



# thirteen

A strong start. Ready to grow.



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**Our 2014/15 Year**



**At Thirteen we are proud to be a catalyst for change, providing opportunities for people to make a difference to their own lives.**

Mike Clark



## Chair's Introduction

The first year of Thirteen has not been without its challenges; bringing together two large, already successful organisations was never going to be an easy task but both Fabrick and Vela were clear on the ultimate benefits it would bring.

While cuts and government pressures continued to take their toll, we knew that merging to create the Thirteen Group would be the right thing to do and would help us continue to deliver effectively and efficiently into the future.

Against a backdrop of crises in our sector nationally, as well as international economic pressures, we undertook a tough challenge which we knew would not be without its stresses and strains and would mean major changes to staffing and ways of working.

However we have spent the last year getting our structure in place and working towards what has become our overarching priority for 2015-16; 'building firm foundations.'

We now know we have to concentrate on getting the basics right as a group of landlords and care and support services, whilst helping raise the aspirations and ambitions of our customers.

Thirteen has already proved to be capable of doing just that. In our first year we won a range of awards, employed scores of apprentices, built 592 new homes and won a range of new contracts. These are just some of the achievements detailed later in this report.

It goes without saying that I would like to give my thanks, as ever, to all my fellow board directors for their continued support, as well as our dedicated staff members, who have worked hard and shown their commitment through difficult times.

At Thirteen we are proud to be a catalyst for change, providing opportunities for people to make a difference to their own lives.

We're about challenging preconceptions and seeing things differently. Thirteen is just a number. What makes the difference is how you choose to perceive it.

A year has flown by at the Thirteen Group and despite the challenges facing not only the sector but the country as a whole, we have already proved that we can deliver on what we set out to do.

The Thirteen Group was created as a result of a desire to continue to deliver an essential function in a changing and ever more difficult environment.

By bringing Fabrick and Vela together, we knew we could share resources and costs to deliver even more enhanced services and initiatives.

We projected efficiency savings of £10m in the first three years as a result of the merger and in the first year alone, we saved £7.5m – equivalent to 5.2% of the group's turnover.

We are now starting to really feel those benefits amid funding cuts and reforms and are at a stage where the introduction of new systems and schemes that have been worked on for the last year are coming to fruition.

As our chair has stated, this is our year of building firm foundations and continuing to focus on our three main priorities of building a great organisation, promoting resilience and sustainability and being committed to growth and adding value.

We have worked with our partner companies around those priorities and not only have a range of successes to celebrate from our first year but can look forward to the next year with optimism.

Significant external changes will soon hit our income hard. However while we know things are going to be tough and we face massive challenges, our bold decision to create Thirteen has put us in a strong position to weather the storm.

We are financially robust and will be introducing new terms and conditions for staff, as well as investing in the future with an impressive integrated property and customer system that will make a positive impact on the overall running of the business.

We are also looking to deliver even more initiatives in partnership with other agencies and authorities, including a new dementia care village in Middlesbrough.

Customers remain a priority and we are constantly changing and advancing to ensure we offer the best possible service and make the biggest positive impact we can.

One year in and the Thirteen Group has a bright future – one I can say I am extremely proud to be a part of.

## Chief Executive's Review



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**We projected efficiency savings of £10m in the first three years as a result of the merger and in the first year alone, we saved £7.5m – equivalent to 5.2% of the group's turnover.**

Alison Thain OBE

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## Highlights of our Year

**By bringing together Fabrick and Vela we aimed to share resources and expertise to make us stronger and more efficient, allowing services to be enhanced further and more vital new homes to be built.**

By joining forces to become Thirteen, we have significant successes to celebrate from the 2014-15 year against our three overarching priorities. Some of our key achievements are:

### Building a Great Organisation

- As a result of the merger, we saved £7.5m in the first year alone – equivalent to 5.2% of the group's turnover
- Our turnover in 2014-15 was £157m and our surplus was £22.4m
- Management costs equated to £20m or £600 per annum per property
- We spent £32m on routine and planned repairs and maintenance and £25m on major repairs
- We were assessed as G1 regulatory status for governance and V1 status for financial viability, the highest level that can be awarded by the Homes and Communities Agency. Processes have been put in place to ensure standards are maintained.
- We started the implementation of a new computer and business system that will provide one single system to manage all of our property and customer records. The iPaCs system will help us to streamline our activities, create new, more efficient ways of working and represents a step change in the way information will be managed right across the Thirteen Group.
- Building was nearing completion on our new head office and a number of teams successfully moved between offices.
- We opened our Titan House one-stop shop in Hartlepool and moved a number of customer service staff members into a brand new base in Billingham.
- Just 12 months after our formation, we were awarded the Government's Customer Service Excellence Standard, which looks at 57 elements that focus on the needs of people engaging with the organisation.
- We launched Channel, our new intranet, which became the essential information and communication tool for staff across the group.
- Concentrated work was carried out towards delivering new terms and conditions for staff, offering a great package for all employees, while still being affordable for the group.

## Promoting Resilience and Sustainability

- Our Allocations and Empty Homes Strategy was reviewed to promote tenancy sustainability and incorporate the provision of quality home fixtures and fittings. Performance outturns indicated that there had been a positive impact on void rent loss with a reduction of £43k on the projected amount and the number of empty properties reduced by an average of 10% across the Group.
- Tees Valley Housing's supported housing provision was transferred to Thirteen Care and Support, which enabled the creation of a single business unit with a dedicated board and a new management structure.
- More than 2,000 properties benefited from energy efficiency work to help save money for our residents and reduce carbon emissions. More than 3,000 components were installed, including external wall insulation, new boilers, double glazing and photovoltaic panels.
- We worked with OVO Energy to help our tenants get the best possible gas and electricity tariffs for them through getting a property ready for the next

tenant by finding the cheapest energy tariff it can.

- Vital partnership work continued on major regeneration schemes such as Grove Hill in Middlesbrough and Victoria in Stockton and new schemes began to move forward, such as North Ormesby in Middlesbrough.
- The KYM Big Lottery-funded project celebrated its first anniversary in August 2014 after a year providing free one-to-one financial advice, support, social events, IT access and health services to young people aged 16-24.
- We launched our Money Advice and Employability service to help customers make the most of their money, help them get online, or take steps to find a job.
- Committed regeneration activity including Swainby Road in Stockton and Mandale in Thornaby was delivered in accordance with the agreed programme.

## Committed to Growth and Adding Value

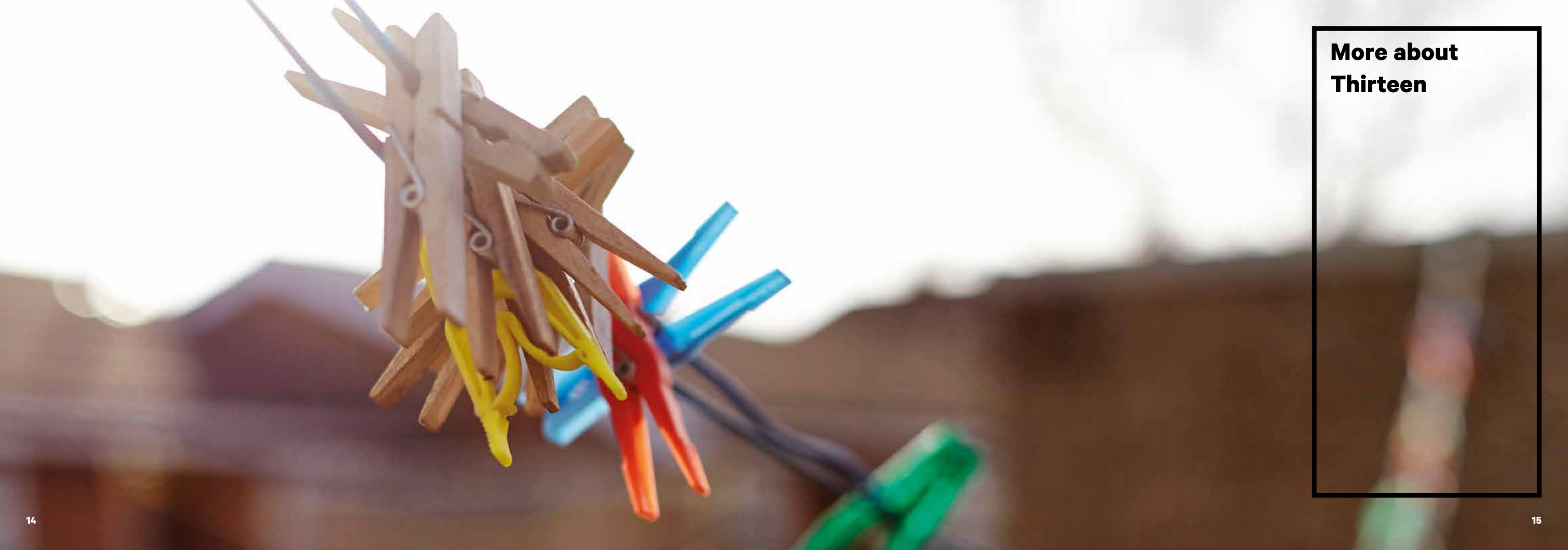
- We built 592 new homes across the group, including a range of properties for rent, shared ownership and sale.
- Our social investment activity brought an added social value of more than £354,000. In 2014/15 our employability advisers alone helped 97 people into employment, 244 into training and 43 into work experience.
- Work started on a range of major new schemes to provide new homes across the region, including three sites in Middlesbrough, the major West End Gardens development of 117 homes in Stockton and sites in a number of areas in Hartlepool.
- Thirteen formed part of the Achieving real change in communities (Arcc) consortium that was successful in securing the Ministry of Justice's Transforming Rehabilitation contract for the County Durham and Tees Valley area.
- Our Fuel Poverty Strategy was approved in principle and we entered into a collaborative agreement with a range of other landlords to form a joint company – Your Energy Services

NE Ltd (YES) - to help reduce tenants' fuel bills. Further options will be considered in 2015/16.

- We started or completed work on a range of extra care schemes, including one in Thirsk, North Yorkshire, offering independent living with specialist facilities and care and support on site if needed.
- We carried out a range of environmental projects in communities as part of a specialist partnership with Groundwork North East, to boost neighbourhoods and bring unused land back to life.
- We started work on a range of new projects to offer specialist housing, including rented homes for NHS staff and began work to sensitively bring a range of historic buildings back into use as housing.



**We built 592 new homes across the group, including a range of properties for rent, shared ownership and sale.**



**More about  
Thirteen**

# From the Beginning

The history of Thirteen is rooted in communities across the North East.

We grew from traditional housing associations and local authority housing which provided safe and sustainable homes for thousands of people in the region. But since our formation in 2014, we are continuing to develop our services to create opportunities for people to make a positive change in their lives and enable them to raise and meet their own ambitions.

With 70,000 tenants and more than 32,000 homes, the story really begins with the formation of Tees Valley Housing Association almost 20 years ago - the organisation being formed by the merger of Cleveland and Teesside Housing Society and Phoenix Housing in 1996.

The merger of the two associations brought together 4,000 properties in locations across the North East and Yorkshire.

In April 2000, Tees Valley Housing Group was formed by Tees Valley Housing Association, Tees Valley Trust, and joined by Sunderland based Banks of the Wear Community Housing.

Tristar Homes was created as an arms-length management organisation in 2002 to manage council housing stock on behalf of Stockton Borough Council. In 2010, Tristar Homes went on to become a registered provider of social housing, taking over the ownership of the council's stock.

A little further down the Tees in Middlesbrough, Erimus Housing was created from the transfer of council housing stock in November 2004. Meanwhile in Hartlepool, the housing stock was transferred from the council to Housing Hartlepool in March 2004.

## Fabrick and Vela

Four years later, on 1 April 2008, Fabrick Housing Group was created by the joining of Tees Valley Housing and Erimus Housing. These two combined to manage 15,000 homes in communities ranging from North Tyneside to York.

In 2010, Tristar Homes and Housing Hartlepool joined in partnership to form Vela, a major housing group in the North East with a combined 17,000 homes spread across Stockton, Hartlepool and other areas of the North East.

In July 2012, Newcastle-based specialist charity Norcare joined Fabrick which enabled Norcare to boost its work across the North East. Later to become Thirteen Care and Support, Norcare was set up in 1984 to provide housing support and a range of other services for some of the most vulnerable groups in society. This included working on projects to support veterans, people suffering alcohol or drug addiction, those with mental health issues and victims of domestic violence.

## Thirteen's formation

Fast-forwarding to April 2014, Thirteen was formed by the merger of Fabrick and Vela. To help challenge the negativity and superstition that have historically affected some of the communities we serve, Thirteen's choice of name demonstrates how we look to the future and want to do things differently within our communities.

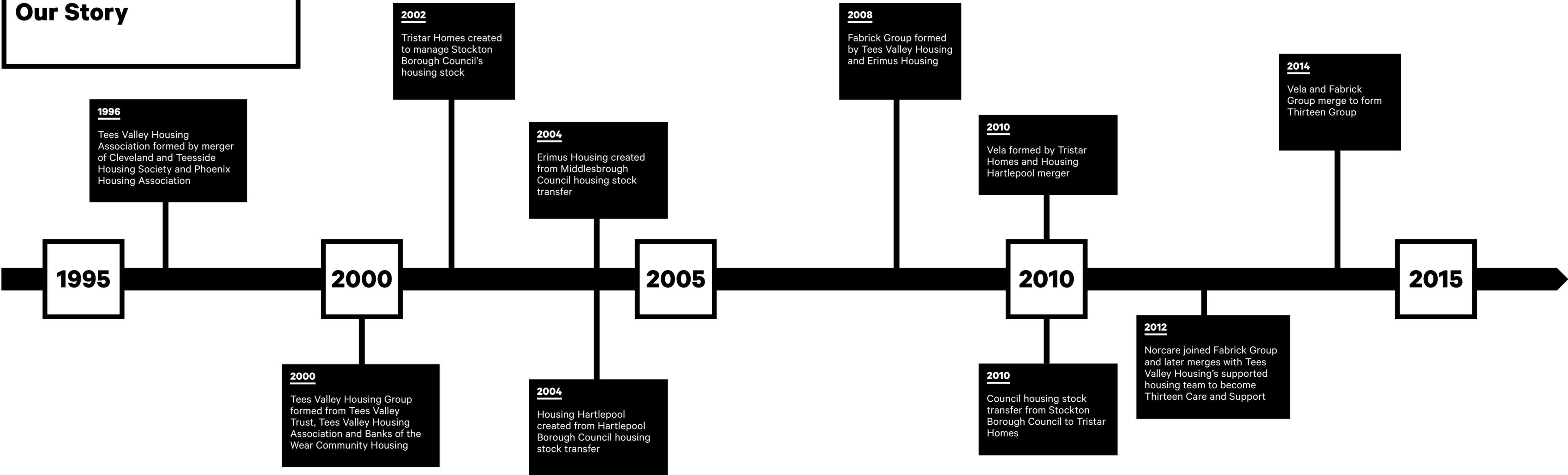
We now own and manage more than 32,000 homes and we're committed to growth. We expect 435 new homes to be handed over in the 2015/16 year alone.

The past 20 years have seen the metamorphosis of many successful organisations to establish Thirteen as the largest group of housing associations in the North East and one of the top 25 in the country.

Throughout the organisational changes, we have brought together our strengths, experience, knowledge and resources, but the same challenges and aims remain.

Our strength as a group gives us an even greater ability to focus on the needs of our tenants, clients and neighbourhoods to provide genuine opportunities. Alongside providing high quality homes, our range of services including training and employment initiatives are helping people to realise ambitions and change their lives for the better.

# Our Story





## Who We Are

Based in the North East and covering an area from Northumberland to York, Thirteen doesn't just provide homes - we create opportunities for people to make a positive change.

At Thirteen, we realise that when we raise aspirations, challenge perceptions and look at things differently, we can create genuine opportunities. Opportunities to raise ambition. Opportunities to help people succeed.

We pride ourselves on being passionate about what we do because at Thirteen, we believe making a difference is worth the time and energy it takes to achieve.

When we're willing to take a fresh look and see life differently, we're able to create genuine opportunities. That's why at Thirteen, we avoid staid thinking and resist making assumptions; we always look for the potential in everyone.

**At the very heart of the business, we want to challenge preconceptions. Thirteen is just a number. The difference is how you choose to perceive it.**

## What We Do

At the Thirteen Group, we do more than just provide homes and build communities. We focus on people and know that through our work, we can improve lives by offering services, schemes and initiatives to help people help themselves.

Together the partner landlords Erimus Housing, Housing Hartlepool, Tees Valley Housing and Tristar Homes, own and manage more than 32,000 homes.

We also offer a vast range of support and specialist services for vulnerable people facing a range of challenges through our specialist arm, Thirteen Care and Support.

Parent company Thirteen offers strategic direction and drives the vision for the partnership, overseeing the partner organisations in the group.

By working together we can share expertise, resources and costs to achieve savings without reducing services and allowing our partner companies to focus on the needs of their tenants, neighbourhoods and clients.

Keeping customers at the heart of everything we do helps us shape our services and makes us strive to provide excellence and innovation.

We also work very closely with key partners to ensure that our neighbourhoods thrive and create the environment that people want to live in.

We offer quality homes and vital care and support, improve properties and neighbourhoods, regenerate areas and build high-spec new homes with a range of affordable ownership options.

But that's only part of the story. We believe in doing much more and our range of initiatives, including health, employment and financial schemes, allows people to make a difference to their own lives.



# The Partner Companies

## Erimus Housing

With 11,500 properties across Middlesbrough, we don't just provide quality homes and first class services to residents, we also offer a range of specialist award-winning schemes. We're also a key player in the regeneration of the area, investing in the town to make a difference both locally and to the wider region.

## Housing Hartlepool

At Housing Hartlepool we have invested millions into our 7,500 homes to ensure they meet modern day standards and we are continuing this with an ongoing programme. As Hartlepool Borough Council's major regeneration partner we are playing a vital role in the town, including ongoing regeneration of neighbourhoods and specialist buildings.

## Tees Valley Housing

Covering an area spanning North Tyneside to York and with over 4,000 properties, we believe in investing in neighbourhoods through new and innovative services and initiatives. This approach helps us develop sustainable communities and provide positive attractions for new residents, working closely alongside our existing residents and offering a range of ways for people to get involved in decision making.

## Tristar Homes

Tristar Homes manages more than 10,000 homes across the Stockton borough, including Stockton, Thornaby, Billingham, Yarm and their surrounding villages. We are dedicated to ensuring our neighbourhoods are pleasant and safe places to live, as well as providing new homes and building top quality properties for rent and sale in a range of locations.

## thirteen Care and Support

At Thirteen Care and Support, we work to improve lives by working with and supporting people aged 16 and over who are vulnerable and face a range of challenges. This includes helping them find the right kind of home, addressing any issues they may be facing and helping them towards leading happy, independent lives.





## Our Partners' Key Achievements

# Erimus Housing

**Managing around 11,500 properties in the Middlesbrough area, Erimus Housing provides quality homes and first-class services to customers.**

### **Some of the key achievements for Erimus Housing in 2014/15 include:**

#### **Grove Hill revamp**

The Grove Hill estate in Middlesbrough took a giant step forward with the completion of 35 affordable new homes in March 2015.

Erimus Housing completed the facelift after hundreds of unpopular and outdated homes were demolished. They were replaced by new two bedroom bungalows, semi-detached and terraced houses which were built for rent on the Bishopton Road site.

The homes form part of a wider regeneration programme delivered in partnership with Middlesbrough Council, which has already led to the redevelopment of a number of sites in Grove Hill.

#### **The Gateway neuro rehabilitation centre**

Erimus Housing and healthcare group Keiro won a string of major awards for The Gateway neuro rehabilitation centre at Middlehaven in Middlesbrough. Providing high quality neuro, stroke and spinal injury rehabilitation and care, the facility won the award for Best Supported Living Development at the Better

Healthcare Awards. The building was also highly commended as Best Product for Financial Efficiencies in the Working Together award and North East Project of the Year at the RICS Renaissance Awards. As part of the complex, Erimus Housing developed apartments, houses and bungalows with features designed especially for people with mobility problems.

#### **Netherfields and Park End site developments**

Work got underway at three Middlesbrough sites in September 2014 to provide more than 50 vital affordable homes.

Erimus Housing started work at the site of the former Fulbeck House flats in Netherfields, as well as two Park End sites: Penrith Road and Cornforth Walk.

Working in partnership with contractors, the developments will provide 28 homes at Netherfields, 18 at Cornforth Walk and eight at Penrith Road.

#### **You, me and Thorntree**

People around Thorntree came together for an event to help make big improvements to health and wellbeing in the community.

# Erimus Housing

Residents came along to the event to share ideas with Erimus Housing and other organisations to consider how assets such as buildings and other spaces could be used to improve health, wellbeing and life chances of people in the community.

The idea is to help the community take the lead in the project, identify everything that is good about the neighbourhood and help it achieve more.

## Heat and insulation improvements

Glastonbury House benefited from external work to insulate the high rise block and provide a new look for the building. Gas heating was also provided for the popular sheltered scheme.

Consultation with residents led to another project in conjunction with Groundwork North East to carry out environmental improvements, which include a new garden area for the residents to enjoy.

Residents helped design the project which incorporates raised flower and vegetable beds and an area for relaxing exercise.

## Improving areas on estates

We have been working with residents on a variety of new environmental schemes in Middlesbrough.

In Hemlington, artist Graeme Hopper worked with the neighbourhood team at Hemlington to develop the outstanding artwork inside the park. The new work is next to the main arterial route through Hemlington, so it's visible for the many people passing through the route every day.

We've also been working to create a woodland walk at Hemlington and two other schemes to improve the appearance of land at Langton Close and Eden Road in Grove Hill, as well as at Chertsey Avenue in Pallister Park.

These projects, which also aim to improve the use of the areas, are developing into wide-ranging schemes which will help to resolve a number of issues and make the areas more desirable.

## Environmental work to boost learning

A wildlife garden at Caldicotes Primary Academy in Middlesbrough was created with help from Thirteen's grounds maintenance team.

The development work on the site helps children learn and understand the environment in action.

Along with a large woodland area, the garden features a secure pond area where children can enjoy supervised pond dipping and explore the surrounding area to discover a wide range of pond and woodland creatures, which are now thriving at the site.

A special entrance to the garden, inspired by the novel *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, was also created using two old school sheds, adding to the uniqueness of the site.

In another environmental improvement project, a neglected strip of land in Middlesbrough known as Jellystone has been transformed into an environmentally-friendly double-use facility.

The area in Grove Hill was revitalised to create a training centre and community allotments, to help local people develop gardening skills and grow a range of plants and vegetables.

The scheme won Sustainable Project of the Year at the prestigious Builder and Engineer Awards in November 2014.





# Housing Hartlepool

**Managing around 7,500 properties and as lead partner in the Hartlepool area, Housing Hartlepool continues to develop and provide quality homes and first-class services to customers.**

## **Some of the key achievements for Housing Hartlepool in 2014/15 include:**

### **Morison Memorial Hall rescue**

A derelict 19th century Methodist chapel on Hartlepool's Headland is being transformed into affordable housing in a £1m regeneration programme.

In partnership with the Hartlepool New Deal for Communities Trust - with support from Hartlepool Borough Council and Esh Property Services - Housing Hartlepool is working to rescue Morison Memorial Hall and convert it into eight apartments. The work is transforming the building with the help of trainees on the Armed Forces Employability Programme.

The building is located in a conservation area and has been locally listed by the council. The exterior has been sympathetically restored, employing the skills of contractors who specialise in historic work for clients such as English Heritage.

### **Crown Halls student accommodation launched**

Housing Hartlepool launched the first properties built specifically for students at Cleveland College of Art and Design.

The Crown Halls apartments provide four new accommodation blocks for over 50 students, including two new

apartment blocks and two town houses. The development on the college's Church Square campus includes bedrooms which are fully adapted for people with disabilities.

Students are also benefiting from high-speed data links, bike storage and ensuite shower rooms in the apartments. Outside, the apartment blocks have secure outdoor space with parking and shared gardens. The development was built to be highly energy efficient and also has solar panels fitted to the roof.

### **Throston flats development**

In Hartlepool, ten brand new two and three bedroom homes were built for Housing Hartlepool on the site of the former Springwell flats in the Throston area of the town.

The homes are a valuable addition to the affordable housing stock in the area, as well as providing training and employment opportunities and valuable experience for the construction apprentices who worked on the development.

# Housing Hartlepool

## **Rostwaite Avenue development**

In October 2014, work started on two major projects to boost the number of affordable homes in Stockton. The development at Rostwaite Avenue in the town has seen 14 two and three bedroom homes constructed, along with one wheelchair-adapted bungalow.

The project, part of a wider £2.3m development, was part-funded with grant support from the Homes and Communities Agency and provided training, employment and work experience for apprentices.

## **Multi-million pound facelifts**

A multi-million pound investment scheme to transform homes in Hartlepool completed its first phase in early 2015.

Over £7m was invested in internal and external work designed to keep homes for hundreds of people comfortable and secure.

In Owton Manor, 134 properties were completed in December 2014, with the refurbished flats benefiting from high-quality kitchens and bathrooms, boiler upgrades, new electric fires and fire surrounds. Housing Hartlepool residents also received external wall insulation and energy efficient windows and doors to increase the security and warmth in over 581 homes across the town.

The transformation of properties also included a recently completed scheme to give a new look to 136 bungalows at Rift House, with new boundary walls, fences, railings and gates to improve their external look.

## **Titan House opening**

In October, our friendly customer service team moved into Titan House, York Road, to make it even easier for customers to access the services they need.

We've received some fantastic compliments from customers who have visited our new one-stop housing office, where customers can access a range of services including the neighbourhood teams, information about properties to rent and help with any anti-social behaviour.

The office replaced a small row of empty shops and is open from Monday to Friday to provide a wide range of services for all customers of the landlords in the Thirteen Group.

## **Extra care in Thirsk**

In Sowerby on the outskirts of Thirsk, a new community development will provide extra care accommodation for the town.

Work on the apartment block started earlier in 2015 to provide high quality accommodation for people who need

additional levels of care and support, while helping them maintain a level of independence.

Set across three floors, the development includes a communal area on each floor and an attractive garden room for residents to enjoy.

The extra care apartments are part of a new community hub in Sowerby that includes retail units which will encourage residents to socialise with their neighbours and provide valuable services for people living nearby.





# Tees Valley Housing

**Managing over 4,000 properties from York up to Northumberland, Tees Valley Housing provides new and innovative services and initiatives for customers.**

**Some of the key achievements for Tees Valley Housing in 2014/15 include:**

## **Nursery Gardens regeneration**

A multi-million pound scheme in Stockton town centre was completed to provide 110 homes in the town.

The development, called Nursery Gardens, is a short walk from the town centre and has transformed the area by demolishing 185 terraced properties and the Trades and Labour Social Club to make way for the new homes.

Since 2007 Dunelm Homes has built 110 new homes on the site. Sixty properties were for private sale by Dunelm and the remaining two, three and four bedroom houses and bungalows were bought by Tees Valley Housing for social rent and for sale through rent-to-buy, shared equity and shared ownership.

As part of the regeneration work, Dunelm Homes also funded a piece of artwork - created by four primary schools and sculptor, Andrew McKeown - at the entrance to Spring Street bridge.

## **New homes in Stockton**

Construction began in May 2014 on a major regeneration project to bring much-needed family homes,

bungalows and apartments into Stockton town centre.

The development, called West End Gardens, features a mix of two bedroom apartments and bungalows and two and three bedroom houses.

Available to local people for rent and shared ownership, the programme includes the development of 117 new homes on the town centre site which is bounded by Dovecot Street, Hartington Road, St Bernard's Road and Worthing Street.

## **Mascot House 20th birthday celebration**

Owned by Tees Valley Housing, Mascot House, a landmark housing scheme for South Asian people in Newcastle, celebrated its 20th birthday during 2014/15.

Residents got together to party with games and food as the apartment complex entered its third decade.

Mascot House is home to 30 one bedroom, two person properties and has communal gardens, a laundry and residents' lounge. The facility is close to local amenities, Newcastle's Chinatown, transport links, a newsagent, doctor and local supermarket.

# Tees Valley Housing

Since its official opening in 1995, residents of Mascot House have been supported by a house manager, providing a range of assistance including vital translation and interpretation for residents and visitors.

## **Billingham Library Customer Service Centre**

In January 2015, the new Billingham Library and Customer Service Centre opened.

The library is located in the town centre and is home to highly-skilled customer service staff from both the Thirteen Group and Stockton Borough Council.

The centre welcomes the customers of all landlords in the Thirteen Group to deal with their enquiries and offers self-service facilities and technology, allowing customers to report any issues or request services.





# Tristar Homes

**Lead partner in the Stockton area, Tristar Homes manages around 10,000 properties across the borough.**

## **Some of Tristar Homes' key achievements during 2014/15 include:**

### **Psst... Positively Stockton-on-Tees**

We supported Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's project to share all that is good about Stockton.

The psst... campaign was launched to counter any negative publicity as a result of Channel 4 showing the Benefits Street series based on the town's Tilery Estate.

Hundreds of people got involved in promoting what's best about Stockton, including organising the world's loudest whisper to promote positive voices, a Lovelier Production film to highlight the best of the town, and video comments from Stocktonians around the world.

### **Middlesbrough Extra Care**

Extra care apartments were launched earlier in 2015 for shared ownership and purchase at Beechfield Court and Beresford Crescent in Middlesbrough.

The £9m development features 87 two bedroom apartments and bungalows for over 55s, which give residents the privacy of their own home together with a range of on-site facilities offering care 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The facilities are all easily accessible with

step-free access throughout, residents' gardens, a bistro and hairdresser, together with on-site warden assistance when needed. The development also provides visitor accommodation, residents' parking and a roof terrace.

### **Tower blocks revamp**

Kennedy Gardens - three landmark tower blocks in Billingham - received a £10m revamp to provide smart, modern homes in the town centre.

The blocks were given a completely new look by Tristar Homes which included structural repairs, new render, solar panels, insulation and new fire alarm systems. The buildings also feature interactive lights at the top of each block which can be programmed into a range of sequences.

As part of the redevelopment, Tristar Homes built 12 brand new apartments and provided three new community rooms. Kennedy Gardens also has barrier-controlled residents' parking with electric car charging points, new street lighting and an impressive new sculpture.

### **App to access services**

Tristar Homes launched its online housing app in March 2015.

The app for smartphones enables residents to report repairs, find a home,

find local information, see how rent payments can be made and much more.

The app, which can be found and downloaded from the app store or on Google Play, gives customers another way of getting in touch with us and adds to the many other accessible ways of carrying out all sorts of customer service tasks.

### **Hardwick housing office**

Our former Hardwick neighbourhood office became home to the community hub Hope House in February 2015.

Open Monday to Friday mornings, customers can come to the office and use a free phone service to get in touch with our contact team, which can help with any enquires customers may have.

Customers can also speak to neighbourhood officers face-to-face during weekly housing surgeries at the hub, where they can get help with their enquiries.

### **Artwork in Billingham development**

Schoolchildren worked with a local artist to create a stylish fencing design as part of a £3m investment in Billingham.

Graeme Hopper worked with pupils from St Joseph's Primary School to design wildlife-themed fencing at Lewes Way on

the Radburn estate, which Tristar Homes worked on as part of a wider facelift in the neighbourhood.

The schoolchildren designed a special look for the steel fencing with a wildlife design including owls, spiders, flowers and mushrooms.

The facelift included external work to homes, environmental work including resurfacing and adding steel fencing to front gardens, as well as the closure of some footpaths. Improvement work was also completed on the popular local shopping parade.

### **Local people decide on funding**

Local people helped to decide the destination of £20,000 worth of funding for a community project to help young people in Stockton improve their life chances, volunteer, learn new skills and take part in fun activities that keep them safe.

The Tristar Homes Buzzin' fund gave a helping hand to Stockton-based charity Eastern Ravens Trust which launched the Nu4U programme. The project gives children and young people access to accredited courses to teach them how to manage their emotions and take control of their finances.

More than 1,500 people got involved and voted for a range of projects to receive funding.

### **Fairfield outdoor area launch**

People living in flats in Gunnerside Road, Cornfield Road and Brookfield Road in Fairfield, Stockton, welcomed the completion of work to an outdoor communal area in June 2014.

Tristar Homes breathed new life into a redundant patch of land to provide useful outside space in the area. The official opening of the site also marked the end of Keepmoat's modernisation work to the 100th block of flats owned by Tristar Homes, which improved their safety and made them more welcoming.

Much of the land was previously unused, but it now hosts off-street parking, a small patio and barbecue area and gardens for each block of flats with seating, bedding plants, screening and sculptures with images of wild animals and birds to provide a woodland feel.

Residents and youngsters from Fairfield Primary School and St Patrick's Primary School were also involved in creating artwork and digging for planting in the gardens.





# thirteen

## Care and Support

**Thirteen Care and Support provides a range of special care and support services to help vulnerable people throughout the North East.**

**Some of Thirteen Care and Support's key achievements during 2014/15 include:**

**Prestigious award for 'Support to Stay'**

Thirteen Care and Support won a Chartered Institute of Housing Celebrating the Region Award for its Support to Stay scheme.

The scheme offers help to sustain tenancies for customers of our partner landlords which might be at risk because of support needs being unmet.

Vulnerable residents of each of the partner landlords are identified and assessed, before a support plan is tailored specifically around their individual needs.

The main goal is to help people stay in their home and extend the average length of tenancy. This helps with increasing the confidence and independence of individual tenants, boosting stability within communities and reducing the costs associated with empty properties.

This was the first award picked up by Thirteen, just a few days after the company's formation in April 2014.

**Peer mentoring and volunteering**

The Middlesbrough Recovering Together (MRT) project offers support to people experiencing difficulties through the misuse of drugs and/or alcohol. We provide a range of services to give people the skills and support they need to overcome addiction, helping them to sustain their recovery and gain control of their lives.

Due to the success of peer mentoring and volunteering within the MRT service, we've developed a dedicated programme which is being expanded across the full range of Thirteen Care and Support services. This will train at least a further 25 people throughout the coming year, enabling them to undertake specialist volunteering and peer mentor roles.

Peer mentoring is when someone has real experience of issues and can use their experience to provide support to someone else facing the same issues.

## **Through the Gate**

We supported the delivery of Thirteen's Rehabilitation of Offenders package within the Achieving Real Change in Communities partnership.

We were awarded the Through the Gate service which works with a range of organisations to help offenders successfully reintegrate into society and reduce their risk of reoffending when they leave prison.

The service provides specialist support to help deal with issues such as homelessness, debt management, domestic abuse and those wanting to leave the sex trade, as well as access to education and employability services. This helps to further improve people's lives when they leave prison.

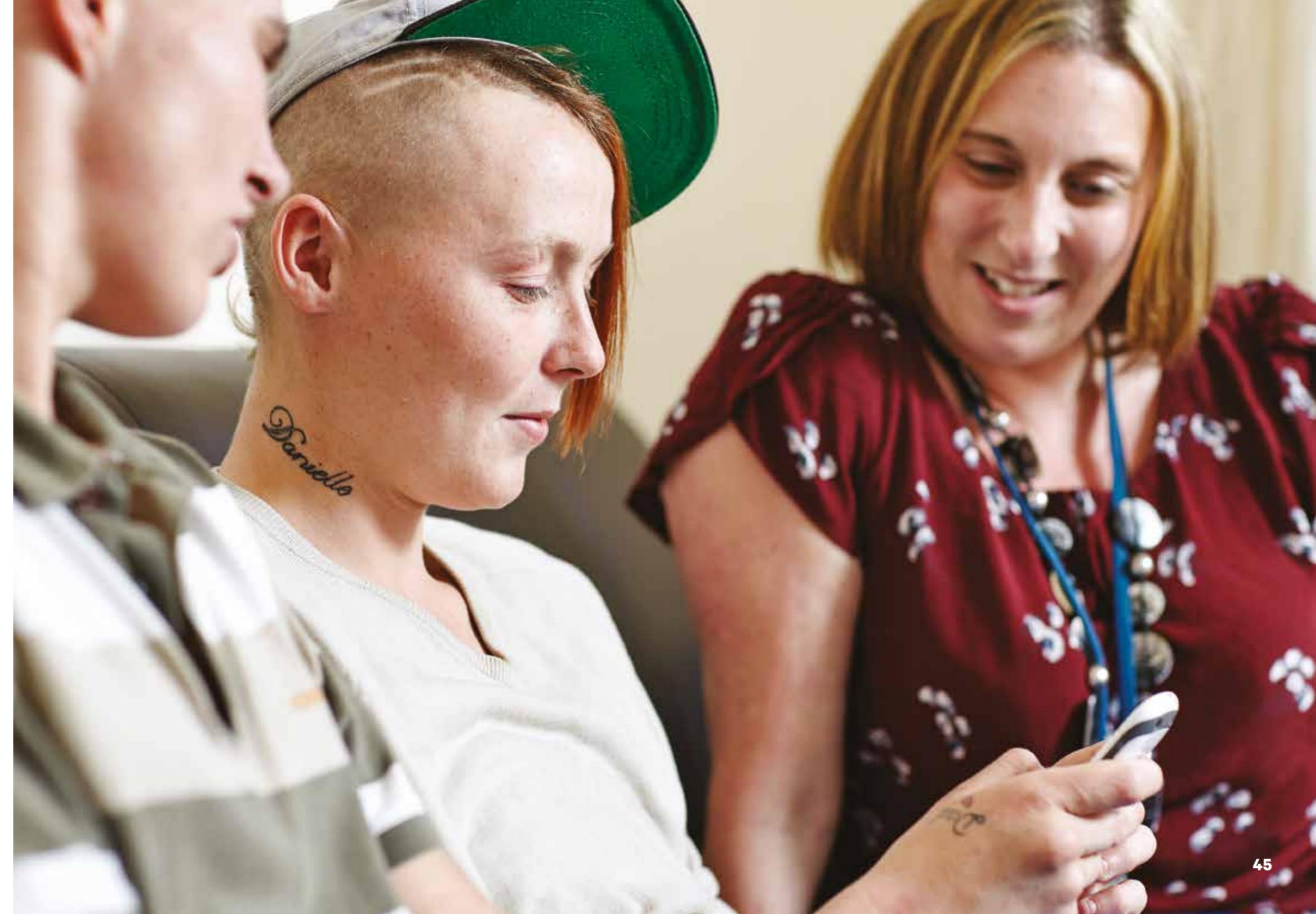
## **Family drug and alcohol service**

We're working in partnership with Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI) – a national charity which is delivering the integrated drug and alcohol recovery service for adults in Gateshead.

We're supporting families in Gateshead where parents face issues with drug and alcohol misuse. Service users receive an assessment and, with support from a recovery coordinator, we develop a care plan to support their journey to recovery. Service users have one-to-one support to meet personal needs, as well as the option to attend group work sessions.

## **Expanding Early Help service**

We expanded our Early Help service in Redcar and Cleveland, working with families to provide holistic support to help address their issues such as attendance problems at school, unemployment, health, domestic abuse, criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.



# Meet the Team

## Our Leadership Team



**Alison Thain OBE**  
Chief Executive

Alison has worked in the Tees Valley for over 20 years, beginning as Chief Executive of Cleveland and Teesside Housing Society.

In 2008 Alison became the Chief Executive of the Fabrick Group, a strategic partnership of Tees Valley Housing Group, of which Alison was Chief Executive, and Erimus Housing. Newcastle based Norcare joined in 2012.

Alison holds a number of non-executive directorships throughout the North East. She is Chair of the CBI in the North East, a member of the Leadership Board of the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, Vice Chair of Darlington Building Society and a council member of the North East Chamber of Commerce.

Alison was awarded the OBE in 2004 and an Honorary Doctorate in Business from Teesside University in 2014.

Alison is also an Executive Director on the Thirteen Group Board.



**Heather Ashton**  
Director of Resources

Heather is responsible for the financial and corporate services of the Group, including HR, ICT, compliance, legal services and governance.

Responsible for overall financial viability, Heather ensures effective treasury and funding arrangements and leads on risk and assurance.



**Martin Hawthorne**  
Director of Development and Regeneration

Responsible for developing and leading on all new build and acquisitions for the Group, Martin is also responsible for regeneration activities and the strategic property function.

Ongoing sustainable development encompasses all tenures and is enhanced by emerging financing and joint venture models.

Martin is also the lead executive for Tees Valley Housing, ensuring the effective delivery of its business and operational plans.



**Dave Pickard**  
Director of Operations

Dave has responsibility for developing and leading on all aspects of managing social and affordable housing within the group, including services for the elderly.

Responsible for income collection, tenancy and neighbourhood management, Dave ensures strong neighbourhood partnerships and high quality service delivery to customers.

Dave is also the lead executive for Tristar Homes, ensuring the effective delivery of its business and operational plans.



**Chris Smith**  
Director of Business Development

Chris is responsible for business analysis, performance and research and corporate social responsibility.

Chris is a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board in Middlesbrough, chairs the Wellbeing in Middlesbrough Partnership, is a trustee of Middlesbrough Environment City, a Northern Housing Consortium board member and sits on the regional Work Programme Advisory Board. She is a director of Arcc, set up to deliver the Transforming Rehabilitation programme for the Ministry of Justice.

Chris is the lead executive for Erimus Housing, ensuring the effective delivery of its business and operational plans.



**Russell Thompson**  
Director of Property Services

Russell has responsibility for in-house repairs and maintenance, as well as the major refurbishment programmes and investment covering the group's properties.

This includes managing property assets, contract management, repairs and maintenance, investment, surveying and estimating and compliance with property legislation.

Russell has a wide range of experience having worked on major projects with a variety of companies and public sector organisations throughout his career. This covers property services, large organisational change and consultancy support.

# Meet the Team

## The Thirteen Board



### Mike Clark

Chair of Thirteen

Formerly Chief Executive at Derwentside District Council, Mike previously worked for the Association of North East Councils where he was the Strategic Regional Lead for Housing and Regeneration.

He also chairs the North East Regional Home Loans Partnership and was Chair of the Vela Group Board from May 2010 until April 2014.



### Gill Rollings

Chair of Thirteen Care and Support

Gill worked in local government in the North East for 35 years, most recently as Chief Executive of Middlesbrough Council.

She has a strong track record of leading and implementing transformational change to improve services for local communities and to secure economic and environmental improvement.

Gill has played a key role in a number of partnership boards including a local strategic partnership, a health and wellbeing board, a children and young people's trust and a safeguarding children board.



### Julie Clarke

Chair of Housing Hartlepool

Julie was previously a partner in a consultancy firm whose primary clients were local authorities and the housing association sector.

She is also a senior lecturer in the Department of Architecture and the Built Environment in the Faculty of Engineering and Environment at Northumbria University. She has held previous non-executive directorships at Nomad and Enterprise Housing Associations.



### Brian Dinsdale OBE

Chair of Erimus Housing

Brian had a 40-year career in local government before retiring to become a consultant and interim manager in the public sector.

Brian was Chief Executive of Hartlepool Council for 14 years and Chief Executive of Middlesbrough Council for two years. He was awarded the OBE in 2001 for services to Hartlepool. Since his retirement, Brian has worked for HM Treasury, been an interim chief executive for four councils and the interim managing director of a large publicly owned trading company, as well as carrying out numerous consultancy roles throughout the UK. He is currently vice-chair of the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.



### Sue Jeffrey

Chair of Tees Valley Housing

Until September 2015 Sue was Chair of Tees Valley Housing and a member of the Remuneration Committee.

She is leader of Redcar and Cleveland Council and previously worked as an Executive Director at the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly.



### Mark Simpson

Chair of Tristar Homes

Dr Mark Simpson is Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Business and Law at Teesside University and a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. He is the author of a number of texts in the areas of crime, criminal justice and drug use, and is a director of the British Society of Criminology.

He is a governor at a local primary school, a sixth form college and Teesside University. He is Chair of Tees Valley Leisure and is also a local ambassador for the Prince's Trust.



### Margaret Fay CBE

Chair of the Remuneration Committee

Margaret was Managing Director of Tyne Tees Television until December 2003 when she became Chair of regional development agency One North East, a position she held until August 2010.

She is Deputy Chair of The Sage Gateshead, governor of the University of Sunderland, Chair of the Economic Development Board of South Tyneside MBC, non executive director of Northumbrian Water, Patron of Tees Valley Community Foundation and a Prince of Wales' Ambassador for the North East of England.

# Meet the Team

## The Thirteen Board



### Andrew Lean

Chair of the Treasury and Investment Committee

Andrew retired from his role as Senior Advisor to the Homes and Communities Agency.

Previously, his senior civil service career included direct responsibility for policy making and management around the Urban Programme, Single Regeneration Budget and the Olympics.



### David Murtagh

Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee

David is a chartered accountant and works as a finance director for a major multi-national manufacturing company based in the region.



### Stan Irwin

Stan has a degree in economics and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.

He commenced his career working for British Gas mainly on large building and engineering contracts. For the last 25 years, before he retired, he worked in the health sector, mainly as Director of Finance of different health bodies, ranging in size from £200m to £500m turnover, and was also responsible for estates facilities management and IT. Stan is vice-chair of the Cleveland Police Audit Committee.

Stan is a member of the Group's Remuneration Committee and Treasury and Investment Committee.

# Our People

**With more than 1,300 members of staff at Thirteen, we're one of the ten largest employers in the North East and offer a range of ways into employment.**

We're also committed to providing excellent and affordable terms and conditions for staff, as well as opportunities including training, development, communication and health and wellbeing.

### Opportunities for employment

At Thirteen, we offer a range of routes into employment, as well as vital work experience. In March 2015 we had 38 apprentices across the Thirteen Group and later brought a further 18 new apprentices on board.

By creating Thirteen, 14 apprentices gained contracts and we have now introduced an improver role for our trade operatives, with four being moved onto this after their apprenticeship. With the formation of Thirteen, we embraced a new approach, which has seen us partnering with and creating

SLA agreements with six college providers to deliver a range of different qualifications.

### The employee voice

Alongside other communication and feedback methods, three staff forums ensure employee voices and opinions are heard across the Thirteen Group. Staff representatives, heads of service, union reps and HR team members attend quarterly meetings to discuss any issues raised by staff and matters that will affect employees throughout the Group.

The staff reps work alongside their union colleagues to develop effective representation for the employee population across Thirteen and to act as a communication channel for employees across the group.

We provide training and development opportunities to staff reps to enhance their skills in areas including communicating effectively with others, basic skills in consultation and how to contribute effectively in meetings.

### Health and wellbeing

Managing attendance, reducing sickness levels and maintaining a healthy workforce are all major priorities for us as an employer. That's why we offer a range of services and initiatives including a flexi-time scheme, eye care, access to an on-site exercise programme, Cycle to Work scheme and health insurance.

As a responsible employer committed to health and wellbeing, we offer occupational health services such as advice on supporting individuals within

the workplace, phased return to work and amended duties, alongside physiotherapy and counselling services.

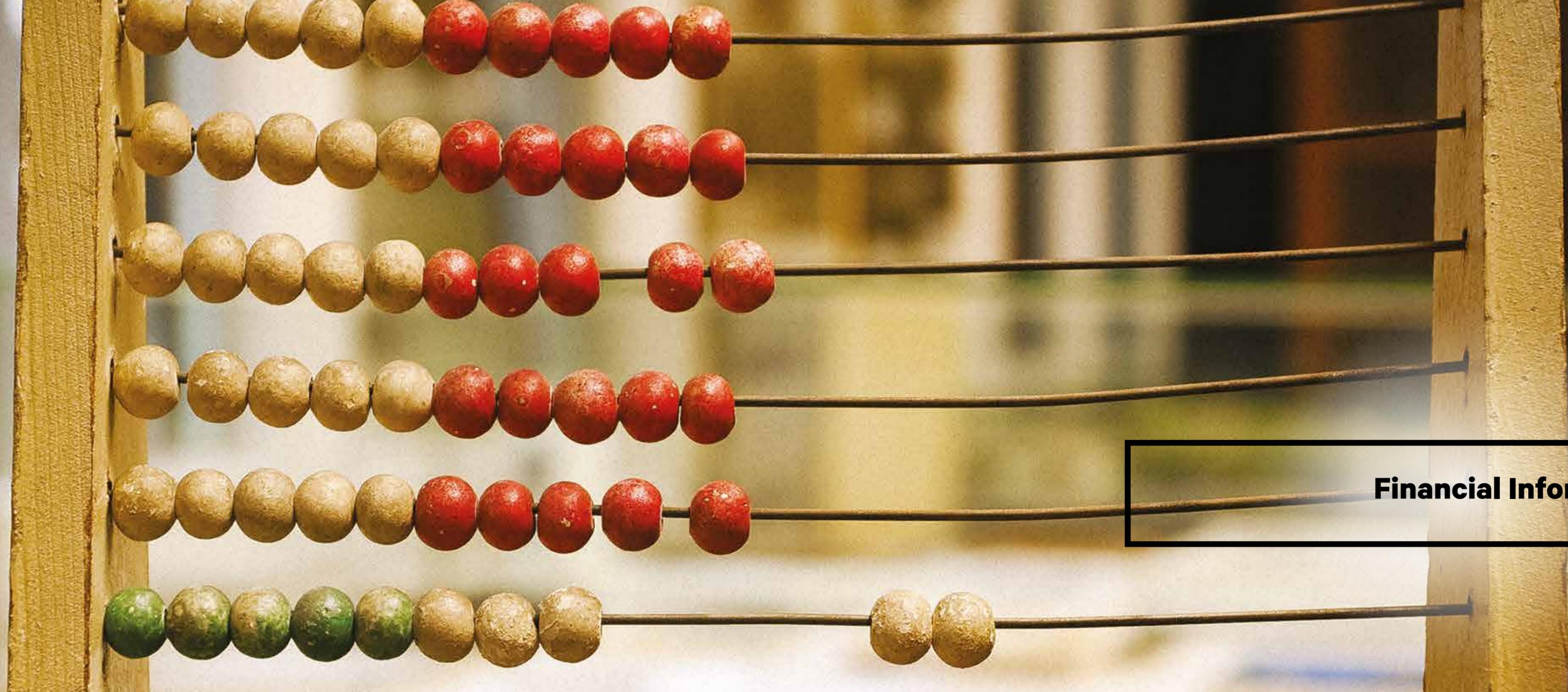
An annual flu vaccination programme is also available to all members of staff and we even offer pay day pamper sessions with on-site health and beauty treatments at affordable prices.



### Learning and development

We want to provide people practices that allow our employees to improve their performance through learning and development, make decisions about their own learning, gain access to flexible learning and development opportunities and share their expertise and knowledge with others. We offer:

<b>On boarding</b> (induction / establishing the vision and values)	Managers have been equipped with the necessary tools and techniques that allow them the confidence to share our values and associated behaviours with their own teams.
<b>Leadership development</b>	170 leaders (at all levels) from across the Group have, and continue to work through, an internal programme that considers personal development and reflection, behaviour and leadership style, maximising impact, resilience to change and coaching.
<b>New ways of working</b>	Newly introduced project management techniques encourage people to contribute ideas that improve their own and others' performance through team meeting and learning events.
<b>Customer service</b>	In support of our customer service strategy, a pilot training programme has been delivered which requests any improvement ideas that will assist in an improved customer experience.
<b>E learning packages</b>	To gain access to a broad audience, data protection, safeguarding, equality and diversity and other packages are available via our intranet.
<b>Attending conferences and external training events</b>	Opportunities are available to attend external events where appropriate.
<b>Toolbox talks</b>	Specific to manual trades, these sessions provide real time information to people who need a quick update.
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	Thirteen is passionate about investing in its future talent and has offered 45 apprenticeships this year.
<b>Involvement in action learning sets</b>	An opportunity to learn from colleagues by sharing knowledge and expertise through planned meetings specific to this objective.
<b>Studying for professional qualifications</b>	Employees have been able to apply for sponsorship to study external qualifications.



**Financial Information**



## Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account

	2015	2014
		Restated
	£'000	£'000
<b>Turnover</b>	<b>156,854</b>	<b>150,993</b>
Cost of sales	(1,172)	(1,924)
Operating costs	(122,497)	(123,815)
<b>Operating surplus</b>	<b>33,185</b>	<b>25,254</b>
(Deficit)/Surplus on sale of fixed assets - housing properties	(359)	1,474
Deficit on sale of other tangible fixed assets	(4)	(313)
Interest receivable and other income	342	393
Interest payable and similar charges	(12,626)	(12,889)
Other finance income	1,871	1,285
<b>Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation</b>	<b>22,409</b>	<b>15,204</b>
Tax on surplus on ordinary activities	(1)	(1)
<b>Surplus for the financial year</b>	<b>22,408</b>	<b>15,203</b>

## Consolidated Balance Sheet

	2015	2014
		Restated
	£'000	£'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Housing properties	845,000	783,439
Other tangible fixed assets	30,107	21,800
Fixed asset investments	970	924
	<b>876,077</b>	<b>806,163</b>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Properties for sale	7,189	3,566
Stock	210	222
Debtors	15,148	17,769
Investments	38,555	19,224
Cash at bank and in hand	9,772	17,995
	<b>70,874</b>	<b>58,776</b>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	(99,598)	(34,923)
<b>Net current (liabilities)/assets</b>	(28,724)	23,853
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	847,353	830,016
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	265,563	284,638
<b>Net pension liability</b>	41,317	28,618
	<b>306,880</b>	<b>313,256</b>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>		
Minority interest	12	12
Revaluation reserve	392,347	385,161
Restricted reserve	292	175
Designated reserve	12,350	9,930
Revenue reserve	135,472	121,482
<b>Consolidated funds</b>	540,473	516,760
	<b>847,353</b>	<b>830,016</b>

## Consolidated Cash Flow Statement

	2015	2014
		Restated
	£'000	£'000
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>	62,104	33,515
<b>Returns on investments and servicing of finance</b>		
Interest received	342	420
Interest paid	(14,216)	(13,469)
<b>Net cash outflow from returns on investments and servicing of finance</b>	<b>(13,874)</b>	<b>(13,049)</b>
<b>Capital expenditure and financial investment</b>		
Purchase and construction of housing properties	(59,000)	(50,994)
Capitalised works to existing properties	(24,174)	(20,818)
Social housing grant received	4,346	8,499
Purchase of other fixed assets	(4,402)	(3,934)
Sale of housing properties	5,545	11,986
Sale of other fixed assets	(4)	(275)
<b>Net cash outflow from capital expenditure and financial investment</b>	<b>(77,689)</b>	<b>(55,536)</b>
<b>Management of liquid resources</b>		
Cash (placed with)/withdrawn from money market deposit accounts	(19,331)	24,180
Loans advanced to home owners	(46)	-
Loans repaid by third parties	12	12
<b>Net cash outflow before financing</b>	<b>(48,824)</b>	<b>(10,878)</b>
<b>Financing</b>		
Loans received	42,000	37,399
Housing loans repaid	(1,399)	(12,305)
<b>Net cash inflow from financing</b>	<b>40,601</b>	<b>25,094</b>
<b>(Decrease)/increase in cash</b>	(8,223)	14,216



**The Future**



We are fully aware that yet more challenges are on their way; both internally and because of change that will be imposed upon us. What kind of organisation do we want to be? Doing what and where?

However these are not all negative challenges. We can also look positively on some moves that are coming our way.

Following the retirement of our current chief executive in 2016, a new head of the organisation will be a chance for new ideas and a different look at the business. This, together with a new chairman at the end of 2015, brings great opportunity for fresh thinking and new ideas.

The critical business challenge is one affecting the whole sector; a reduced income. Changes in the Right to Buy scheme and the rent structure, alongside a range of measures designed to lower the annual benefits budget over the next three years, mean our finances will be hit

hard and we could end up working to keep pace with replacements rather than building homes for the people in need of somewhere to live.

What we know we have to do is refocus on the key things we want to do as an organisation – and work even more closely with our key partners to achieve those goals.

Another motivation is how we react positively to the challenge by the government about how we can engender aspiration and further resilience.

That means we will be looking at doing even more to help people into some form of home ownership, to be able to access jobs and training even more effectively and to promote better health and wellbeing.

However we are not going to make any knee jerk quick decisions. This is a conversation we want to have with staff members, board directors, key partners

and residents. We want to ensure everyone is involved in working our way through how we reshape and reorganise the business to focus on the things that matter. To that end, we are beginning an inclusive exercise, 'Good to Great', to map out our future direction in an inclusive way.

There are also other exciting opportunities around devolution and local decision making, especially around housing, regeneration and economic policies and we look forward to being part of that debate and influencing those conversations.

There is no doubt this is a real challenge for Thirteen and fundamental change for the sector as a whole. However we are a strong organisation and we are flexible and innovative enough to cope. We know things are going to be tough and we face massive challenges - but our bold decision to create Thirteen has put us in a strong position to weather the storm.

**What we know we have to do is refocus on the key things we want to do as an organisation – and work even more closely with our key partners to achieve those goals.**

Partners in the Thirteen Group

**thirteen**  
Care and Support

 **Erimus  
Housing**

 **Housing  
Hartlepool**

 **Tees Valley  
Housing**

 **Tristar  
Homes**