



# ANNUAL REPORT 16/17

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



# A message from Richard Peacock, Chief Executive

I'm delighted to celebrate Soha's 20th birthday after another great year. Our performance across the board has been very good. We have increased tenant involvement, had very good operational performance, continued to grow in the number of new homes we provide for people in housing need and, most importantly, had great feedback and satisfaction from tenants.

Following detailed consultation with residents and staff, we have produced our new Corporate Plan for 2017–20. This sets out how we will be a leading community housing association where both residents and staff shape a sustainable future.

We will listen to and empower residents. For example we are one of a handful of housing associations to invite tenants to be members of Soha. This will give tenants and shared owners the legal right to hold us to account and to re-elect the Board.

We will provide homes for people in need. Our growth in providing new homes is excellent and we will continue to extend the range of homes we provide for the different needs of residents, for example more extra care schemes.

We will support residents and communities to help them thrive. For example, we will help people maximise their income through training to get employment, by helping with changes in the way benefits are paid and by helping tenants in our new homes establish healthy local communities that are built on respect and cohesion. We will also help people with the new digital world we all now live in.

We will work hard to provide the key basic services of any landlord, like repairs and improvements, brilliantly.

We will invest in our staff so they have the right tools to continue to give a great service. We have just installed a new IT system for example.

Finally, we will remain financially strong so we can continue to be effective for our next 20 years. Rental income increased to £37.2 million which, after costs, resulted in a surplus of £14.3 million. This money, with additional borrowed funds, was invested back into development to provide 178 new affordable homes for rent and shared ownership.

We take great pride in what we do and Soha continues to perform well because of our dynamic and dedicated staff who are determined to build further on our success.

We listen to you and welcome your feedback. Please keep it coming. As we celebrate our first 20 years I look forward to working with you to help shape the future.



**Richard Peacock**  
Chief Executive

# Meeting the Standards

In line with all housing associations, Soha must meet standards set by the government's Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). We invest in our staff to deliver these achievements and hold the Investors in People Gold award.

## Economic standards

### Value for Money

We are a high performing provider of homes with lower running costs than most other housing associations. The number of homes Soha provides puts us amongst the top developing associations in terms of percentage increase in stock. (Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Global Accounts 2016).

### Rent

We comply with the HCA standard for rent calculation.

### Financial viability and governance

We are an efficient business. (HCA analysis of cost per unit). Soha received the top ratings of G1 for governance (meaning we are well-managed) and V1 for finance (meaning we are financially sound).

## Consumer standards

### Home

Over 92% of tenants say their home is good quality and 87% are satisfied with our repairs service. Repairs are carried out more quickly at an average of 8.5 days and most are completed first time. 92% of residents say they are satisfied overall with Soha as a landlord.

We are Customer Service Excellence accredited and our delivery and satisfaction for services are amongst the best in the sector. (Housemark, 2016).

### Tenant involvement and empowerment

An independent report states that Soha's involvement with tenants is exceptionally good.

We aim to keep improving by upgrading our housing management system and encouraging tenants to make more use of our online services.

### Neighbourhood and community

Over 90% of tenants are happy with their neighbourhood. 92% of tenants affected by neighbour issues are satisfied with how we handled their case. We were Highly Commended for tenant involvement at the UK Housing Awards 2017.

### Tenancy

Rent arrears are low at just 1.9% and we continue to offer support to those affected by benefit changes.

We aim to let homes quickly and fairly, mainly through choice based lettings and the average time for a new tenant to move into a property is down to 16 days.

# Soha's year in numbers 2016/17



## Number of homes

Total number of homes

**6,619**

New homes added in 2016/17

**178**

## Lettings

Total Lettings **383**

Mutual exchanges **48**

## Shared ownership

Sold **51**



## Communication



Phone calls received **98,664**



Emails received from customers **4,600**



Letters received from customers **5,814**



**42, 238** users visited our website,  
**52.4%** on a mobile or tablet

User visits to the website have increased by 19%. The website includes information about our services and you can use it to advise us about repairs.



## Involvement

Households involved in the running of our business

**447**



## Repairs

Number of repairs **18,553**

At a cost of **£3,250,000**

Average time to complete a repair **8.5 days**

Repairs fixed on first visit **88.5%**

**87%**

of tenants are satisfied  
with our repairs service



## Planned maintenance (existing homes)

New kitchens **190**

New windows and doors **298**

New bathrooms **218**

Redecorations **1,600**

New roofs **42**

Heating systems **251**

- 96%** of tenants are satisfied with our lettings process
- 90%** of tenants are satisfied with their neighbourhood
- 92%** of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home
- 92%** of tenants are satisfied with Soha's overall service
- 82%** of tenants are satisfied that we listen to their views
- 100%** of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

## Anti-social behaviour

- 391** anti-social behaviour cases
- 14** notices served due to ASB
- 3** court orders due to ASB
- 0** evictions due to ASB
- 98%** of ASB cases resolved

**88%** of tenants satisfied with how we handled their ASB case

Note: The majority of ASB enquiries relate to noise.

## Complaints

- Complaints received: **60**
- Resolved at Stage 1\*: **58**
- Resolved at Stage 2\*\* : **0 ... (2 still in progress)**

\*Stage 1 means the start of the formal complaint process with a response provided by a Senior Manager

\*\*Stage 2 means the complainant is unsatisfied with the Stage 1 response and the complaint is then heard by a panel of three Board members.

### 3 Evictions

- due to rent arrears **3**
- due to anti-social behaviour **0**
- due to other reasons **0**



**459**  
Estate inspections

## Out & about

**592**  
Handypersons visits

## Our tenants



We have **6,619** households which include:

- 4,961** general needs rented
- 295** leaseholders
- 34** keyworkers
- 580** shared ownership
- 632** sheltered
- 5** market rented or unsold
- 112** supported and extra care

**20%** of households include at least one disabled person

Soha residents are plumbers, volunteers, builders, nurses, grandparents, teaching assistants, carers, retired, community activists, parents, charity workers, teachers, accountants and many more! **#RealPeopleTrueStories** aims to tell the stories of just a few of our residents. Soha is also leading a national campaign which aims to turn negative media stereotypes on their heads. Keep an eye out for **#BenefitToSociety**.

Bedroom tax households **215**

Universal Credit claimants **113**

We collected **98.1p** of every **£1** in rent in 16/17

### Gender



Female  
**59.5%**

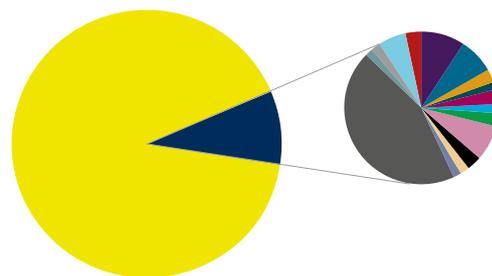


Male  
**40.5%**

### Age

- 18-39 **31%**
- 40-59 **35%**
- 60+ **34%**

### Ethnicity



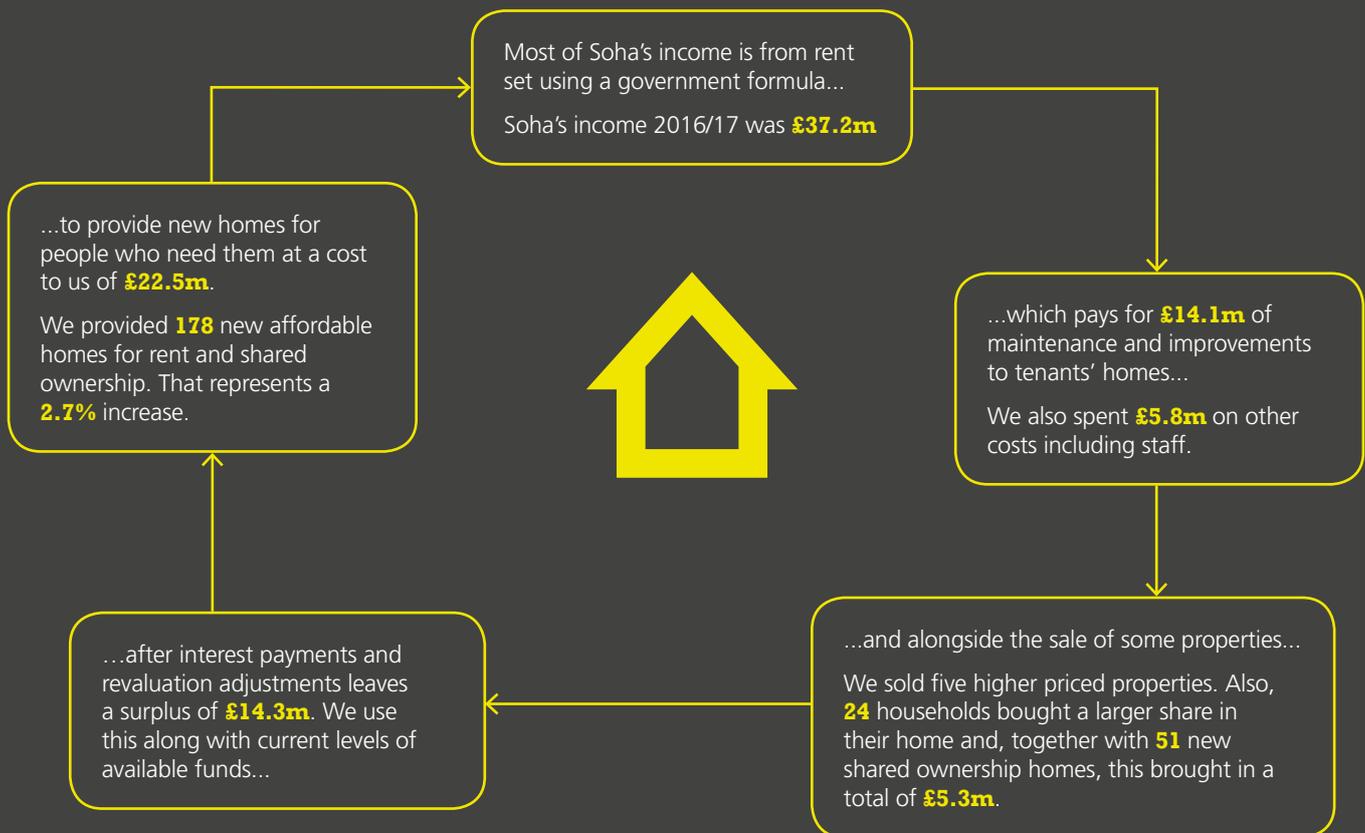
- African 0.8%
- Asian – Other 0.65%
- Bangladeshi 0.24%
- Black – Other 0.15%
- White British 91.37%
- Caribbean 0.26%
- Chinese 0.17%
- Indian 0.22%
- Irish 0.66%
- Mixed Other 0.27%
- Other 0.15%
- Pakistani 0.14%
- White – Other 3.8%
- White and Asian 0.15%
- White and Black African 0.17%
- White and Black Caribbean 0.51%
- Prefer not to say 0.27%

Our publications are available in some alternative languages upon request. Please contact us on Freephone **0800 014 15 45**.

# Value for Money

## Where the money goes

Soha Housing doesn't make a profit – all our income is spent on maintaining your home, buying new homes and investing in your communities.



Our costs compare well with other housing associations. The HCA confirmed that the cost of running Soha in 2016 was £3,040 per home. This compares to £3,975 across all housing associations. Based on 2015/16 data comparing the accounts of all housing associations.

## What you think about our spending...

We listen to you. Your views are the measures that matter most. This is what you say:

- **92%** of tenants are satisfied overall with our service
- **87%** of tenants are satisfied with our repairs service
- **92%** of tenants are satisfied that Soha rents offer value for money
- **82%** of tenants are satisfied that we listen to, and act on, their view

\* If you're interested in knowing more, a full VfM Statement is available on Soha's website. If you want a hard copy, please get in touch.



# Financial summary

2016  
£'000

2017  
£'000

Income		
Income from all rents and service charges	36,214	36,358
Other income	362	855
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>36,576</b>	<b>37,213</b>

Costs		
The cost of repairing & maintaining homes*	10,633	9,631
The cost of replacement fixtures & fittings in homes*	4,211	4,504
All other Soha running costs	4,822	5,772
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>19,666</b>	<b>19,907</b>

Other		
Surplus from selling shared ownership and other properties	9,231	5,479
Gains on revaluation	2,744	1,068
Net interest payable on our loans	(9,519)	(9,529)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>19,366</b>	<b>14,324</b>

Notes		
New loans taken out	48,259	0
Existing loans repaid	(8,000)	(2,002)
Money spent to build new homes, and fixtures & fittings#	36,187	22,485

\* Over 70% of our running costs are used to make sure existing homes are maintained.

# We re-invest 100% of our surplus to build new homes.

# How we're run

Tenants are involved throughout the organisation, including five who sit on the Soha Board which is responsible for leading the organisation.

The National Housing Federation (NHF), the umbrella body for most landlords like Soha, produces a Code of Governance which we have signed up to and comply with.

Board members with portfolios are paid for the roles they perform. In 2016/17 the Chair was paid **£9,848** and an ordinary board member **£3,898**.

The Chief Executive was paid **£143,077** (including benefits in kind but excluding pension contributions).

For more information on Soha's governance please go to [www.soha.co.uk/about-us](http://www.soha.co.uk/about-us).

## Have your say...become a member

Our strategy continues to put people at the heart of all we do. We aim to be a leading community housing association where residents and staff shape a sustainable future.

The Soha Board is opening up membership to tenants so you can now get your voice heard even more and take ownership of Soha's purpose and values.

### What membership means for you:

- Have your say on Soha's priorities for community involvement
- Have a vote on major organisational changes
- Have a vote on appointing Board members

### Your commitment:

- Members pay £1; which is the limit of your liability
- Members must sign up to Soha's purpose and values.

### For more information:

[www.soha.co.uk/membership](http://www.soha.co.uk/membership)

email: [ri@soha.co.uk](mailto:ri@soha.co.uk)

Telephone **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone)  
– ask for Resident Involvement Team

## Other information

We are sending this publication to you as part of our commitment to ensure all tenants are kept up to date with the governance and management of Soha Housing. You have been sent this paper copy even if you have signed up for e-newsletters. As a sustainable environment is extremely important to Soha this publication is printed on recycled paper. To sign up for our e-newsletter go to [www.soha.co.uk](http://www.soha.co.uk)

Alternative formats of this publication are available on request. These include large print, audio, alternative languages and electronic formats. Please contact us on Freephone **0800 014 15 45** or email [lizroberts@soha.co.uk](mailto:lizroberts@soha.co.uk).

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To register your interest in becoming a member please complete and return the following and we will be in contact.

Name
Phone
Email
Tenant <input type="checkbox"/> Leaseholder <input type="checkbox"/> Shared Owner <input type="checkbox"/>

Address
Post Code