

Annual report and review 2013-14



Contents

Welcome from the Chairman	3
ARCH achievements over the year	4
A forward look	5
A noted from the Policy Adviser	6
Accounts	7
ARCH tenants' group	7
What does ARCH do?	8
Member benefits	9
The Executive Board	10
Reach us	11

Welcome from the Chairman

ARCH Chair, Paul Ellis

Welcome to ARCH's Annual Report for 2013/14, which I am proud to introduce as Chair of the Association. It has been a year during which ARCH has continued to improve the support we offer to members. Last year we announced a programme of free seminars for member councils, and launched ARCH Exchange, which gives members the opportunity to share experience and innovative practice. ARCH Exchange has been extensively used and we have seen growing attendance at our seminars, which we have held in Birmingham as well as London to enable more members to attend.

Looking ahead, the major challenge is next year's General Election, which could produce significant shifts in housing policy affecting our members. We have sought to influence the forward thinking of all the major parties, with submissions to the Lyons Inquiry which will input to Labour's housing policy, and the review of councils' future role in housing supply set up by the Coalition government. Our policy work over the next twelve months will continue to focus on defending and extending the self-financing settlement which has been such an important gain for ARCH members.

We have begun to work much more closely with the National Federation of ALMOs and Councils with ALMOs Group, with both of which we share substantial common ground, as allies in the cause of council housing. We expect to further strengthen these links in the year ahead.

As part of our pre-election influencing work, we plan to hold another parliamentary reception early in the coming months, hoping to repeat the success of our first, which was attended by the housing leads for all three main parties.

I would like to thank all members of the ARCH Executive Board for the time and energy they have contributed during the year to ensure the success of our work, and in particular Brian Reilly, Paul Price, Ted Czerniak and Bob Ledger, for the work he put into our very successful regional seminar in Derby, including coming up with the idea. Special thanks go to John Bibby, who has been a pillar of ARCH since its foundation, and who will be retiring this month.

Thanks are also due to Jenny Hill who has served stalwartly as Chair of the Tenants' Group for the year.

I look forward to working with colleagues, partners and supporters over the coming year and hope you find this annual report informative and inspiring.



ARCH achievements over the year

A look at 2013

The annual stock-retaining authorities' conference hosted by HouseMark and ARCH was held in December 2013 at Warwick University. We welcomed Laura Shimili from CIH, Matthew Warburton, ARCH policy adviser, John Bibby, Lincoln City Council, Clive Betts, Labour MP for Sheffield and South East and how can we forget the Chancellor's Autumn Statement being delivered live in Parliament at the same time as the opening session took place. Live updates on pertinent issues were read out during course of the morning, stirring up much debate amongst delegates. The conference continues to go from strength to strength and will be in its 8th year this December!

We held a very successful photo competition calling out for ARCH member councils to submit photos demonstrating the hard work they do. 28 photos were entered from 11 different councils and the judges were very impressed with the particularly high standard. The first prize went to Warwick District Council with their photo of some residents entering a float in the local carnival. [You can look at all the entries here.](#)

We've also held a successful series of seminars this year on hot topics such as 'House building: how to build more homes', as well as 'New approaches to market-rented housing' and 'Welfare reform: one year on'. The presentations from these seminars are available to download from the ARCH website.

ARCH Exchange became available in January 2013; it is a member service which gives senior staff a simple way to pool their knowledge and experience, and to reduce duplicated efforts. Recent topics include establishing a subsidiary housing company, insourcing repairs, local lettings and garden maintenance with 20 councils taking part since the service began. For more information, email exchange@arch-housing.org.uk.

ARCH, HouseMark and PfH also held their annual drinks reception at CIH Housing 2014 which enabled some networking amongst councils and the chance for ARCH members have a catch-up at the busy conference over a drink or two.

It's been another busy year for ARCH as we continue to represent the interests of the retained council housing sector.



A note from the Policy Adviser

ARCH Policy Adviser, Matthew Warburton

My work over the last year has rarely strayed from the issue of councils' role in building more homes. Alongside others, we have lobbied for council debt ceilings to be lifted to allow more investment. Our efforts reaped a small success in the form of the announcement, in last year's Autumn Statement of an extra £300 million in borrowing approvals. At CIH Housing in Manchester in June the then Housing Minister Kris Hopkins made it clear that the Government isn't minded go further any time soon. But he threw down a challenge: if councils can spend the extra £300 million in full and on time, he said, we can go back to the Chancellor with a much stronger case for more.

Labour's launch, last December, of an enquiry headed by Sir Michael Lyons into how to increase the supply of new homes, was soon followed by the announcement by the Government of its own independent review of councils' role in housing supply, headed by Keith House and Natalie Elphicke. On behalf of ARCH I put together substantial submissions to both reviews (two submissions in the case of the House/Elphicke Review, the second drawing on the outcomes from a very successful seminar for councils and ALMOs we held in Derby in July).

ARCH's input to last Autumn's consultation on council rents policy from 2015 drew attention to the potential impact on investment of the government's plans to change the annual rent increase guideline and scrap convergence. And our now regular survey of councils and ALMOs, carried out jointly with the National Federation of ALMOs and the Councils with ALMOs Group, provides valuable information on the impact of welfare reform on councils and tenants alike, including a valuable estimate of how rent arrears are rising and the likely long run effect on income and investment.

I have also commented on many other issues of concern to ARCH members as they have arisen, either in my blog on the ARCH website or directly to the housing media.



Accounts: 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014

Income and expenditure account

Income		Expenditure	
Membership fees	£124,000	Policy and practice	£50,000
Miscellaneous income	£505	Professional fees	£1,309
		Meetings/seminars/ events	£28,164
		Tenant participation	£23,633
		Travel expenses	£507
		Printing and design	£2,247
		Sundry costs	£6,409
Total	£124,505		£112,269
Surplus	£12,236		

The ARCH Tenants' Group is made up of tenant representatives from ARCH member authorities across England. The Chair and Vice Chair of the group also sit on the ARCH Executive Board as Directors so they have a real voice and influence at a strategic level of ARCH. Jenny Hill is Chairman (Runnymede Borough Council) and Marlene Price (London Borough of Wandsworth), who was honoured with the British Empire Medal this year, is Vice Chairman. They are both in their 2nd year of their two year term in these roles.

The Tenants' Group has been busy in 2014 producing their 3rd leaflet on 'Making a complaint'. This leaflet can be found on the website as well as the other recent leaflets on the bedroom tax and universal credit. These leaflets have been written by tenants for tenants, for ARCH members to use. The idea of the leaflets is to signpost tenants to where they can get help and advice on different topical issues.

The Tenants' Group have met three times so far this year and are busy planning their annual tenants' conference. There will be an exercise at the conference for delegates to produce a tenants manifesto. The Tenant Group's final meeting of the year is in early November.



Photos from ARCH tenants' conference 2013



making a complaint
A guide for tenants produced by tenants

What does ARCH do?

Member list

Getting a better deal

ARCH (Association of Retained Council Housing) is an association of councils in England who have retained ownership and management of their council homes. We aim to get the best deal for councils and their tenants. About 100 local authorities still own and manage around 800,000 homes, and we are here to make sure that a positive future for council housing is secured.

What ARCH does for the retained stock council sector:

- **Represents** collective interests of retained stock councils
- **Lobbies** government for a strong retained stock sector
- **Helps members** meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of the recently reformed council housing finance system and other government initiatives
- **Promotes** best practice and facilitates sharing between members
- **Listens** to the views of tenants

We represent the views of 65 councils in the UK, and give councils an opportunity to act collectively, be heard nationally and achieve efficiencies through collaboration and joint working.

How much is membership?

A flat rate fee of £2,000 per year plus VAT, per council, irrespective of size of stock, or £2,350 to include a place at the annual chief officers' conference. We have held our membership fees for several years and they continue to be affordable to all. There is no restriction on the number of officers, councillors or tenants who can have passwords or use our services.

Further information

If you would like to find out more, please contact Julie Morton, ARCH Administrator: julie.morton@arch-housing.org.uk or call 02476 472 711.

Arun DC
 Babergh DC
 Birmingham City Council
 Bolsover DC
 Bournemouth BC
 Brentwood BC
 Broxtowe BC
 Cambridge City Council
 Canterbury City Council
 City of Lincoln Council
 City of York Council
 Corby BC
 Crawley BC
 Dacorum BC
 Dartford BC
 Epping Forest DC
 Exeter City Council
 Gosport BC
 Gravesham BC
 Great Yarmouth BC
 High Peak BC
 Hinckley and Bosworth BC
 Ipswich BC
 Kettering BC
 Lancaster City Council
 LB of Croydon
 LB of Hammersmith and Fulham
 LB of Islington
 LB of Southwark
 LB of Wandsworth

Member benefits

Member list (cont)

Knowledge

- Free access to all ARCH policy briefings, blogs and updates
- Free policy and good practice information through the resources of CIH and HouseMark
- Free access to any dedicated research commissioned by ARCH for councils with housing

Performance improvement

- Discounts on financial modelling from CIH experts and performance improvement support from HouseMark
- £1,000 discount from HouseMark towards your ARCH membership fee in the first year, if you join HouseMark and ARCH, plus a further 15% discount on HouseMark membership if you sign up to a three year membership agreement
- A quarterly electronic member newsletter and free access to the member-only area of our modernised website

Events

- Annual General Meeting for all ARCH members featuring a seminar session on a critical topic
- Invitation to the ARCH/HouseMark annual chief officers' conference in December. New members will get a free place and ARCH members will get their 2nd place funded by ARCH (buy one get one free!)
- Free attendance to at least three seminars per year - topical speakers and unique networking opportunities
- Free access to the HouseMark stock retained councils' performance improvement club which meets twice per year
- Free attendance for your tenants (up to five per council) to the annual ARCH Tenants' Conference

Recent additions

- Free access to ARCH Exchange - enabling senior housing staff to share knowledge, reports and documents, and seek advice from colleagues in other member councils.

Lewes DC
Mansfield DC
Mid Suffolk DC
North Kesteven DC
North Tyneside Council
North Warwickshire BC
Norwich City Council
Nuneaton and Bedworth BC
Oxford City Council
Reading BC
Redditch BC
RB of Kingston upon Thames
Rugby BC
Runnymede BC
Slough BC
South Cambridgeshire DC
South Derbyshire DC
Southampton City Council
Stoke on Trent City Council
Stroud DC
Tamworth BC
Tendring DC
Uttlesford DC
Warwick DC
Wealden DC
West Lancashire BC
Winchester City Council
Woking BC
Wokingham BC

The Executive Board

	Elected members	Officers
Birmingham City Council	Cllr Peter Griffiths	Rob James
Broxtowe Borough Council	TBC	Ted Czerniak
Canterbury City Council	Cllr Tony Austin	Larissa Reed
London Borough of Wandsworth	Cllr Paul Ellis	Brian Reilly
Norwich City Council	Cllr Bert Bremner	Paul Sutton
South Derbyshire District Council	Cllr Jim Hewlett	Bob Ledger
Tendring District Council	Cllr Paul Honeywood	Paul Price
Warwick District Council	Cllr Norman Vincett	TBC
West Lancashire Borough Council	TBC	Bob Livermore
Tenants' group representatives	Jenny Hill and Marlene Price	

Reach us

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www.arch-housing.org.uk

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**ASSOCIATION OF RETAINED
COUNCIL HOUSING**

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