



people first
annual review 2000

realisation

of a dream

People First has now been in operation for five years and from our early and humble beginnings, working in a deck access flat in Hulme, we have gone from strength to strength. We now operate from well equipped, centrally located and easily accessible offices in Hulme. We own the 249 homes which we previously managed, having successfully raised the necessary private finance, at a very competitive rate, to enable us to do this. The association also continues to grow, we have a development of 26 one and two bedroom flats nearing completion.



housing

... and much more besides



Kelvin Hughes (left) and Nicola Moughan of the Cheshire Building Society with People First's Chair, Adrian Lohrey outside People First new 26 unit development. The Cheshire has lent People First just under £5m to purchase the 275 properties.

As a tenant-led, community based association we have never been more committed to working with the people of Hulme to ensure its future sustainability. As well as increasing opportunities for tenant involvement we have been instrumental in developing a community regeneration agency chaired by our Chief Executive, Kulbinder Kang, in partnership with four BME housing associations in the area. AAAPT, formally launched in November 1999, has already secured funding for a Community Safety Officer to work for the benefit of all the residents of Hulme: owner occupiers and RSL, local authority and private sector tenants. In the future AAAPT aims to tackle social exclusion through a variety of projects offering employment and training opportunities for the community. Such partnership arrangements are crucial to the future sustainability of Hulme and we are grateful to our partners for their continued support. The association will continue to look for new and innovative ways of promoting sustainability in partnership with other organisations.

We share the Best Value emphasis on continuous improvement, value for money and the focus on consumers. Since our last report we have reviewed our housing management function and updated our computer system, to improve and enhance the services we provide to our tenants.

As an employer and provider of services we also recognise the importance of promoting a culture in which the needs and aspirations of the BME community are incorporated into our every day business and we will be looking to develop a strategy in the forthcoming year.

Much remains to be done and the Association does not intend to rest on its laurels. The changing environment in which we now operate poses many challenges, but we are confident that we can meet these. Our success is largely attributable to the hard work of our board members and the staff at People First and I would like to thank them all for ensuring this.

Adrian Lohrey, tenant and Chair



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adapting in a rapidly changing environment

There is no doubt that we are working in a changing environment presenting many challenges. We are continually adapting to meet these challenges.

With good budgeting and forward planning we have been able to meet the financial challenges presented by the SORP requirements and the withdrawal of section 54 grant. Now we are gearing up to meet new ones such as those presented by the long awaited Green Paper, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, the emphasis on Best Value, the Supporting People proposals and the spectre of changing demand in the north, to name but a few.

The Green Paper "Quality and choice: a decent home for all" poses the greatest challenge, particularly the proposals on the new rent setting structure, which could restrict rent increases to RPI only and link rents to capital values and earnings. As a small, relatively young association this has significant implications. However, we are involved in debates nationally on the impact of these proposals through our seat on the NHF's National Council; Investment and Regeneration Committee and Small Housing Associations' Standing Group. We have already assessed the likely impact of these proposals on our business plans to ensure we are prepared. The other key areas in the Green Paper (regeneration and the creation of more balanced and sustainable communities) have always been

at the heart of the association's activities and are reflected in the initiatives we have developed. For example, to ensure the area in which we operate remains a popular choice to live we are currently piloting a new allocations policy weighted towards need but also taking account of the economic status of applicants and the contribution they can make to the community. Developed in consultation with residents this is being piloted on a scheme of 26 one and two bedroom flats where we are in the process of taking 'hand over'. We recognise that this alone will not ensure sustainability and have adopted a holistic approach. Our involvement in AAAPT and the way in which we continually strive to involve tenants in our work demonstrates this.

We see the 'Supporting People' proposals as an opportunity to evaluate our current arrangements and assess and meet the future needs of our tenants. Our commitment however, goes beyond this. As well as recently chairing a conference on the implications of the new arrangements for black and minority ethnic groups the association is also represented on the DETR External Reference Group.

We are conscious that we will be required to implement the Best Value framework and will be subject to the same performance indicators as larger RSLs. Best Value, however, has always been the focus of our approach. Hence our inclusion in the NHF's publication, "Continuous Improvement: A good practice guide for small HAs" and the NHF and the Housing Corporation's "Best Value for Small

Independent Landlords" briefing which aims to promote good practice. This focused on the partnering arrangements we have developed to promote sustainability in Hulme, notably the development of AAAPT; the employment of a consultant by a number of Manchester based associations to undertake individual health and safety appraisals; the series of reviews undertaken to maintain continuous improvements in performance; and the purchase of the services of a young, locally based programmer to update our computer system.

A number of the initiatives we have developed and our general approach seems to fit well with the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the recommendations of the Green Paper on renewal as this report will show, but we are conscious of the need to do more to ensure sustainability and social inclusion for our tenants and the wider community in Hulme.

Kulbinder Kang, Chief Executive

Bathed in sunshine: Hulme Park is Manchester's first new park to be created in over a hundred years





tenants taking centre stage with more participation

throughout the
year residents
and staff have
met to carry out
estate
inspections
together

As a community based, tenant-led association tenants have always been centre stage when it comes to management.

During the last year we have reviewed our tenant participation strategy to ensure that people feel that there are opportunities for contributing their views at whatever level suits their commitment. We felt that it was important to develop a range of opportunities for consultation and involvement, which could reflect the different levels of interest of individual tenants needed to be developed.

We also noted that many tenants felt daunted by the responsibilities of board membership. We have therefore established a Tenants' Advisory Panel to allow for the review of service delivery but also to enable people to develop the skills and confidence to make the transition to board membership in the future.

Tenants were also given the opportunity to get involved in the design of a new development of twenty-six one and two bedroom flats currently being let. This ensures that they feel they have a stake in the local community. In addition throughout the year residents and staff have also met

together to carry out estate inspections. This allows residents to raise issues relating to repairs to their property or improvements to the local environment. We will continue to look at ways to extend this form of participation to gain greater feedback from residents.

These initiatives give tenants an opportunity to have a greater involvement in the management of their homes, in line with the recommendations of the housing management policy action team which forms part of the strategy for neighbourhood renewal.

Housing Assistant Georgina Mellor chats with one of the tenants whose wares were on display at People First's AGM





the association has been involved in the development of a new health resource centre which includes one and two bedroom flats as part of the scheme

partnering for sustainability

The association continues to work in partnership with housing associations and other organisations both within and outside of Hulme. The AAAPT project is a prime example of this.

Working in partnership with the Hulme Community Health Resource Centre and North British Housing the association has also been involved in the development of a new health resource centre and is presently taking hand over of 26 one and two bedroom flats which form part of this scheme.

The association also continues to work closely with the City Council and other housing associations through the Hulme Community Housing Group. As well as developing joint schemes such as the Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative we aim to work with others on developing good practice in housing management in the area.

As an association we are developing a number of approaches to achieving balanced communities and sustainability through the development of partnership arrangements and many of these initiatives have already been referred to throughout this report, for example the review of our allocations policy.

The association is also keen to promote social activities. Last Christmas we held our second successive Christmas party for residents' children and we are presently exploring interest in the idea of developing a youth theatre group.

We are also exploring opportunities for employing local contractors. One local firm has been taken on to provide general building maintenance and we continue to review our approved list of contractors.

In addition we recognise that our stock is our biggest asset and the importance of maintaining this and we are committed to the upkeep of Hulme. Although our stock is relatively young we have already developed a clear and focused strategy for maintaining this. To this end we have completed our first painting contract and a programme for 2000/01 has been developed and tendered.



Kulbinder Kang (right), People First's Chief Executive, and Nigel Springs of Salford University present the People First Prize in Housing to Riognach Casey, Salford's top MSC in Housing student



measuring our achievements

performance indicators

rents

amount of rent collected as a percentage of the annual rent due:	97.3%
rent arrears as a percentage of the annual rent due:	6.40%
percentage of rent lost through properties being empty:	0.04%
total amount of rent lost through properties being empty:	£268.65
percentage of rent lost through bad debts:	0.82%

Comparison of rent levels

	People First	Manchester
1 bed	£44.54	£xx.xx
2 bed	£49.12	£xx.xx
3 bed	£58.22	£xx.xx
4 bed	£64.18	£xx.xx
average	£52.28	£xx.xx

repairs

category of repair	number of repairs ordered during the year	percentage of work completed within People First's target	target set by People First	target set by the Housing Corporation
emergency	213	91.1	95	95
urgent	348	80.2	95	90
routine	219	90.0	95	90
total	780			

ethnic origin of new tenants

	number	percentage
asian	1	3.5
caribbean	0	0.0
african	3	10.3
south-east asian	0	0.0
british/european	12	41.4
irish	2	6.9
other	4	13.8
combination	0	0.0
refused / no information	7	24.1
total	29	

	number	percentage
black	3	10.3
white	14	48.3
other	4	13.8
mixed	1	3.5
refused / no information	7	24.1
total	29	

complaints

Number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman during the year: 0

lettings

changes in tenancy during the year

nominations from Manchester City Council	5
allocations made by People First	12
transfers	1
mutual exchanges (swapping homes)	3
changes in tenancies (e.g., from joint to single)	8

percentage of properties let without losing rent 83%

percentage of homes available for letting at 31/3/00 0.4%
(one property)

accounts

Income and Expenditure account for the period ended 31 March 2000

	2000 £	1999 £
Turnover	781,650	723,140
Operating Costs	<u>(478,923)</u>	<u>(370,213)</u>
Operating Surplus	302,727	352,927
Interest payable and similar charges	(255,131)	(282,995)
Interest receivable	<u>28,988</u>	<u>35,757</u>
Surplus on Ordinary Activities before Taxation	76,584	105,689
Tax on surplus on ordinary activities	<u>(24,882)</u>	<u>(11,350)</u>
Surplus for the Financial Year	51,702	94,339
Transfer to Designated Reserves	(9,973)	(10,267)
Retained Surplus Brought Forward	<u>309,797</u>	<u>225,725</u>
Retained Surpluses	<u><u>351,526</u></u>	<u><u>309,797</u></u>

All amounts relate to continuing activities.

There were no recognised gains or losses for 2000 or 1999 other than those included in the Income and Expenditure Account.

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2000

	2000 £	2000 £	1999 £	1999 £
Tangible Fixed Assets				
Housing Property Cost		11,910,113		11,910,113
less				
Housing Association Grant		(8,275,317)		(8,275,317)
Less Depreciation		<u>(40,474)</u>		<u>-</u>
		3,594,322		3,634,796
Tangible Assets		17,444		16,812
		<u>3,611,766</u>		<u>3,651,608</u>
Current Assets				
Debtors	79,313		60,375	
Bank and Cash	<u>580,413</u>		<u>534,191</u>	
	659,726		594,566	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	<u>66,045</u>		<u>77,086</u>	
Net Current Assets		<u>593,681</u>		<u>517,480</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		<u><u>4,205,447</u></u>		<u><u>4,169,088</u></u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year		3,772,042		3,787,389
Capital and Reserves				
Share Capital - non equity	69		65	
Designated Reserves (service items)	37,722		27,749	
Designated Reserves (cyclical maint.)	44,088		44,088	
Income and Expenditure account	<u>351,526</u>		<u>309,797</u>	
		<u>433,405</u>		<u>381,699</u>
Total Capital and Reserves		<u><u>4,205,447</u></u>		<u><u>4,169,088</u></u>

These accounts were approved by the Board of Management on 3 July 2000 and signed on its behalf.


A Lohrey


Martin Stevenson


K Kang

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Registered with the Housing Corporation No. L4088

Registered as an Industrial & Provident Society No. 27746R

Chief Executive

Kulbinder Kang

Chair

Adrian Lohrey

Board of Management

A Lohrey

S Byron-Swire

M Stevenson

C D'Souza

J Hepplestone

C Hayes (retired July 2000)

L Lawrence

A Kovacevic (from February 2000)

N Williams (from March 2000)

J O'Sullivan (from March 2000)

Secretary

Kulbinder Kang

Registered office

179 Royce Road, Hulme, Manchester M15 5TJ

Auditors

Moore and Smalley, Richard House, Winckley Square,

Preston PR1 3HP

Bankers

Girobank plc, Bootle, Merseyside GIRO 0AA

Solicitors

Beachcroft Wansbroughs, 13 Police Street,

Manchester M2 7WA

The Association is a member of the National Housing Federation. The Board of Management of People First Housing Association accepted the NHF's revised Code of Governance at its meeting in May 2000 as a guide to best practice. It agreed that it would accept the spirit rather than the letter of sections that are less relevant to the Association.

