

snapshots



Chair's statement

Over the last year Swan has continued to grow by forming strong partnerships, improving neighbourhoods and empowering our residents.

We secured the fifth largest grant allocation from the Housing Corporation. It reflects our position as one of the leading social housing developers in Essex and east London. As the housing market slows, there will, no doubt, be numerous opportunities presented to us to develop more social housing. Such opportunities will, however, need to be addressed with a healthy dose of realism.

Our reputation as a developer is founded on our strength as a people organisation. We have the capacity, the resources and the experience to get involved in larger regeneration activities, but we will not do so without understanding the people challenges involved.

We know that for many of our residents, the financial downturn represents a major challenge. We understand because we are constantly engaging with them, whether through focus groups, satisfaction surveys or through their representation on our boards.

So while we will continue to engage in regeneration and development schemes, we will also continue to enable our residents to live better lives. We will meet the challenges faced in reducing worklessness, in empowering residents and in creating sustainable communities. Put simply, we believe in helping people to help themselves.

At the same time, we will not lose sight of the nuts and bolts of our work – creating, maintaining and improving our residents' homes. We are committed to quality, whether in the way we manage our assets, the delivery of an exceptional repairs service or the specialist advice our Housing Officers provide.

All are symptomatic of our focus on people. And last year, we established a Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy that shapes our behaviour. Using our experience of investment and partnership, and by valuing and enabling our people, we will revitalise our communities and neighbourhoods.

My confidence in the future of Swan is shared by those we work with, and those who invest in us. I am confident that the staff, senior management and Board of Swan will demonstrate that faith is not misplaced.



Richard Frost
Chair

Creating excellence in regenerating communities

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Chief Executive's statement

Swan has enjoyed a successful year, building on the pattern of growth in recent years. We've moved into east London with successful stock transfers in Tower Hamlets; we launched a development arm, Swan New Homes, to support our social housing work and we have become a significant Housing Corporation partner for housing development in the east of England and London.

We are an increasingly confident organisation with a clear vision of where we're heading and a sound plan of how we're going to get there. A business restructure and the devolution of power to tenants, means we're in better shape to deal with upheavals in the housing sector and more accountable to the people we serve.

As this annual report shows, our focus is on people. Primarily that means our residents, who we want to provide with high quality services and affordable homes. This past year has seen us give Swan residents a leading role in the development of our services. We have given people more say at local level and increased their involvement through training and support.

The other really important people for Swan are our staff and our partners. We plan to invest more in our people and improve our relationships with all our partners.

Many thanks to Swan staff and Board Members for their achievements in the past year and their commitment and drive for the exciting years ahead.

John D Synnuck
Chief Executive

“We were blown away by the house. They thought of everything when they designed them.”

“I first moved onto the Five Links estate when I was 13, then I came back when I was 22 and now I live here again.

It was known as Alcatraz. Once inside people disappeared into the high walled alleys. A lot of the flats around the outside of the whole estate had garages underneath which used to be derelict. There was a big green space in the middle with walkways but it never felt safe.

Community Support Officers are always walking about now, all the kids know them because they talk to them and they've got respect for them. My kids are safe here, they've made friends from different schools who they play with. Parking is so much better. They've made the whole place more open.

We were blown away by the house. They thought of everything when they designed them. My neighbours are fantastic and I showed one of my neighbours around my house before she moved into hers.

We've joined the Tenants Association and we're trying to start it up. We've had really good feedback, there's about ten of us of all different ages. Swan is helping us sort it out. We need people who want to make a difference, we want to live here and we want it to be right. Change only happens when you do something. No one hands anything to you on a plate.”

Louise Christopher
Laindon, Essex

Putting our residents first

The voice of Swan residents was heard loud and clear this year in discussions at estate residents boards and consultative committees, on estates through walkabouts, in focus groups and surveys and through the dedicated website for residents, web4residents.org.uk.

Our resident involvement team helped more people get involved than ever before and what they said has helped us decide what we should do and how we can develop our services. We saw Brackendale Residents Association set up, we carried out a quality of life survey on the Five Links Estate and we held a residents conference in March open to all Swan residents.



“I’m quite confident in reading Swan’s leaflets in English now. I also try to read an English newspaper for one hour a day.”

“I was living with my relatives in Manchester but now I live on my own in London and need to be more independent. I teach Arabic to children and many of them speak English to each other. I find it easier to teach now I know more English and understand what they are saying.

The English course I go to at the neighbourhood office is taught by Youssuf. He is very good, he helps me with everything. There are twelve students now and every two or three weeks a new student joins the class.

The course is two hours a week for a year. At the end of the year there will be an exam – involving a test of my writing, reading, listening and speaking. I want to learn to speak good English, so I will probably do another course after this one.

Mainly I get course information from Abdullah, through the estate office. I’m quite confident in reading Swan’s leaflets now, I try to read them in English first and I also try to read an English newspaper for one hour a day.”

Hasan Ali
Bow, London

Helping a community grow and prosper

Swan is one of the leading developers and regeneration experts in the south-east of England. In March we heard that we’d secured £64million in funding from the Housing Corporation, the fifth largest amount in the country. Part of the reason we’re a trusted development partner is that we understand that sustainability is about people.

We help all our residents to take a full and active role in their neighbourhoods through training and support services. We started English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training on the Exmouth Estate to give local people the confidence to talk and mix with others in their community. We celebrated diversity on the Craylands Estate with an International Day and encouraged greater community involvement in Essex.



“Paula from Swan helped me get a pass that means I can go on trains and buses for free.”

“I go bowling on Mondays, there are about eight of us. I got about two or three strikes this week. I also play snooker on Thursday and I go there on my own, I cycle down there if I want. Swan helped me to get involved. I’ve also got good friends from college where I studied horticulture. I love it.

Paula from Swan helps me with housing and my money. She helped me get a pass that means I can go on trains and buses for free. I’ve known Paula for about a year and I get on very well with her.

I help with Swan’s job interviews. I’m on the panel for support workers and I say, this person’s good, I think they’ll be good in the job and things like that. I only talk about the person when they leave the room. I’ve been four or five times, I like it.

I also went to some meetings with Swan about a support leaflet. Me and a few other people decided what should go into it.”

Alistair Barker
Basildon, Essex

Striving for excellence in all that we do

Every aspect of our service should be of the highest quality. We have been awarded the Charter Mark, Clients Charter and Investors in People but the key audience in deciding if we measure up are the people we serve. Residents told us that our telephone service and customer care are not up to scratch, so we’re taking action now to improve in those areas.

Other recognition came when our regeneration plans for the Bow Cross Estate were shortlisted for the National Building Awards 2008. We were the only Housing Association to make the final list for this prestigious prize. We were also highly commended in the Housing Association of the Year category of the Regeneration and Renewal Awards 2007.



“When I looked around, I was so pleased. I could really see myself in the place.”

“It was impossible for me to find somewhere to live in the area. I looked at a 1 bed flat for £90,000. It was a basement flat and nowhere near the standard of the home I’ve got now.

When I first started looking in the area I knew I didn’t want to rent. I wanted a place I could come home to and that would be mine. One of my friends said, have you tried shared ownership?

I just wanted a 1 bedroom flat, a decent place, and I found out about these new build Swan homes through a shared ownership website. I really liked the idea of getting my own place without doing all other work like painting and decorating. When I went to Swan’s website it really explained what shared ownership was and I read up on all the terms and conditions.

In my job its quite hard to get time off, so Swan helped me out by saying we’ll meet you late on a Friday when you come back from travelling so you can have a quick look around and see if you like it. When I came in, I really liked the place and reserved straightaway. When I looked around, I was so pleased. I could really see myself in the place.

It wasn’t a long process, Swan helped me move in pretty quickly. And as I moved in on a certain date I got a £500 moving in bonus which really did help me.”

Anthony Bennett
Canvey Island, Essex

Providing high quality and well managed homes

All Swan homes in Essex and London – rented, shared ownership, supported housing, owner-occupied – should be high quality, affordable homes. In the past year we completed 738 handovers, an increase of over a third on the previous year. The housing services we provide to residents are equally important and we made a marked improvement in customer services last year, for example, we were awarded accreditation to the Quality Housing Standard of customer service.

We also launched Swan New Homes last year. This is a development company that can compete in the open market and will enable us to generate profits to put into improving our services for residents.



Overview

	Group			
	Owned number of units 2008	Owned number of units 2007	Managed number of units 2008	Managed number of units 2007
Social housing				
General needs	5,160	4,928	-	-
Shared ownership	459	346	-	-
Sheltered (elderly)	28	35	-	-
Other supported housing	510	543	-	-
NHS keyworker accomodation	689	479	96	89
Supported housing (Floating support)	-	-	-	15
Temporary social housing	-	-	15	17
Total social housing	6,846	6,331	111	121
Non-social housing				
Market rented	83	148	-	-
Garages	426	409	-	-
Sold to leaseholder with retained freehold	645	598	-	-
Total Housing Stock	8,000	7,486	111	121

Group income and expenditure account

Swan Housing Association Limited
Year ended 31 March 2008

	2008 £ '000	2007 £ '000
Turnover	36,694	29,556
Operating costs	(28,932)	(20,851)
Operating surplus	7,762	8,705
Surplus on sale of properties	1,782	72
Interest receivable	204	227
Interest payable and similar charges	(13,345)	(10,509)
Deficit on ordinary activities before taxation	(3,597)	(1,505)
Tax on deficit on ordinary activities	177	88
Deficit on ordinary activities after taxation	(3,420)	(1,417)

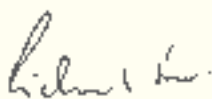
The turnover and deficit for both the current and prior year relate to continuing activities.

Group balance sheet

Swan Housing Association Limited
Year ended 31 March 2008

	2008 £ '000	2007 £ '000
Tangible fixed assets		
Housing properties at valuation	463,244	362,433
Other fixed assets	5,093	3,922
Total tangible assets	468,337	366,355
Current assets		
Debtors	11,900	5,336
Short term Investments	3,127	474
Cash at bank and in hand	2,146	1,010
	17,173	6,820
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(17,531)	(26,152)
Net current liabilities	(358)	(19,332)
Total assets less current liabilities	467,979	347,023
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	344,873	236,983
Capital and reserves		
Share capital non-equity	-	-
Income and expenditure account	2,282	4,054
Designated reserve	542	396
Revaluation reserve	120,282	105,590
Capital and reserves	467,979	347,023

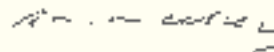
The financial statements were approved by the Board on 23rd October 2008 and signed on its behalf by:



Richard Frost
Chair



Ian Ritchie
Vice Chair



Roy Weekley
Treasurer

A full set of audited accounts are available on our website www.swan.org.uk

Average weekly rents

	Swan Housing Group	Supported housing average rent	Total average rent
	£	£	£
Bedsit	54.24	70.85	60.09
bedroom	68.42	73.79	69.33
2 bedroom	80.84	69.55	80.63
3 bedroom	87.91	72.34	87.66
4 bedroom	96.82	81.26	95.13
5 +	109.18	110.11	110.11

Repairs performance

	On time %	Annual target %
Immediate	98.50	98
Emergency	97.54	98
Urgent	97.31	94
Routine	96.46	95
Total	96.91	95

Our people

We employ a total of 280 people across the group:

	Number	%
White	250	89%
Black	21	8%
Asian	5	2%
Other	4	1%

New homes

for April 2007 - March 2008 are as follows:

General needs rented	627
Intermediate rented	17
Shared ownership	94
Total	738

Board members

Swan Group

Gideon Amos
Hui Fong Chen
Richard Frost+
Tim Gerrard
Tony Holland
David Holmes
George Kieffer
Derek Morrison
Ian Ritchie
Stephen King
John Synnuck
Roy Weekley

Swan (Essex)

May Briggs
Vicki Brown
Keith Dabbs
Ken Dean
John Elkins
Malcolm Elston
Stephen King+
Brian Smith

Swan (London)

Oliver Blunt
Tyson Bunby
Ann Carlton
Nasreen Golamnohee
Tony Holland
Eileen McNally
Ian Ritchie+
Mohamid Sharif
Colin Wannell

+ Chair

Directors

John Synnuck
Chief Executive
Mark Thompson
Deputy Chief Executive
Ian Nelthorpe
Central Services Director
Paul Edwards
Director of Treasury Services
Michael Rutherford
Director of Financial Services
Mary Gibbons
Regional Director Housing (Essex)
Sandra Fawcett
Regional Director Housing (London)
Terry Bird
Director of Asset Management
Kevin Hartnett
Group Development Director
Dave Poulter
Development Director
Major Projects
Roger Synnuck
Construction Director
Swan New Homes
Jon Hayden
Development Delivery Director
Swan New Homes

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