



Better homes, better lives

Dunedin Canmore

Annual Highlights 2016–17



Chair's welcome

Tom Mitchell
Chair of Dunedin Canmore

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It has been a year of progress on all fronts at Dunedin Canmore as we continued to invest in the future of our homes and communities, and supported our tenants to access more life-changing opportunities. Excellent progress has been made on our ambitions to increase the supply of affordable housing. At the end of the financial year, work had started on 404 new homes and we had completed 21 homes for mid-market rent. A further 270 were also in development.

We also invested £5.8m in our existing homes with work including new kitchens and bathrooms, doors, roofs and windows. Customers also benefited from brand new central heating systems and new boilers.

Some of our tenants still struggle financially – and supporting them remains a focus for us at Dunedin Canmore.

Our specialist advisors helped our customers save thousands of

pounds on their energy bills, and claim thousands more in welfare payments. Our Tenancy Support Service, delivered by our partners at Loretto Housing Association, gave tailored support to 130 of our most vulnerable tenants who were having particular difficulties keeping their tenancy.

This year we also gave more people from our communities the opportunity of an apprenticeship. This included, for the first time, two new horticultural apprenticeships, made possible by a new partnership with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

All of this was achieved against the backdrop of a strong business performance. Most notably our overall customer satisfaction rose to 93.6% from 89.6% previously and 18 out of 26 of the key measures which we report to the Scottish Housing Regulator were on or above target.

Our Property Services Team is now playing a key role in supporting Wheatley Group realise its ambition of delivering an outstanding repairs service to all its customers. The team became responsible during 2016-17 for repairs in our sister organisations in the east - West Lothian Housing Partnership and Barony – as well as in our own communities.

Alongside this, our parent company, Wheatley, became joint owners, with Glasgow City Council, of City Building (Glasgow) on 1 April, 2017, with the new jointly-owned company delivering repairs to all customers in Wheatley's communities in the west.



7466

people have benefited from Wheatley Foundation's projects.

£5.8m

invested in our existing homes.

This has provided a unique opportunity for all of Wheatley's partners, including Dunedin Canmore, to work together on reviewing and redesigning our repairs service model with the aim of achieving outstanding customer service for customers every time.

Wheatley also established the Wheatley Foundation, a new charitable trust which supports programmes which can make a difference to disadvantaged communities.

It is chaired by Sir Harry Burns, former Chief Medical Officer of Scotland, with my fellow Board member from Dunedin Canmore Mary Mulligan also on the Board. It complements the work of Dunedin Canmore's own charitable foundation, and is supporting 15 different programmes across our communities, all of them designed to offer new opportunities to our customers, and their families. 7466 people have benefited from the Wheatley Foundation's projects which include apprenticeships, bursaries, cultural and sporting activities and a new money advice service for vulnerable people.

No review of the year would be complete without paying tribute to

our outgoing Chief Executive Ewan Fraser who retired after 33 years in the housing sector and 11 years at the helm of Dunedin Canmore.

Ewan's long and distinguished career saw him lead a range of award-winning new-build projects across Edinburgh and the regeneration of council estates in the south of the city.

More recently, he was instrumental in guiding Dunedin Canmore through significant change as it joined and then settled into becoming part of Wheatley.

It was a tremendous pleasure to work with Ewan who was a great support to the Board as we drove forward with our ambitions for our communities.

Hazel Young, who was previously our Housing and Customer Service Director, was appointed as Managing Director. She has already demonstrated she is an excellent leader who can help us steer Dunedin Canmore through the next chapter of our on-going journey to excellence.

Turn over for the annual highlights 2016-17

Our highlights



Our homes

We continued our work to modernise and maintain our homes, investing £5.8m in upgrades right across our communities. The work included replacing kitchens and bathrooms, roofs, doors and windows as well as brand new central heating systems and boilers.

We also invested in neighbourhoods, upgrading communal areas such as stairwells and green spaces.

We had 5759 homes at the end of the financial year 2016-17 with 99.6% of them meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

Building affordable housing

Our plans to build more affordable homes in our communities made progress with work starting on 404 new homes and we completed 21 homes for mid-market rent – three months ahead of schedule – in Midlothian. The two-bedroom houses, at Corby Craig Road and Walk in Bilston, were built by Taylor Wimpey and let by us. Originally

scheduled for January 2017, they became available to rent from November 2016.

A further 270 homes were also in development.

We marked work starting on a number of key developments including:

- ▶ 111 homes, a mix of social and mid-market rent, in Craigmillar in Edinburgh
- ▶ 80 affordable homes, 64 for social rent and 16 for mid-market rent, at Muirhouse in the north of the capital city
- ▶ 105 affordable homes at Mains Farm, North Berwick, as part of a project in partnership with Cruden Homes, East Lothian Council and the North Berwick Trust.

£5.8m

invested in upgrades right across our communities.

404

new homes started.

A new repairs service

Our ambition to create a modern, local and more efficient repairs and maintenance service took a major step forward over 2016-17.

Dunedin Canmore's Property Services Team took over responsibility for delivering repairs to West Lothian Housing Partnership and Barony. Meanwhile our parent company Wheatley agreed a new joint venture with Glasgow City Council which saw it become 50/50 joint owner of City Building (Glasgow) on 1 April, 2017. This gave all the partners in Wheatley an opportunity to work together to reshape our repairs service, designing a service which will deliver consistent excellence for customers no matter where they live. Work on this is under way with Dunedin Canmore playing a major role.

Services for more customers

One of our aims when joining Wheatley Group was to use the new partnerships to improve services for our factored homeowners, mid-market tenants and tenants of our commercial properties.

This year after a review, our Board made the decision to merge Dunedin Canmore Enterprise, which was responsible for factoring and private and commercial letting, with Dunedin Canmore Housing. This means we have a single organisation which is more streamlined, accountable and efficient.

On 31 March, 2017, we appointed our sister organisation in Wheatley, YourPlace Property Management, to deliver factoring services to our 2419 factored homeowners.

YourPlace, which provides high-quality factoring services and value for money to its 29,000 customers, is already offering our customers improved and additional services including 24/7 customer service, low-cost home insurance and gas and boiler cover.

We also appointed Lowther Homes, our sister organisation which has a growing portfolio of homes for mid-market and private rent, to deliver services to our customers in our mid-market homes and commercial properties.

Cleaner communities

As part of our mission to create communities people are proud to live in, Dunedin Canmore worked with Keep Scotland Beautiful to explore a partnership approach to improving environments.

Wheatley Group and Keep Scotland Beautiful have now launched a new partnership which is putting tenants at the centre of assessing, grading and transforming neighbourhoods.

We also began developing plans to strengthen the environmental services delivered by Dunedin Canmore with improvements expected to be implemented in 2018.

Improving performance

We continued to improve our performance with 18 out of 26 measures, which we report on to the Scottish Housing Regulator, on or above target. This included achieving overall tenant satisfaction of 93.6%, up from 89.6% and our best ever performance.



Other performance highlights for the year included:

Exceeding year-end target on rent arrears by nearly



Repairs completed right first time



Tenants satisfied with the quality of their home



Tenant satisfaction with the management of neighbourhoods



Awards and accreditations

Our journey to excellence was recognised with the award of Investors in People (IiP)Gold. It was the first time Dunedin Canmore put itself forward for assessment against the standard which measures how organisations support, recognise and develop staff. We scored above the



industry average in seven of the nine indicators with the IiP assessor commenting: “You have transformed your organisation. Colleagues are establishing new levels of collaboration across teams, which has resulted in people highlighting how they consider the customer to be at the heart of everything they do.”

Over 2016-17, we also played a major part in our parent company Wheatley:

- being ranked no 47 in the Sunday Times list of best not-for-profit organisations to work for;
- making it into 24 Housing magazine’s top 10 social landlords in the UK.

Rent campaign

Our annual rent campaign resulted in our best ever arrears performance over the festive period.

The campaign which urged customers to Put Rent First invited people who were facing difficulties to get in touch and access the wide range of help and support we have available. The campaign materials, which included posters, bus stop advertising, newsletter articles and regular content on social media and our website, also made clear to customers what their rent pays for.

It resulted in us exceeding our year-end target on rent arrears by nearly £60,000.

619

opportunities for people in
Wheatley communities.

£247k

saved on tenants fuel bills
over the year.

Jobs and training opportunities

Our new charitable trust, Wheatley Foundation, funds a range of employability initiatives targeted at tenants, owners and their families. These include apprenticeships as well as traineeships and Wheatley Pledge, a scheme which incentivises our suppliers to do even more for our communities.

The scale of our new-build and investment programmes also means Wheatley can create or support opportunities for people from our communities to access jobs and training each year.

This year, in total across Wheatley, 619 new opportunities were created through schemes supported by the Foundation and from community benefit clauses in contracts. 10 of our customers, or their families, secured a Modern Apprenticeship with us.

Pioneering apprenticeship scheme

Thanks to the Wheatley Foundation we were able this year, for the first time, to offer two people from our communities the chance of a traineeship which sees them being trained to be plant and landscaping experts at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

The trainees spend a year learning and working outside in the Botanic Gardens while studying for the Certificate in Practical Horticulture. They then join our environmental teams in the second year, using their skills to keep communities across Edinburgh looking smart.

Helping tenants save money

We continue to support our tenants in a wide range of ways.

For example, we helped tenants to save more than £247,000 on their fuel bills over the year.



Fuel advisors provide free expert advice to tenants on cutting their energy bills and keeping their homes warm.

Advisors can help tenants access the cheapest tariffs, arrange low-cost payment arrangements and, depending on their circumstances, help them write-off long-term debt. 968 tenants used the fuel advice service in 2016-17 – and saved on average £256 on their bills.

Our My Great Start service which helps new tenants get off to a good start with their tenancy supported 65 Dunedin Canmore customers to develop budgeting skills and manage their money.

Support for the most vulnerable
Bringing care and housing together in Wheatley Group is allowing us to identify and support vulnerable people in our communities in ways we couldn't before. Our Tenancy Support Service, delivered by Loretto Housing Association, launched in 2015 with the aim of helping people maintain their tenancy and get more out of life.

In 2016-17, 130 Dunedin Canmore tenants who were struggling to cope received support for periods of up to eight weeks. 100% of tenants who returned a questionnaire said they were satisfied with the service they received.

Restoration of tenements

Our project to bring a Victorian tenement in Edinburgh back to life, as part of our drive to make homes warm and comfortable, earned local and international recognition.

US housing expert Jim Stockard, who lectures on affordable housing at Harvard University, visited Dunedin Canmore to learn more about the work of housing associations in Scotland.

One of the highlights of his tour was Earl Grey Street in the city centre where an £850,000 project to restore the building is under way as part of a wider strategy to save pre-1919 tenements.

The Earl Grey Street project was also 'highly commended' at the CIH awards while children from nearby Tollcross primary school marked the restoration of the historic building by filling a time capsule with mementoes.

The primary 5 pupils hope their collection of items, which will be placed behind a cornerstone of the building at Earl Grey Street, will lie undiscovered for 100 years.

Homeless World Cup

The work we do to support homeless people through our Dunedin Harbour Hostel also gained recognition during the Homeless World Cup which was held in Glasgow.

Stephanie Tweed represented her country at the tournament in July and told the story of her recovery from drug addiction with the support of Dunedin Canmore.

Steph, 21, from Edinburgh, used heroin and valium from an early age and ended up losing her home. After finding herself on the streets, she was eventually placed in our hostel in Leith. As part of the support offered she was encouraged to take up football sessions run in a partnership between us and Street Soccer Scotland.

The support she received from team mates and coaches helped her confidence grow and she got her life back on track. Steph then moved into a Dunedin Canmore supported tenancy in Gorgie, Edinburgh, as part of our Resettlement Scheme. She said: "The hostel was great, helped me get back on my feet and I love living in my flat and having my freedom. I wouldn't be here without the help of the people at Dunedin Harbour."

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Wheatley Group, Wheatley House,
25 Cochrane Street, Glasgow, G1 1HL
wheatley-group.com

