



# Annual report to tenants 2012/13

Investing in our homes, people and neighbourhoods

## Welcome

It's a really interesting and exciting time at City South. Our £100m investment programme to improve tenants' homes – our top priority since transfer – has now finished so we've been putting lots of effort into deciding where best to focus in the future.

As we move away from 'bricks and mortar' investment, our prime focus will be on people. That means you, our tenants, as well as other residents in your community, and businesses and entrepreneurs who work in our neighbourhoods.

We want to provide new, innovative services that will help build and sustain households, neighbourhoods and businesses. Things such as increasing opportunities for residents to access employment and training, helping people struggling with money and cope with changes to benefits, and developing more opportunities for young people to contribute to their community and realise their potential. And much more besides!

In this annual report we'll outline what plans and improvements we intend to put in place over the next 12 months. We'll also look back at some of the important things we've achieved over the last year, and let you know how well we have performed in key areas such as repairs and dealing with anti-social behaviour.

And, as always, we want our tenants to be involved. If you're interested in contributing to our work and helping us make decisions about the future of your neighbourhoods then please get in touch.

Thanks

Dave Power, Chief Executive



Dave Power  
Chief Executive

### Our mission

*Investing in our homes, people and neighbourhoods to shape a place where everyone is proud to live and work.*

## Tenant involvement and empowerment

This covers customer service, choice and complaints, customer involvement and how we respond to the diverse needs of our customers.

What we have done in the last 12 months:

- Over 800 customers got involved in some way during 2012/13.
- We received over 5000 satisfaction surveys on a range of services.
- We put customers at the heart of neighbourhood improvements, 'recruiting' 29 neighbourhood inspectors and carrying out 36 neighbourhood inspections.
- Over 1000 people have now found employment through The Works, and over 3000 have accessed further support there.
- We've increased access to cultural activities. To date we've created over 1000 individual opportunities, and developed new projects with the Royal Exchange Theatre and Manchester Histories.

- We have improved how we deal with complaints and how we let new homes by implementing the actions suggested by our Scrutiny Panel, following their service reviews.
- We have helped set up a new St George's Residents Panel in Hulme.
- Working with Blue Orchid, Bubble Enterprises and the Prince's Trust we introduced a range of support to people who want to set up their own business.



We helped set up a new residents panel in St George's, Hulme

### Performance Fact File

	2012/13	2011/12
Overall customer satisfaction	87%	89%
Tenants who would recommend us to family or friends	86%	87%
Stage 1 complaints	51	74
Stage 2 complaints	11	20
Stage 3 complaints	1	10
Complaints acknowledged within 3 days (target 100%)	98%	92%
Complaints responded to within 10 days (target 100%)	67%	39%
Complaints upheld	96%	66%

### Case Study: culture cultures

City South is working closely with museums, galleries, theatres and arts groups, such as Z-Arts, Contact Theatre and People's History Museum, to increase access and opportunities for our customers. We've been able to offer things such as volunteering and employment opportunities, acting workshops, adult education courses, discounted tickets and exclusive taster visits.

Tenants recently went behind the scenes during a special event at the Royal Exchange Theatre where

they met actors starring in a play and took part in a workshop about it.

Tenant Elaine Archer said: "I had a wonderful time – I didn't want to come home!" We've now got together a group of 'cultural champions' – tenants who are working with us to shape future activities and opportunities and promote them to other residents in their neighbourhood.

If you want to get involved in cultural opportunities call Phil Lukes on 0800 840 1444.



## Your home

This covers the quality of our properties and the repairs and maintenance service we provide.

What we have done in the last 12 months:

- We have completed our five-year, £100m home and neighbourhood improvement programme – our key promise following transfer. We've made nearly 30,000 individual home improvements.
- We've introduced a new repairs handbook to let customers know what to expect when they report a repair, and clarify which repairs tenants are responsible for fixing.
- We've introduced a new handyman service, providing affordable repairs to all residents in our neighbourhoods.
- We've introduced an energy advice service to help our customers save money on their energy bills and find a better deal from their supplier.
- 93% of our homes now meet Decent Homes Standard.

### Performance Fact File

	2012/13	2011/12
Customers satisfied with repairs service (target 90%)	99%	94%
Repairs appointments kept (target 99%)	98%	99.6%
Homes with a valid gas safety certificate (target 100%)	100%	100%
Emergency repairs completed on target (target 100%)	99.8%	99.5%
Urgent repairs completed on target (target 99%)	93.4%	93.8%
Routine repairs completed on target (target 100%)	99%	99.1%
New tenants satisfied their home met our lettable standard (target 100%)	96%	91%

### Case Study: tenants review relet service

One of the most important things we do is re-let empty homes (voids) to new tenants. We want to make sure our homes are in a good condition when new tenants move in, and the more efficiently we do it, the less rental income we lose.

Our tenant-led Scrutiny Panel has carried out a full review of how we re-let empty homes and made a number of recommendations to our board that they felt would improve the service.

## What we plan to do to improve in the year ahead:

- We will develop a five-year planned maintenance programme for 2014-2019 to ensure we look after the investment we have made in our homes.
- We will build 12 new properties to be allocated at an affordable rent level. We have planning permission to build these homes on a plot of land in Moss Side.
- We will be aiming to contact all of our customers to ensure we have accurate personal details and information about things such as household make up and work status.



Scrutiny Panel members, Allison and Ellen

Recommendations included taking photographs when voids are surveyed, considering carrying out some void work around new tenants, immediately scanning documents provided by prospective new tenants, and creating an online version of our Tenant Handbook.

We're implementing as many of these recommendations as possible, and our Scrutiny Panel has now moved on to review the service we provide through our customer services team.

## Tenancy, lettings and rent

This covers how we allocate our properties to new tenants and how we set and collect rent.

What we have done in the last 12 months:

- In 2011 we launched Homechecks to give customers more support with their tenancy. This year we have completed 1064, and since the introduction of the scheme we have completed 1735.
- City South is part of Manchester Move, a new online Manchester-wide choice based lettings service launched this year. Most available City South properties are advertised on the Manchester Move website, where customers place bids each week. Properties are offered in line with our Allocations Policy.
- We've introduced a new standard-rate automated over-the-phone rent payment service to make it even quicker and easier to pay your rent.
- We have increased the help we offer to people struggling with money, and offered lots of advice and support to help customers cope with benefit changes.
- We have reduced the time it takes us to re-let empty homes to 22 days.
- Our Money Mentors have helped many customers, dealing with a total overall debt of over £236K.

### Performance Fact File

	2012/13	2011/12
Evictions	29	12
Lettings	250	234
Average time to let a home (target 22 days)	22	24
Average weekly rent: 1-bed flat incl. service charge	£72.59	£69.44
Average weekly rent: 3-bed house/flat	£79.74	£74.87
Satisfaction with value for money of rent (target 90%)	84%	86%
Average rent increase	3.1%	6.1%

### Case Study: money matters

With changes to benefits and the cost of living squeezing household budgets, we've been doing lots to help customers who may be struggling with their money. We've been offering lots of advice to help tenants cope with the under-occupation charge, and we now have two dedicated members of staff in place to support affected customers.

Our Money Mentors service is helping residents find ways to save money, open bank accounts, budget and

## What we plan to do to improve in the year ahead:

- We will train more staff to provide detailed financial support to tenants.
- We will continue to assist residents who are affected by benefit changes by providing advice and referrals to other organisations.
- We will continue to develop our Money Mentors team to provide information, advice and guidance to residents to help with money management.
- We will reduce the number of tenants in arrears.
- We will improve the help we offer tenants looking to find work through our new Employability Support Worker, and increase placement and volunteering opportunities within CSM and partner organisations through our new Volunteer Coordinator.



Trish from the Mind Your Money team offers advice at an event in St Mary's School

manage debts, avoid loan sharks and improve chances of finding work.

Our Energy Adviser has also been helping customers save money by switching energy supplier and spend less on their energy bills by being more energy efficient around the home and using their heating controls more effectively. If you want money advice please get in touch with our Money Mentors team on **0800 840 1444**.

## Neighbourhood and community

This covers how we manage our wider neighbourhoods, work with other organisations to improve communities and deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB).

What we have done in the last 12 months:

- We've done a lot of work to improve how we deal with anti-social behaviour (see the case study below).
- We completed environmental improvement schemes, having invested £7m in our neighbourhoods.



- Working with partners, we have reduced commuter parking problems by supporting resident-only parking schemes in Hulme.
- We have continued to encourage recycling and worked with residents to reduce waste.
- We've set up a new mentoring project with Manchester Active Voices, called Female Focus, to support young girls who are being exploited by gangs to break free and find a more positive path.
- We set up the South Manchester Enterprise Network with our partners Laing O'Rourke and the City Council to deliver community projects and increase prosperity in the area. Over 30 local businesses are now on the network.

### What we plan to do to improve in the year ahead:

- We will work on a Neighbourhood Improvement Plan for each of our nine neighbourhoods.
- We will review our Neighbourhood Inspection process with our inspectors and implement any recommended changes.
- We will develop a five-year environmental improvement plan 2014 – 2019.
- We will introduce a formal inspection scheme for our high rise blocks.
- We will support the delivery of more community projects through the South Manchester Enterprise Network.

### Performance Fact File

	2012/13	2011/12
New ASB cases reported to us	304	256
Number of cases in which legal action was taken	47	53
Customers satisfied with our ASB service (target 100%)	92%	79%

### Case Study: tackling anti-social behaviour

All residents have the right to live in a safe, secure and peaceful neighbourhood and over the last year we've improved how we deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB). We've recruited an ASB Co-ordinator and ASB Case Officer, who focus solely on preventing and tackling neighbourhood nuisance.

Our service is now more consistent and we are able to respond to and deal with ASB quicker, resulting in more action being taken and more customers being satisfied with our service.

Recent successes include tenants evicted from City Road who were drug dealing, and young people from Platt Lane receiving acceptable behaviour contracts after reports of abusive behaviour and damage to property.

Where appropriate we are keen to implement restorative justice too. In St Georges for example, young people who had damaged flower beds and communal areas are now replanting what they have damaged and getting involved in community events.

## Value for money

We always do everything we can to maximise our income and look for ways to manage and improve what we do in an efficient and cost effective way.

Last year our value for money working group continued to look for ways City South could make savings and maximise value for money when procuring or delivering goods and services. Below is a snapshot of some of the things we achieved last year:

- In 2012/13 we collected over 100% of the rent that was due to us.
- We work to strict Government guidelines to keep our rents affordable, and our rents are among the most competitive in Manchester.
- We completed the replacement of the old district heating system on Alex Park with energy efficient boilers, and following the end of our investment programme we have restructured our staff. These two projects have made us savings of £994,000.
- We've continued to bid for as many grants and external funding sources that are available to us. For example, we secured £20,000 from Manchester City Council's High Street Innovation Fund to set up The Pod.
- We've continued to boost our income by bidding for commissioned services and finding new commercial contracts for our services such as repairs and maintenance. Our range of commissioned services now bring in almost £250,000 annually.

### What we plan to do to improve in the year ahead:

- Our target for 2013/14 is to make a total of £320,000 of savings through cost-saving projects and initiatives across all areas of City South.
- Key elements of our savings plan include material and labour savings on repairs, providing highways inspection in-house, and getting better deals to reduce the cost of goods and services such as our fleet of repair vans, telephone and data systems and communal electricity.

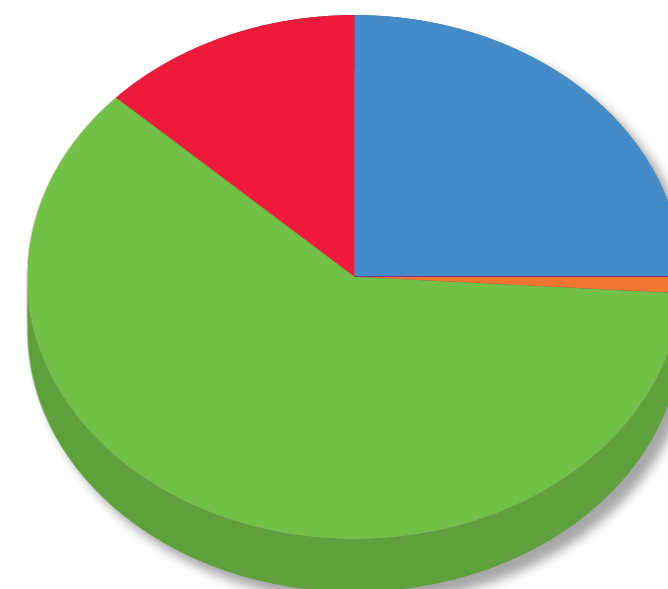
### Turnover – money we received

Lettings to tenants (incl. rents and service charges)	£21,595,000
Other housing activities (incl. leaseholder charges)	£130,000
Other activities (incl. grants)	£469,000
<b>TOTAL TURNOVER</b>	<b>£22,194,000</b>

### Costs – money we spent

Managing and improving our homes	£23,323,000
Other activities	£1,656,000
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>£25,344,000</b>
Operating deficit for the year	£3,150,000
Financing costs	£2,114,000
Income from Right to Buy	£103,000
<b>OVERALL DEFICIT</b>	<b>£5,161,000</b>

### How we spent your rent



The majority of the money you pay us in rent and service charges is spent on maintaining our properties and on housing management.

Housing management	25%
Arrears written off	1%
Maintenance of homes	61%
Interest on loans	13%

## Making improvements down your street



- Increase recycling and tackle littering issues on **Monton Street**.
- Encourage local garden maintenance by exploring options for a tool hire scheme and working with a community group such as Friends of **Shawgreen**.
- Raise awareness of loan sharks and encourage recycling and promote better use of fixed recycling sites on **St Georges**.
- Raise awareness about the dangers of loan sharks by delivering an Illegal Money Lending week of action in Platt Lane and other areas of **Fallowfield**.
- Encourage residents to take better care of their gardens by running a competition or scheme for well-maintained gardens on **Wilbraham**.

Each year we put together a Neighbourhood Improvement Action Plan that outlines improvements we want to make that are often specific to a particular area, neighbourhood, or even street.

Each action plan is broken down in to four key areas: financial inclusion, health and wellbeing, resident engagement and maintenance and environmental management. While the plans focus on local issues, there are some key areas that are common to all the plans – these are:

- Supporting residents to cope with benefit changes through downsizing and maximisation of benefits.
- Provide publicity, support and guidance for customers on the impact of benefit changes.
- Carry out quarterly multi-agency (ie – involving the police and council officers etc) neighbourhood inspections.
- Increase the number of residents with financial planning skills.
- Making sure our neighbourhoods are well-maintained.

### Local plans

To give you a flavour of what's included below are some of the local improvements we intend to make:

- Carrying out three community events throughout the year specifically aimed at improving the environment on the **Alexandra Park** estate.
- Promoting healthy eating and exercise by developing the allotment site with local residents on **Aquarius**.
- Increasing facilities for secure bicycle storage and find opportunities for residents to access IT training on **Bentley House**.
- Improving communication to encourage more residents to get involved and work with City South on the **Bethnall** and **Sherwood** estates.



### Neighbourhood champions

Each area has a neighbourhood champion from City South who will be responsible for co-ordinating the activities in your area.

They also meet regularly with one of our board members, who will be making sure progress is made.

You can request a copy of the plan for your area from your neighbourhood officer or by calling us on **0800 840 1444**.