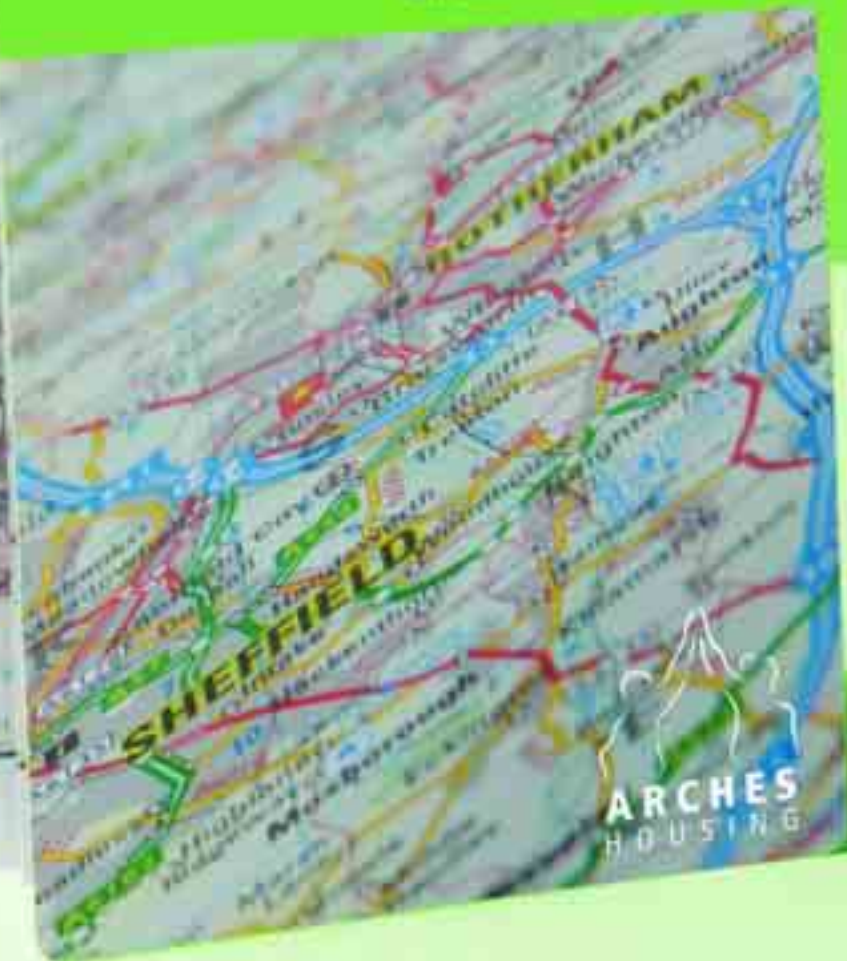


Annual Report 2008/09

Arches Housing

diversity

on our doorstep



ARCHES
HOUSING



The map of our communities is constantly evolving. The neighbourhoods in which Arches Housing works – already diverse in their cultures and needs – are today welcoming people from all corners of the globe.

This can enrich our experience, something we are reminded of every day in our own corner of Sheffield, Burngreave, where just round the corner from our offices, shops and restaurants throng with the sights and smells of produce representing dozens of different cultures.

We recognise that a changing map brings challenges too. We need to be sure we respond to the changes that are happening, mapping needs and preferences to ensure we can offer the kinds of homes people really want to live in.

We must also maintain our efforts to understand the needs of the older, more established communities we serve, where social and economic pressures are creating new challenges for local people.

This annual report reflects on our achievements over the past year. It charts our efforts to navigate the changing landscape of our communities, and it celebrates the richness and variety of *diversity on our doorstep*.



bucking the trend

This has been another exciting, challenging and successful year for Arches Housing. Despite the credit crunch, our strategic focus and business planning enabled us to successfully complete our new build programmes in Sheffield and Rotherham.

This success is reflected in our partnership work on independent living and move on homes in Rotherham. This new partnership has been a great success, and we fully embraced the opportunity to utilise our capacity for developing high quality support services with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC). Our development team used their collective experience, expertise and understanding of what our partners and customers want, to provide much needed independent living accommodation. This scheme also reflects Arches commitment to promoting choice, inclusion and independence for some of society's most marginalised groups and individuals.

At Arches Housing we continue to value and retain a focus on our highly diverse and culturally rich customer base. This commitment to equality continues to be reflected and endorsed in our new Race, Gender and Disability Strategy and Action Plans (2008/10).

A key aspect of the equalities strategies is to understand the changing demographics and diversity of the organisations customer base. This focus led us to review our approach to service provision, by prioritising customer relations and communication. As a result, we will be exploring potential Customer Relations Management Systems during the year, with a view to introducing a new system in 2009/10. Our dedicated staff teams are fully committed to continuous improvement and new initiatives aimed at service improvements.

Our customer first focus also led us to get involved with and enable many of our tenants to take part in the new Tenants Services Authority (TSA), nationwide conversation initiative, including two Arches Local Conversation events.

During the year we also set about gaining Charitable Status for the organisation and we envisage successfully achieving this goal in 2009/10.

Our Housing Strategy continues to include a diverse portfolio of investments and enables us to provide choice through the provision of affordable and mixed tenure homes, including homes both for rent and shared or low cost home ownership.

In 2008/09, Arches appointed a new Chairperson, Tariq Zaman, a dedicated and long established board member who brings substantial knowledge and experience to this role. We would also like to pay tribute to Iain Campbell (Arches Chair from 2001 to 2008) for his dedication and support over the years and for his continued support and expertise as a board member.

We would also like to thank the board, staff, and our customers and respective partners for their tremendous support, enthusiasm and involvement in helping shape Arches success as a provider of diverse homes and services.



taking the temperature

Listening to what our customers want, learning to understand their needs, and training our staff to respond to diversity.

At Arches Housing valuing diversity continues to play a key focus in shaping our Homes and Service provision. This year has been particularly eventful, as we have begun to consolidate our knowledge and expertise for meeting service improvements, especially in respect of Arches Race, Gender and Disability Strategies and Action Plans for the period 2008/10. In addition to these action plans we developed a new equality impact assessment scheme. We also continued our on-going staff development work on equality and diversity through focused training events and consultation, as well as convening and chairing workshops and meetings for the Synergy Solutions Equality and Diversity Forum.

A key commitment arising from our equalities action plans is to ensure

we have a better understanding of all our diverse customers. To enable this we have begun to explore the potential for introducing a comprehensive new Customer Relations Management (CRM) system. The aim is to enhance customer relations, efficiency and provide essential data for understanding our customer base, trends and their respective needs. Following our preliminary planning work on CRM, we envisage introducing a new system in 2009/10.

We continue to take pride in working in partnerships and to use and build on our local knowledge of the communities with whom we work. We will continue to work across a range of specialist and generic housing needs. These range from generic needs, the needs of BME communities, to our on-going and

new developments on supporting people through the continued development of schemes for independent living. Arches housing is also engaged in discussions with partner organisations to explore how future and changing needs of our communities can be met. We are only too aware that communities grow; change and lifestyle or care considerations can impact on peoples changing needs. In view of the latter we are also committed to creating high quality homes that meet a range of protocols including very good and excellent eco homes standards. We are committed to creating homes that are eco-friendly but also provide flexible and inclusive living space for meeting our customers' diverse housing needs.

creating safety and security

Building safer neighbourhoods where people want to live, and helping them find the financial stability to thrive in them.

The improvement of local services and the development of safer communities remains a primary focus for the Association. Through our participation in a wide range of multi-agency *safer neighbourhood* forums and the increasing involvement of local residents, we continue to help create more desirable neighbourhoods, where people want to live.

In addition to having robust policies and procedures in place to deal effectively with issues of anti-social behaviour and concerns over safety and security, we have made a significant contribution towards the promotion of financial inclusion

amongst our customers. In partnership with other regional social landlords and Financial Inclusion South Yorkshire, an extensive programme of advice sessions and training has been established. Furthermore, in conjunction with the Co-operative Bank, existing residents have been offered assistance in opening basic bank accounts to help individuals take greater control of their financial responsibilities. A significant percentage of our customers are currently unemployed which undoubtedly has a direct impact on poverty and deprivation for our communities. As part of our wider commitment to improving

community cohesion, considerable efforts have been made to help provide opportunities for local people to access training and employment.

This has been achieved by giving local people a chance to gain valuable work experience with the Association, along with the development of closer links with Sheffield Hallam University through the offer of an annual student placement.



working together to something fresh

A successful partnership between Arches Housing and Rotherham MBC has been hailed a great success by partner agencies and those moving into the first phase of the twenty-six newly developed independent living homes.

The partnership has enabled Rotherham MBC to successfully address an identified gap for people ready for independent living, to move on from their respective supported housing accommodation.

The newly developed homes offer very good or excellent Eco-Home Standards and bring a much-needed benefit of helping reduce the cost of residents' fuel bills. These homes are for the first time, offering a choice across the borough of quality accommodation for people who are ready to resettle into the community and live independently. A support worker from one of the agencies benefiting from the scheme said:

"It's great to be part of this new scheme and for the first time, really be able to offer a real choice to our client group. I hope that as more units are provided a good mix of areas will continue to be part of the scheme"

The move-on houses and apartments are let via nominations through Rotherham Key Choices and to be eligible to bid for a property the applicant has to be on Rotherham MBC's housing register.

The partnership agreement between the two parties protects this arrangement for the future. All the homes have a range of affordable rents and are eligible for assistance with full housing benefit.

Barclay, was referred for the move-on homes scheme by Target Housing, his excitement and happiness with his new home reflects the flavour of feedback we are receiving about the homes:

"Best thing ever" ... "I'm not going anywhere" ... "You've got to see it to believe it"

The partnership between Arches Housing and Rotherham MBC has successfully combined close partnership work and community consultation. In the planning stage careful consideration was given to the selection of sites, creating inclusive communities and ensuring homes were available in a range of settings, spanning traditional, general needs, rented and owner occupied areas and estates.

The invaluable and on-going role of support agencies, who initially continue their work with clients for up to three months is also central to building a bridge, and enabling clients to make the transition to independent living without feeling isolated.

The option of choice, independence and empowering people to live independently in a supportive environment, is at the heart of the move on homes, we have created.

A client referred from Action Housing said:

"I am grateful that you didn't judge me and have given me the chance to prove I can start a new life"

We are confident that the scheme will continue to flourish and are optimistic that more independent homes and living accommodation can be provided each year through the partnership.



to deliver





**sustain
a dedic**

Our development team has had a very busy, exciting and successful year. Arches have developed new homes across nine building sites in Rotherham and Sheffield. As a result by the end of March 2009 the Association had completed fifty-seven new homes to add to its stock portfolio.

Visible fruit of dedicated team effort

Our delivery team included project management by Synergy Solutions Partnership, house builders who are members of Synergy Partnership's developer panel and senior staff from Arches Housing.

Our new homes have been built to Eco-Homes excellent or very good standards. Eco-Homes is a tool that assesses environmental performance of our homes and takes account of issues such as energy use, good nearby public transport, reduction in pollution, eco friendly materials, reduction in the use of water and land use and ecology considerations.

At the heart of our developments is the physical dimension to sustainable communities and in our designs we take account of security, lifetime homes and diversity protocols. Our lifetime homes can be adapted to provide for peoples needs, as they get older.

Our development programme for the year has provided a variety of affordable homes to meet peoples' needs. Our strategy has been to work towards mixed communities and the tenure types of our new homes included homes for rent, shared or low cost home ownership and units for sale and intermediate market rent to buy.

We have ensured we are inclusive and meeting a diversity of housing needs including provision of homes for independent living, catering for people who are physically disabled and providing larger homes for the BME community as well as mainstream provision.

During the year we had two successful scheme launches and public open days. In Bennett Street Kimberworth, Rotherham the Lord Mayor, Ann Russell and Christopher Dean unveiled a plaque for the apartment block named Dean

Court. The apartment name is a tribute in recognition of Chris Dean's services as a founder board member of Arches Housing. Chris has always been an enthusiast of Arches' affordable warmth and environmental strategy. The second open day was at Acres Hill Road, Darnall, Sheffield. Local Member of Parliament, Clive Betts and local councillor Mazher Iqbal led the ceremony.

Our future development proposals will focus on inclusive design, eco-friendly designs, and we will build homes fit for the future, meeting high design and environmental performance protocols and work towards achieving zero carbon schemes by 2013.



Comparison of Average Net Assured and Secured Rents in Sheffield as at 31st March 2008

Average rent (£ per week)		Bedsit	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed +	All sizes
Arches Housing	2009	40.50	59.11	62.13	68.53	77.65	85.98	83.70	65.84
Arches Housing	2008	38.79	57.09	59.55	65.88	74.32	81.35	80.30	63.19
Chevin (Sheffield)	2008	43.86	53.77	60.30	65.44	71.56	0.00	81.25	57.34
Northern Counties	2008	46.76	54.17	63.82	74.72	81.28	87.86	0.00	60.44
Places for People	2008	0.00	55.84	64.88	69.70	78.90	86.33	0.00	64.46
South Yorkshire	2008	45.81	52.45	60.63	65.54	82.06	83.79	87.55	63.28
Yorkshire Community	2008	43.88	59.10	65.67	70.70	75.25	80.01	0.00	65.82
Average Net Rent for Sheffield - Excluding Council Stock	2008	46.25	53.43	59.10	66.47	79.11	83.84	85.75	60.14
Average Net Rent for Sheffield - Including Council Stock	2008	46.06	51.12	55.21	60.76	77.78	83.84	85.75	56.72

Comparison of Average Net Assured and Secured Rents with Average Target rents as at 31st March 2009

Average rent (£ per week)	Bedsit	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed +	All sizes
Average Target Rent	42.12	51.31	57.81	64.19	73.01	81.25	84.52	60.73
Average Actual Rent	40.50	59.31	62.32	68.54	77.65	85.98	83.70	65.83

Lettings	Sheffield Rotherham		%
Number of bedrooms			
One	36	13	37.41
Two	34	5	29.77
Three	32	11	32.82
Total units	102	29	100.00
Wheelchair standard			
Yes	0	0	0
No	102	29	100
Tenants nominated by the council			
All cases	54%	100%	
priority cases	35%	100%	

Average re-let time (managed stock) 2008/09	Totals %
Less than 1 week	20.8
1 to 2 weeks	3.8
3 to 4 weeks	22.6
5 to 9 weeks	30.2
10 to 19 weeks	15.1
20 to 29 weeks	5.7
30 to 39 weeks	1.9
40 weeks or more	0
Mean	45 days
Median	34 days

Repairs	% completed on time	reported
Emergency	91	1081
Urgent	90	622
Routine	94.47	3560
Total all priorities	93.37	5447

Arrears and bad debts	Total %
Percentage of rent debit in arrears	7.11
Bad debts	0.85



Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2009	2009 £'000	2008 £'000 (Restated)
Turnover	3,771	2,865
Operating costs	<u>(3,292)</u>	<u>(2,375)</u>
Operating surplus	479	490
Interest receivable	69	101
Interest payable and similar charges	(620)	(624)
Surplus on sale of properties	<u>1</u>	<u>454</u>
(Deficit)/Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation	(71)	421
Tax on surplus on ordinary activities	<u>(36)</u>	<u>(43)</u>
Deficit for financial year transferred to reserves	(107)	378
Income and expenditure account at the start of the year	1,976	1,739
Transfer to/from designated reserves	<u>(130)</u>	<u>(141)</u>
Income and expenditure account at the year end	<u><u>1,739</u></u>	<u><u>1,976</u></u>



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Balance sheet at 31 March 2009	2009 £'000	2008 £'000 (Restated)
Tangible Fixed Assets		
Housing Land and buildings	44,485	38,463
Less: Social Housing Grant	(30,586)	(28,084)
Less: Other Grants	(1,126)	(621)
Less: Depreciation & Impairment	(1,410)	(1,187)
	– 11,363	– 8,571
Other- non-housing assets	– 458	– 473
	11,821	9,044
Current Assets		
Shared Ownership Work In Progress	160	260
Shared Ownership Stock	607	1,239
Debtors	452	708
Cash at bank and in hand	1,833	2,971
	3,052	5,178
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(791)	(2,481)
Net current assets	2,261	2,697
Total assets less current liabilities	14,082	11,741
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	10,965	8,517
Capital and reserves		
Designated reserves	1,378	1,248
Revenue reserves	1,739	1,976
	3,117	3,224
Total Capital and reserves	14,082	11,741

Board of Management

Tariq Zaman *Chair*
Terry Garvey *Deputy Chair*
Muhammad Iqbal, MBE *Vice Chair*
Iain Campbell
Mohammad Altaf
Arun Davda
Bernadette Grocock
Araya Redda
Alex Lamb

Association Secretary

Brian Summerson

Organisational Structure 2008/09

Chief Executive

Brian Summerson

Senior Management Team

Head of Housing & Property Services – Sally Steade
Head of Neighbourhood Services – Jamie Taylor
Finance Manager – Gillian Smith

Development Project Management

Synergy Solutions Partnership Ltd

Auditors

KPMG
58 Clarendon Road
Watford
WD17 1DE

Bankers

Co-operative Bank
84-86 West Street
Sheffield
S1 3SX

Solicitors

Taylor & Emmet
20 Arundel Gate
Sheffield
S1 2PP

Registered Office

Arches Housing Ltd
122 Burngreave Road
Sheffield
S3 9DE
Telephone: 0114 288100
Fax: 0114 2288150/3
Email: info@archeshousing.org.uk
Website: www.archeshousing.org.uk

Housing Corporation Registered
No. LH0884

Register of Friendly Society
No. 21451R

Members of the
National Housing Federation

The Board

Membership is open to anyone who has the necessary skills; experience and commitment to ensure all areas are covered for sound governance. Board membership is open to those who can fill particular skills and experience at the time of application. Arches Housing is headed by an effective board with sufficient range of skills and expertise supported by appropriate governance and executive arrangements that will ensure capable leadership and control. All members are expected to subscribe and adhere to the Association's rules as appropriate and diversity and equal opportunities policy. The board are committed to the National Housing Federation code for members, "Excellence in Service delivery and accountability".

Recruitment

From time to time advertisements will be placed or invitations made for relevant people to join the board. Anyone interested can apply to the secretary. An interview and invitation to meetings initially as an observer will take place followed by co-option by the board if they are willing and meet the required criteria.

