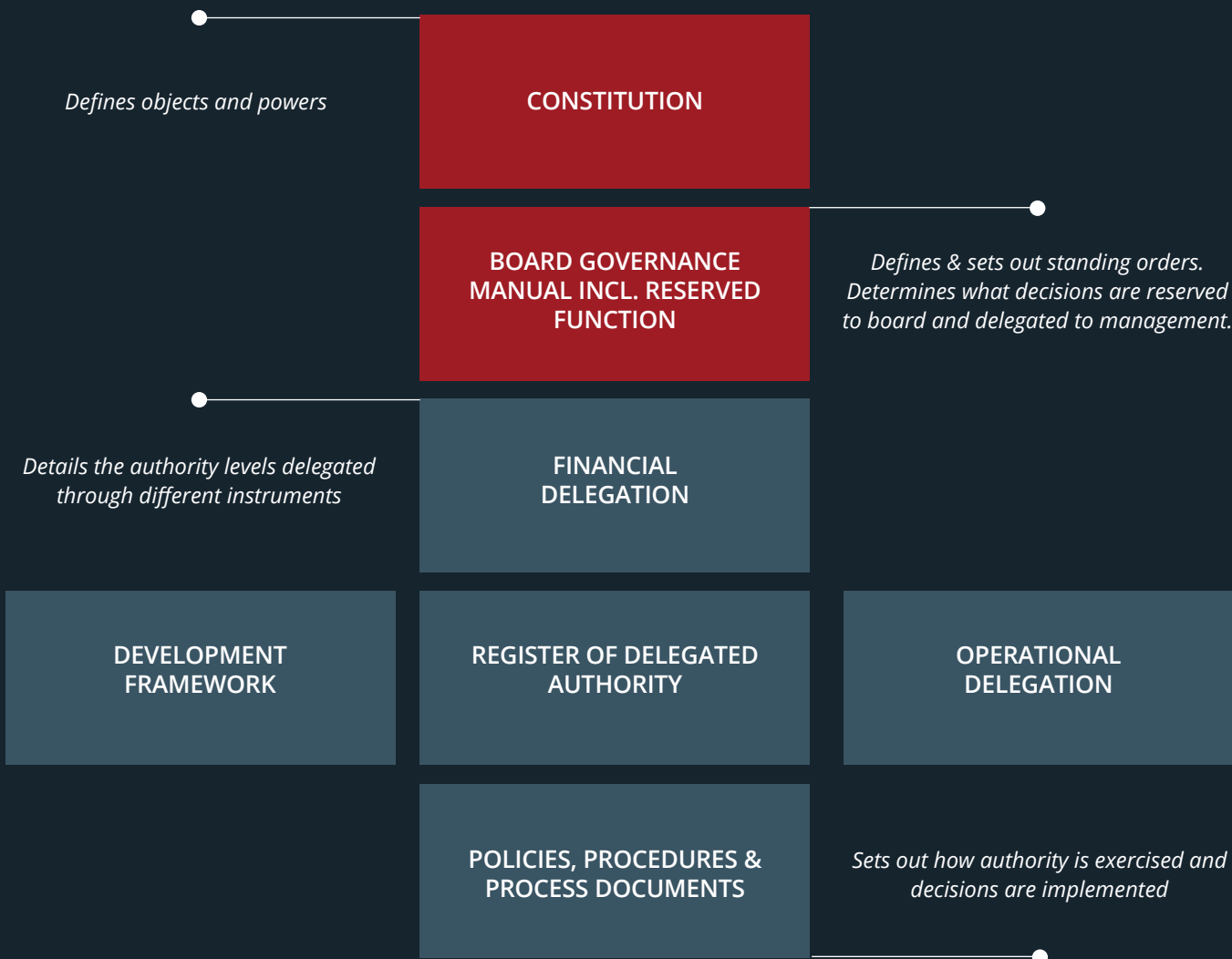
Russell Grainge, Head of Property Services, has extensive experience in asset management, mainly through repairs and maintenance contracting, where he has managed teams providing property maintenance and refurbishment services to local authorities and regional and national housing associations in the UK.



**Housing:** Tara Breen, Orla Burke, Liz Clarke, Gavin Connelly, Tracy Dawson, Titilola Ologbonori and Brendan Pierce. **Property Services:** Colm Barnes, Russell Grainge, Lar Hanway, Clodagh Keating, Greg Laskiewicz, Patrick McDonnell, Aidan Roth, Shauna Rutledge, and Ken Smith. **Finance and Corporate Services:** Elson Chabvi, Clare Creely, Lisa Donnery, Aisling Flynn, Elaine Keogh, Muriel Koyce, Richa Kumar, Anna O'Brien, Anne O'Meara and Tadhg Whelan. **Development:** Anne Bacon, Pat Costelloe, David Linehan and Aine NiMhearain. **CEO Office:** John Hannigan and Elaine Reilly

CIRCLE | VHA GOVERNANCE  
FRAMEWORK

Circle Annual Report 2018



The graphic above illustrates the elements included in Circle Scheme of Governance and the relationship between them.



## CIRCLE | MORE THAN HOUSING COMMITTEES

Circle Annual Report 2018

### FINANCE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE (FARC)



Chaired by Brian Shefflin

Other members include:  
Jerome Casey, Larry Tuomey,  
Damian Kennedy.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE (FARC) IS TO:

- Oversee the efficient financial management of CVHA, including the collection, investment, and outlay of all monies utilised by the organisation
- Ensure that CVHA reports on its financial performance in line with appropriate financial reporting standards
- Ensure that CVHA operates a robust system of internal control and meets its compliance obligations
- Oversee the management and mitigation of risks facing the organisation.

### REMUNERATION AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE



Chaired by Jane Doyle

Other members include:  
Aoife Watters, Fr Patsy Carolan,  
Chris White, Eamonn McGee  
and Amanda Snee.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE REMUNERATION AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (RNC) IS TO:

- In relation to Remuneration: to develop clear and robust policies and practices in relation to remuneration generally in the organisation to ensure that CVHA can attract and retain the right people and, in relation to the CEO, to determine his/her conditions of employment
- In relation to nominations to the Board: to renew and refresh the Board and Board Committees with suitably qualified and experienced people both as vacancies arise and where opportunities to strengthen the Board are presented.

### DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY COMMITTEE



Chaired by Jim Murphy

Other members include:  
David Williams, Jerome Casey  
Garret Tynan and Keith Gilmore.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY COMMITTEE (DSC) IS TO:

- Assess proposed approaches to development to increase the number of properties managed by CVHA and so fulfil its mission to provide housing for people in need
- Assess individual development opportunities to determine how well these fit with CVHA's strategy
- Approve and/or make recommendations to the Board in relation to the above in accordance with the Delegated Authority levels in the Development Framework
- The Committee will review its terms of reference and its effectiveness annually and propose any necessary changes to its terms of reference to the Board.

### IMPLEMENTATION GROUP



Chaired by Chris Ellison

Other members include:  
Aoife Watters, Gráinne Ní  
Dhubhghaill, Joan Green and  
Máirín Ó Cuireáin.

#### THE IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (IG) WAS SET UP IN ORDER TO:

- Monitor progress and advances in delivering the implementation plan adopted by the Board on the basis of the CT report received in 2017 and to provide oversight around governance and budget.



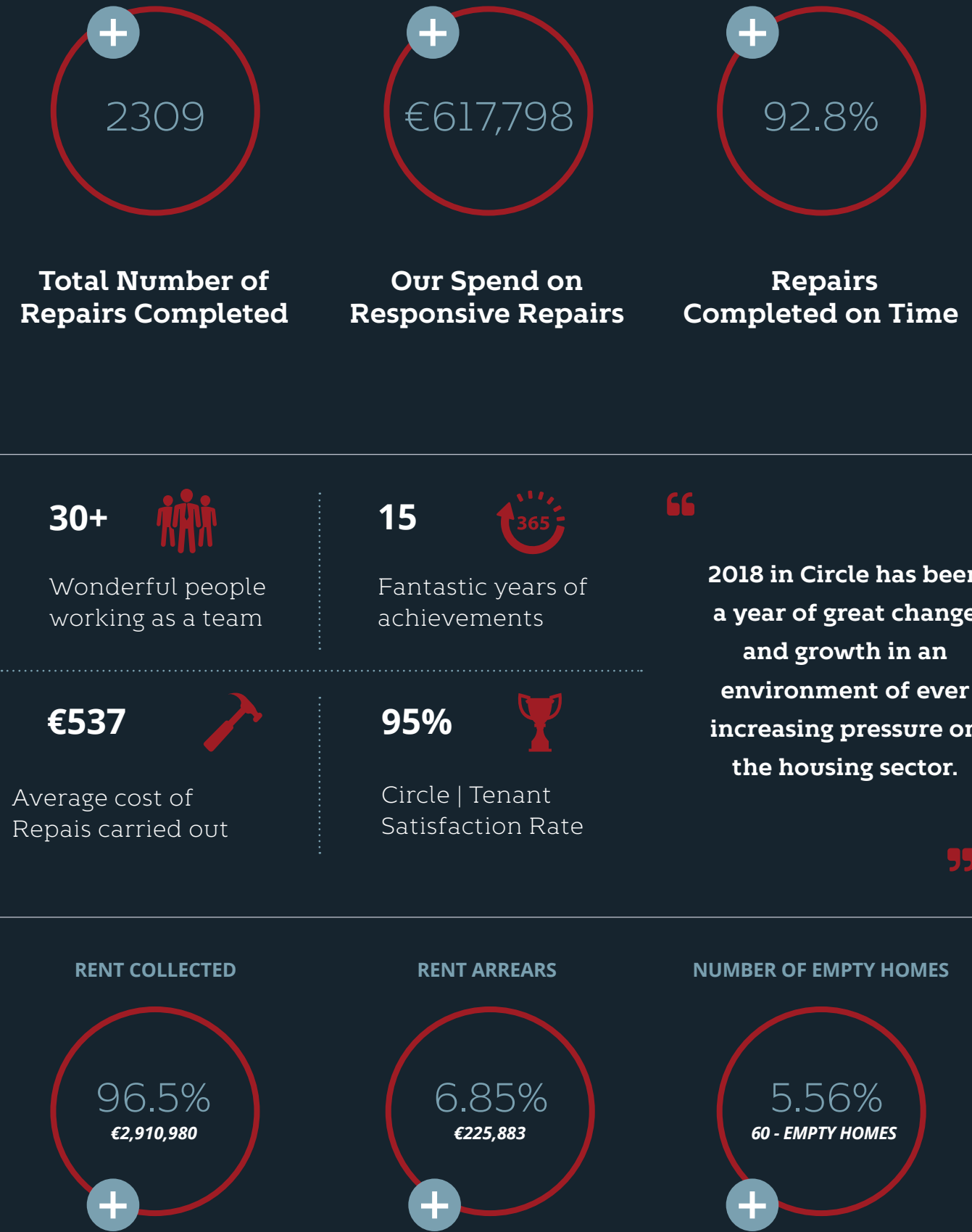
CIRCLE |  
FACTS & FIGURES

Circle Annual Report 2018

DWELLINGS	AT 31ST DECEMBER 2017	AT 31ST DECEMBER 2018
DWELLING HOMES OWNED	406	427
DWELLING HOMES MANAGED	642	651
TOTAL SOCIAL HOUSING HOMES	1048	1078
HOMES PROVIDED WITH ESTATE MANAGEMENT SERVICES	1319	1319
TOTAL HOMES OWNED AND MANAGED BY CIRCLE	2367	2397

<div><div></div><div>95%</div></div> <div>HAPPY WITH THE LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY CIRCLE</div>	<div><div></div><div>93%</div></div> <div>HAPPY WITH THE QUALITY OF REPAIRS MADE TO THEIR HOME</div>	<div><div></div><div>93%</div></div> <div>HAPPY WITH THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THEIR HOME</div>
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CIRCLE | MORE THAN HOUSING







“

*Circle's purpose is to deliver quality homes and innovative integrated housing solutions to individuals and families in Ireland. Our vision is to make a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need.*

”

## CIRCLE | OUR VALUES

### VALUES - WE HEAR

Circle Annual Report 2018

#### VALUES

The actions we take underpin our vision to make a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need. At Circle, we firmly believe that how we interact with our customers, communities, colleagues and key stakeholders is of fundamental importance. Our passionate commitment to caring about our tenants and the services we deliver has led to the development of our core values - six behaviour-based principles that speak directly to the characteristics we hold high.

#### WE HEAR

##### WILLINGNESS

Willingness to embody all our values in a driven manner

##### EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment of our staff and tenants

##### HONESTY

Honesty in everything we do and information we present

##### EXCELLENCE

Excellence in the delivery of services and the homes that we provide

##### ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability for all matters relating to excellent governance and delivery of services

##### RESPECT

Respect towards all those connected to CVHA in any element of our work.





## CIRCLE | 2018 IN REVIEW

### DEVELOPMENT

*Circle Annual Report 2018*

*Circle development department embarked on an ambitious expansion plan which was implemented and supported by the Board in 2017 and has been highly successful to date in delivering homes for the most vulnerable in society.*

*The development team focuses on three strands to increase stock levels for Circle including Turn Key Acquisitions, which is acquiring a number of homes in bulk as part of a new development. Circle are currently contracted on two such schemes designed to yield 80 homes by end 2019 start of 2020.*

***Fairfields Development in conjunction with Frisby Construction in Waterford which will be Circle's first project delivery in the region, and a further 40 homes in Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow.***

In parallel with the turn key method of delivery, one off house acquisitions are being acquired for those who require a specific need of housing, i.e elderly, disabled and Circle have a projected yield of 30-40 homes through this method for 2019.

Portfolio acquisitions have been fruitful for the organisation in the past and the recent completion of 10 apartments in a portfolio in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford has opened up the South East region for the organisation.

Activity has also been busy on the Part V acquisitions in conjunction with various local authorities which shows the level of construction activity ramping up. Circle has recently acquired 3 such homes in Portmarnock and a further 6 homes in Walkinstown through this method. A further 30 homes are in the pipeline for Part V homes this year. Direct design and build

is the new mantra from government for the AHB sector and on this front Circle has been involved in a number of areas including:

- Acquisition of residential site with full planning permission for 28 units in Santry, Dublin which will be the organisation's first acquisition and direct design and build.
- 'Housing with Supports' in Inchicore will set the benchmark for independent living into the future and is a future vision for all such developments of its kind. In conjunction with Dublin City Council, The Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government, Alone and the HSE, and will see supported living for 52 older persons.
- Railway Street, 47 homes also in partnership with Dublin City Council.

Circle, in line with our expansion plans, were awarded two housing agency portfolios which took place in counties Cork,





Limerick, Waterford and Wexford. These homes are currently under caretaker agreements and are set for delivery by Q4 2019.

The Development Department within Circle are always open to hearing about new opportunities with private builders, developers, land owners, and local authorities in particular regarding Part V homes and Housing Agency offers.

While turn key acquisitions and portfolio acquisitions are to the forefront of the organisation thoughts, we also consider sites with full planning. The organisation offers a full facility and tenant management services with recently appointing heads of each department.

Circle are also seeking portfolios to manage for social and private blocks.

***To the forefront are our tenants and living by our mantra 'More than Housing'***

## CIRCLE | 2018 IN REVIEW

### PROPERTY SERVICES

*Circle Annual Report 2018*

This year has seen a complete change in the way Circle looks to deliver the repairs and facilities management services going forward. The introduction of a dedicated Property Services team to undertake complete Asset Management of all of Circle's owned and managed stock has been a steep change in how the organisation delivers key services to tenants and maintains their homes.

Circle's new Property Services team is a dedicated resource made up of two Property Services Officers who handle all the organisation's repairs calls from tenants, and an Asset Repairs Officer who provides technical support and oversees delivery of maintenance in tenant's homes. The team is also supported by a Maintenance Operative who undertakes minor repairs and supervises contractors working on Circle's behalf.

***Further to this, the Property Services team also includes a Property Manager who oversees the delivery of all the organisation's Facilities Management services. The Property Manager is supported by three Caretakers who have front line responsibility for ensuring standards are maintained on several estates under Circle's management.***

As the Property Services team is a new feature for Circle, 2018 has seen a lot of focus on the recruiting and bedding in of new members of staff, reviewing policies and looking at new systems and processes to support the future delivery of core services such as Gas compliance and repairs and maintenance. This focus has also extended to looking at how the different teams within Circle should work together to provide overall services to our tenants.

A close working relationship between the Property Services, Housing and Development teams is vital to the organisation's success and therefore a great deal of time has been spent on bringing teams together to formulate methods of working efficiently and effectively.

The time and investment that has been committed during the year to put into place a dedicated Property Services team will provide a foundation for fit for purpose services in the longer term. A greater degree of focus has been put on key areas such as value for money through better procurement, delivery performance through better monitoring and reducing periods of vacancy in the delivery of empty homes through process engineering and closer contract management.

It is expected that during the coming year we will see gains in all these areas as the new Property Services team settles into the new ways of working and bring focus and renewed energy into delivering the repairs, maintenance and facilities management services to Circle's tenants.





# CIRCLE | 2018 IN REVIEW

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Circle Annual Report 2018

In 2018, Circle recognising the challenges facing housing staff on the frontline in responding to the need for a more holistic and community led approach to housing management undertook a review of the Housing and Property Management departments and services.

Changes as a result of this review were implemented throughout 2018, changing the nature of how Circle delivers its housing management services. A new overarching emphasis on the creation of tenancies that can be sustained was supported throughout the organisation. We now deliver our housing management services through two functional teams: one that covers income collection and the other that covers all aspects of tenancy and estate management.

Our Tenancy Service Officers had been finding an increase in requests for support from our tenants for debt advice and consequently evidencing the need for a new approach in supporting people to sustain their homes. The introduction of the Income Management Team and the new Income Officer role was a direct response to this review and feedback. It now means that our tenants can access early intervention, support and specialist advice, promoting a culture of social responsibility for our tenants and staff. The income and debt advice alleviate the need for tenants to borrow from institutions and encourage long term tenancy sustainment.

Our vision is “to make a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need”. It is therefore really important that both our staff and our tenants are aware of their social responsibilities to Circle to enable the ongoing delivery of quality services, quality homes and financial stability.

The Income Management team focus on early intervention as a matter of good practice and it promotes sustainable, long-term homes for people and families. The purpose of introducing the specialism of rent arrears management ensures consistency of practice across the organisation as

well as a tool to measure and improve our performance in income, arrears and asset management.

***Our 2018 review of roles across housing and property management allowed us to strengthen our approaches to how we work with people in securing and managing their new home and accessing and being part of a wider community. The Tenancy Service Officer is the first point of contact for all matters relating to tenancy and estate management. The role covers lettings and allocations, management of tenancies, including breach of tenancies, anti-social behaviour and all aspects of estate and neighbourhood management.***

The Tenancy Service Officers work with tenants, internal colleagues and external partners in designing and delivering high quality services that are tailored to meet the tenants and community needs. This approach allows other departments and staff members to focus on a customer led and centred approach to their work. Our Tenancy Service Officers have the capacity to focus on community based initiatives which encourages higher levels of participation and in doing so reduces the risk of tenants feeling isolated in their homes and communities.

This holistic approach to housing management, the role of the Tenancy Service Officer extends beyond technical matters such as repairs and rent collection to incorporate tenant liaison on issues such as addressing service complaints, anti-social behavior, liaison with external

stakeholders such as management agents, local authorities, the Gardai and community development organisations. The Tenancy Service Officers take an active role in the management of our developments and take on management company directorships and organising tenant/resident committees and/or forums.

The key to a successful social housing estate is the promotion of community development. Circle’s Tenancy Service Officers are responsible for liaising with tenants’

groups, support workers and external agencies to ensure our estates are desirable places to live.

Circle's property services team works closely with the housing management team to ensure efficient delivery of both housing and property services. There will often be an overlap in the responsibilities of the Tenancy Service Officers and Property Services Team and we believe this teamwork is essential in delivering successfully managed developments.





CIRCLE | OUR PEOPLE & THEIR  
HOUSING STORIES

Circle | More Than Housing

*Mary and her 3 children live in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC) area in a 3 bedroom house. Mary outlines her experience before she moved to her current home and her feelings on being informed of her new home and the impact it has had on her life.*

“Before I was offered accommodation from DLRCC with Circle Housing in 2017, I was a private tenant from 2006 up to 2016. I was on the housing list from 1999. I rented in total 6 different properties. On average I paid between approx. €1350 to €1650 rent per calendar month on one wage. I wasn’t entitled to any rent relief, bar rent tax credits from Revenue. We were excellent tenants, rents were paid on time and properties cared for to an extremely high standard. We put down roots in each property not expecting to have to vacate the properties. However due to spiralling rents and no security of tenure we had to vacate each property once the landlords gave notice to quit. I can only surmise market value led to a number of our tenancies being quit. 2016 was a catalyst for me as I could not live with the pressure anymore. I physically and mentally could not take the pressure another day. I was so lucky to have my brother who offered a room to my kids and I. Although that year was extremely difficult it gave me a break from the extortionate rents I paid monthly from my salary. The pressure of choosing a roof over your families head and/or a weekly shop, while holding down a full time job was unsurmountable. I will never forget the constant worry of moving, to this day that anxiety has never left me.”

“The housing development we live in is a very mature and quiet area, the neighbours are welcoming and friendly. I have since joined the residents association as a helper and every 6 weeks we gather together and clean the area. I have gotten to know more people and as time goes by I hope to become more involved. When we were offered the house my initial reaction was shock, and I will be very honest, I was scared. I wasn’t clear if the property was under a private landlord as I had never heard of ABH’s before. I was afraid we could be moved on again if this was a private landlord situation. Once all the details were made clear to me my shock and fear turned to exaltation. I didn’t know the area initially and wanted to be sure my children and I would be safe and could commute to school and work. So before we had the keys I commuted up and down after work, to their school and back. I wanted this to work and it couldn’t have worked out better.”

“

**I thank God every day for the roof my children and I have over our heads. I say roof, but it is a ‘home’, our forever home. The difference in my eldest son particularly is amazing, he of all three has benefited the most mentally.**

I can’t express enough the effect all of the moves had on him. He struggled so much mentally and educationally. I don’t think I would have gotten him to Leaving Certificate, had we not been housed. He has his own room, his own space, he can have friends over. Our home is a family home and we all love it so much. For me, apart from the fact the rent is affordable, it’s the knowing this is ours for life that has had the biggest impact. To go to work every day and know at the end of the month, with my wages, I can pay the rent, pay the bills, fill the fridge, save for a holiday, pay for grinds, extra-curricular activities and not worry is truly amazing. My wages that I worked extremely hard for, were not mine for such a long time, that was so difficult. Now, I drop the kids to school and head into work relaxed, I didn’t do that for years. I have always been a hard worker and only since Circle Housing am I seeing the benefits for it. I won’t deny that I still worry, because I do. But I believe this is post-traumatic stress disorder derived from my housing issues. However, I will say every day we are truly blessed. We love the security of our home, the affordability, the space. We love the time we spend together in our home. My kids have a mother who is not constantly worried about tomorrow.

”

*“I would like to thank Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council for nominating us for the property and for Circle Housing for accepting my family and I. Circle have been extremely welcoming and helpful to us.”*



CIRCLE | OUR PEOPLE & THEIR  
HOUSING STORIES

Circle | More Than Housing

*Pat and his son live in Dublin 8 in a 2 bedroom apartment. Pat originally became a tenant of Circle with his partner and baby son in May of 2013. Unfortunately after a number of years the relationship broke down and Pat moved out in 2016 and couch-surfed.*

Last August Pat’s partner became extremely ill, was hospitalised and subsequently died a few days later. Pat’s son Connor has autism and is not comfortable staying in other places. Routines and familiarity are everything to him. Pat was afraid that the loss of his home on top off the loss of his mother would set Connor back.

At the time everyone Pat encountered was being very nice to him and he was not sure if people were just being polite or if what they were saying was true or even possible. Pat knew that his family would put him and his son up if it was needed but did not want to ask. When Pat got in contact with Circle he tells of how the staff were very straightforward. Having met with the Housing Officers, they explained the situation very clearly and never made any promises. He felt they were very accommodating and he was a bit more relaxed after meeting with them. Although Pat was anxious about the situation he had confidence in Circle as “it’s usually a good sign when you’re asked into the office.” When Pat got the call a couple of weeks later to say that it had all been worked out and he could stay at the apartment with his son, it felt like “a ton of weight had been lifted of my shoulders and I could sleep properly for the first time in weeks.”

Now Pat and Connor have been living there for over 10 months.

“We are so lucky, where else are you going to find a 2 bedroom apartment in the centre of town. If we have any problems, they are sorted out really quickly.”

*Elaine moved into a 3 bedroom house in March 2018. Elaine outlines her experience before she moved to her current home and her feelings on being informed of her new home and the impact it has had on her life.*

“We were in a 2 bedroom apartment which was overcrowded, me my partner, and two older boys aged 20 and 16. The 20 year old used to sleep on the sofa and then in his grannies 3 nights a week as there is a room for him there. I have two girls too. It was awful.

When I was informed of the move I was crying, I was screaming at my Housing Officer shouting 'you're messing' I was just ecstatic.

I used to go on walks and used to think this is ideal, schools are close-by. I used to say to my sister I’m going to get one of them. I was just dreaming about getting one. I think I cried for a week. I couldn’t believe it. I even said to my neighbour "I’m kind of waiting for them to take the keys back, it’s too good to be true."

We have more space. We are not on top of each other. When we have an argument, we can now go into our own room. The two boy’s relationship is better with everyone. More time to yourself a bit.

It’s private. Its more people don’t know we are with Circle as we are mixed in between everyone else. You can keep yourself to yourself. You have a garden. I’ve somewhere to sit and relax”.

“ 95% of our tenants surveyed are very happy and content with the condition of their home. ”





## OUR PEOPLE & THEIR HOUSING STORIES

Circle | More Than Housing

***Elaine has been a tenant of Circle for over 5 years. Elaine describes being on the housing list for as long as she can remember. Having a stable home has been a life changing experience for her.***

"I think I went to get my own place before I had my son so approximately 15 years I would have been on the Housing List. I had been living in a 2 bedroom duplex with my mother and I had a 13 year old sleeping in the bed with me.

Having a stable home has had a huge impact, we don't know ourselves. It's just the space, somewhere to call your own place. Beforehand if we had an argument I sat in my room. Now I have my own space to call home. It brought me and my mother closer together too. It just means everything.

I love the sense of community. At the start I was worried as I wasn't from here, I was from Portland Row. My fear was moving to here cause I wasn't from here but people have been great. They are great neighbours. You can knock in to each other. If someone runs out of milk. If someone has leftover curry, we drop it into each other. It's like it was years ago. We all look after each other. We do a summer project too."



## CIRCLE | ENHANCING OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE

By Miranda Hickey and Sian Coote

We are the Customer Service Representatives answering all incoming calls. We are the first interface between the customer and the organisation. Our aim is to provide excellent customer service which means we strive to build good relationships with our tenants. By promoting a positive, helpful and friendly environment we make sure that anyone can have the confidence that their call and query is taken seriously.

One of Circle's values is to provide excellence in the delivery of services (and homes). With this in mind and the fact that Circle is growing and will grow even more in the future to provide more people with a good quality social and affordable home, we are working towards the implementation of a new system that will allow tenants to choose from a quick dial menu to provide a more effective service.

Our aim is to make your experience calling Circle a happy experience.





CIRCLE |

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT EXTRACT

Circle Annual Report 2018

Circle Voluntary Housing Association  
Company Limited by Guarantee

Extract from the Financial Statements  
for the financial year ended  
31 December 2018

Company Number 374693

**Independent auditor’s report to the members of Circle Voluntary Housing Association Company Limited by Guarantee.**

Report on the audit of the financial statements.

Opinion on the financial statements of Circle Voluntary Housing Association Company Limited by Guarantee) (the ‘Company’)

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Company as at financial year end 31 December 2018 and of the total comprehensive income for the financial year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the relevant financial reporting framework and, in particular, with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

The financial statements we have audited comprise:

- the Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- the Statement of Financial Position;
- the Statement of Changes in Reserves;
- the Statement of Cash Flow; and
- the related notes 1 to 23, including a summary of significant accounting policies as set out in note 1.

**Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are described below in the “Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements” section of our report.

We are independent of the Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Accounting and Auditing Supervisory Authority, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Conclusions relating to going concern**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

- the directors’ use of the going concern basis of accounting in preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Company’s ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

**Other information**

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the directors’ report, other than the financial statements and our auditor’s report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Responsibilities of directors**

As explained more fully in the Directors’ Responsibilities Statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014,

and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Company’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor’s report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company’s internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors’ use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company’s ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor’s report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our

conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of the auditor’s report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity (or where relevant, the group) to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that the auditor identifies during the audit.

This report is made solely to the Company’s members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company’s members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor’s report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company’s members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

**Report on other legal and regulatory requirements - Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014**

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.
- In our opinion the accounting records of the Company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited.
- The financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.
- In our opinion the information given in the directors’ report is consistent with the financial statements and the directors’ report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors’ report.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the provisions in the Companies Act 2014 which require us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors’ remuneration and transactions specified by law are not made.

*For and on behalf of Deloitte Ireland LLP - Chartered Accountants and Statutory Audit Firm - Date: 20th June 2019*



CIRCLE |  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
EXTRACT

Circle Annual Report 2018

1. STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	2018	2017
	€	€
Turnover	4,966,202	4,546,394
Administrative expenses	(5,628,951)	(4,447,418)
Operating (deficit)/surplus	(662,749)	98,976
Interest receivable	6	435
Interest payable and similar charges	(130,439)	(77,939)
Amortisation of Local Authority Loans	2,765,342	2,695,341
Depreciation of housing properties	(929,380)	(880,935)
Impairment of housing properties	-	(1,816,981)
Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation	1,042,780	18,897
Tax on surplus on ordinary activities	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the financial year	1,042,780	18,897

There are no other recognised gains or losses other than those listed above and the total comprehensive income for the financial year.  
All income and expenditure derives from continuing activities.

2. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018

	2018	2017
	€	€
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	83,335,726	78,150,492
Current Assets		
Debtors: Amounts falling due within one financial year	1,710,201	889,652
Cash at bank and in hand	1,491,004	1,666,934
	3,201,205	2,556,586
Creditors:	(1,875,196)	(999,640)
Amounts falling due within one financial year		
Provision for liabilities	(88,239)	(148,656)
Net current assets	1,237,770	1,408,290
Total assets less current liabilities	84,573,496	79,558,782
Creditors:		
Amounts falling due after more than one financial year	(64,358,485)	(60,386,551)
NET ASSETS	20,215,011	19,172,231
Reserves		
Retained earnings	2,451,627	3,244,809
Capital reserves	17,763,384	15,927,422
	20,215,011	19,172,231

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors and signed on its behalf by:

Aoife Watters

Aoife Watters  
Chair Person

Date: 19.06.2019

Brian Shefflin

Brian Shefflin  
Director

Date: 19.06.2019



## CIRCLE | FINANCIAL STATEMENT EXTRACT

Circle Annual Report 2018

### 3. STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN RESERVES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

	Retained Earnings	Capital Reserves	Total
	€	€	€
At 1 January 2017	5,040,318	14,113,016	19,153,334
Total comprehensive income for the financial year	18,897	-	18,897
Transfer amortisation and depreciation of housing property depreciation to capital reserves	(1,814,406)	1,814,406	-
At 31 December 2017	3,244,809	15,927,422	19,172,231
Total comprehensive income for the financial year	1,042,780	-	1,042,780
Transfer amortisation and depreciation of housing properties	(1,835,962)	1,835,962	-
<b>At 31 December 2018</b>	<b>2,451,627</b>	<b>17,763,384</b>	<b>20,215,011</b>

### 4. STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

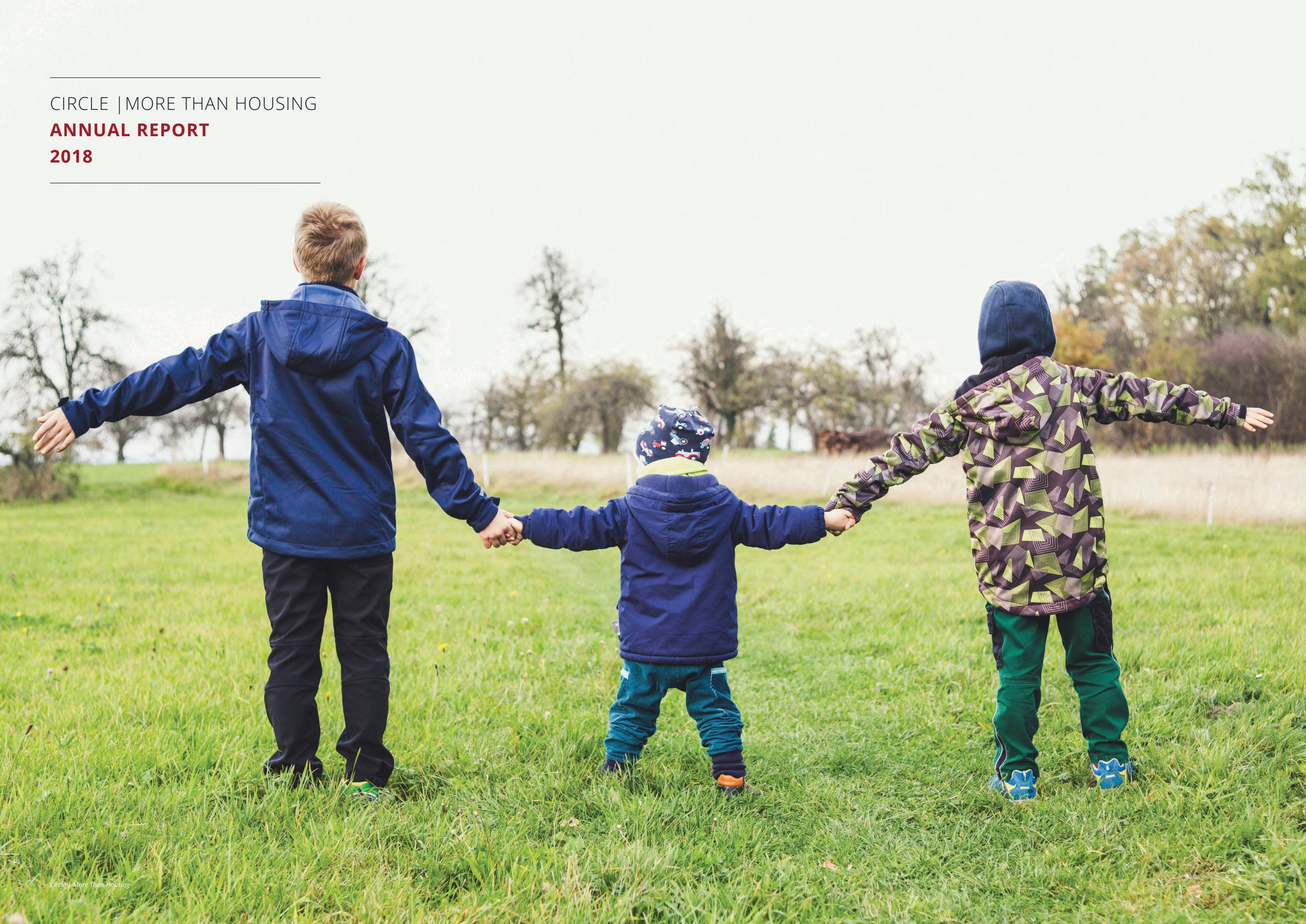
	2018	2017
	€	€
<b>Net cash flows from operating activities</b>	<b>(783,392)</b>	926,196
<b>Cash flows used in investing activities</b>		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(6,197,009)	(7,609,486)
Interest received	6	435
<b>Net cash flows used in investing activities</b>	<b>(6,197,003)</b>	(7,609,051)
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
Interest paid	(103,810)	(60,774)
Increase in bank (HFA) loans	4,074,392	(55,778)
Increase in local authority (CALF) loans	733,883	147,500
Decrease in CLSS and CAS loans	2,100,000	4,537,118
<b>Net cash flows from financing activities</b>	<b>6,804,465</b>	4,568,066
<b>Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>(175,930)</b>	(2,114,789)
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year</b>	<b>1,666,934</b>	<b>3,781,723</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year</b>	<b>1,491,004</b>	1,666,934
<b>Reconciliation to cash at bank and in hand:</b>		
Cash at bank and in hand	1,491,004	1,666,934



## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features alternating light blue and light gray horizontal bands. Each band contains thin, dark gray horizontal lines for writing. The pattern repeats down the entire length of the page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.







**circle | more than housing**

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