



More for your Money

Extract from SARH 2013/14 Financial Statements

Operating Summary Driving efficiency

SARH has continued to invest significant time and energy into developing a well-managed business that is fit for the future. Achievements during 2013/14 include:

- Housing Worx, the trading subsidiary company has increased its income both internally by undertaking new workstreams and externally by winning new clients. This has generated contributions to the group of £470k which is an increase of over £300k in comparison to 2012/13.
- 400 kitchens and bathrooms were installed by Housing Worx during the year and all remained defect free for six months after completion. All workstreams were completed in full and customer satisfaction with the service scored 3.84 out of 4 or 96%.
- Solar panels installed on SARH's head office building saved SARH £6,000.
- Rent collection performance of 100.2% was achieved, with arrears for the year of 1.5% - both bettering the previous year's performance, despite the impact of welfare reforms on customers.
- Savings achieved of more than £35k on the cost of materials for repairs, through effective use of benchmarking to inform negotiations.
- A continued drive to reduce resources such as paper and printing included extending paperless governance arrangements to the Customer Board and issuing the Annual Report for customers as a web based document.
- A new mobile telecommunications contract resulted in substantial savings of around £18k and improved network coverage.
- Use made of free venues and volunteer trainers to deliver the Community Learning Programme
- The 'Total Place' approach, which involves a holistic approach to work across a neighbourhood, involves work being carried out in a way that is cost effective for SARH and partners, as well as generating significant energy savings for customers.

These highlights demonstrate SARH commitment to deliver its objectives, improve efficiency and provide value for money services.



First-class service

SARH is committed to delivering first class services for customers and this continues to underpin the Company's key objectives and values.

Headline achievements for SARH customers this year include:

- Awarded the Telecare Service Authority's Crystal Award. Telecare services are provided for more than 10,000 customers meeting the Platinum accreditation status for consistent high performance to European standards.
- Work carried out to homes to maintain 100% compliance with the Decent Homes Standard.
- Improved the energy efficiency rating of SARH homes to 69.52 (from 68.4) using the Standard Assessment Procedure.
- Carried out safety checks to all homes with gas and solid fuel appliances.
- Completed 90.3% of repairs 'right first time' and 100% of all emergency repairs carried out within target time.
- Provided more than 70 training courses through the Learning Academy and rolled out a range of e-learning courses for staff and Board members.
- Received external recognition received for the work of the Customer Board through inclusion in a Best Practice Guide issued by HQN, and a TPAS Central Award for Excellence in Co-regulation.
- Helped customers to access £834k in benefits, grants and credits through support provided by the Money Advice Team.
- Promoted a Community Learning Programme and delivered 51 courses which were attended by 378 customers.
- Provided a Customer Resource Centre which was used by more than 2,000 people to take part in a range of activities or seek support and advice from SARH and a range of partners. One such activity is the weekly Job Club which helps unemployed people to research and apply for jobs.
- Carried out 33 estate walkabouts, resulting in improvements to 17 areas.
- Achieved top quartile positions for six Key Performance Indicators, when benchmarking using HouseMark data. These included gas servicing, emergency repairs completed within target time and rent collected.
- Achieved high customer satisfaction ratings for a range of services including 97% satisfaction with repairs, 100% satisfaction with new kitchens and bathrooms and 88% satisfaction with the way that anti-social behaviour case were dealt with.



Other achievements

- SARH ranked 20th in the not for profit sector in the prestigious Times Best 100 Companies award for 2014.
- Maintained the top judgement for viability and governance from the Homes and Communities Agency
- Increased the number of homes owned and managed by 55 to 5,807. This included 31 newly built homes and two mortgage rescue homes.
- Influenced national policy and debate on housing matters through the Chief Executive's role as a Board member of the Chartered Institute of Housing; and through work with the local MP.
- Created nine apprenticeships to employ local people and provided training to help them gain a recognised qualification and employment.
- Provided training and employment opportunities for 13 unemployed people between the ages of 16-24 through a Construction Operatives Programme.
- Improved the delivery of repairs and maintenance following an internal health check of the service that resulted in minor repairs being carried out more efficiently.
- Delivered a range of work to improve homes, including 394 new central heating systems, 134 new roofs and improved loft insulation for 82 homes.
- Increased partnership working with GPs and Healthy Living Pharmacists in Staffordshire to promote Telecare awareness.
- Selected as the representative for the Housing and Telecare sector on the Digital Inclusion Board across Staffordshire.
- Provided a First Responder Service that resulted in savings for the Ambulance and Health Services in excess of £110,000.
- Held an AGM attended by more than 100 people, showcasing the work with customers, staff and Board members on 'Learning to Earning'.
- Won Stafford Borough Council's Aspiring for the Future Award for the Meadow Road Community Allotment project.
- Allocated homes to 524 new customers, achieving an average re-let time of 17 days. 100% of customers who signed for a new tenancy were satisfied with the service they received from the Housing Choices Team.
- Launched a Pre-Tenancy Workshop to help new customers understand their rights and responsibilities. Other housing providers and Stafford Borough Council who have seen the work done by SARH are looking to introduce similar support for new social housing tenants and tenants of private tenanted landlords.
- Carried out accompanied viewings for all lettings.
- Achieved the Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents Gold Award for the sixth consecutive year.
- Achieved 'Substantial Assurance' from Internal Audit reviews carried out by KPMG for Corporate Governance, Risk Management, Income Stream Reporting and Welfare Reform work.



- Received recognition at Stafford Borough Council's Green Awards, winning the Best Public Sector Award for an allotments project and receiving three commendations for other projects.
- Raised more than £4,000 for local charities.

SARH has delivered many improvements for its customers and is well equipped to meet the challenges facing the social housing sector, including the changing funding framework and the difficult macro-economic climate. Customers are helping to scrutinise and make recommendations to further improve services and overall performance. Customer satisfaction is measured across the range of services provided, including repairs, work carried out by Housing Worx and the way that telephone calls are dealt with.

