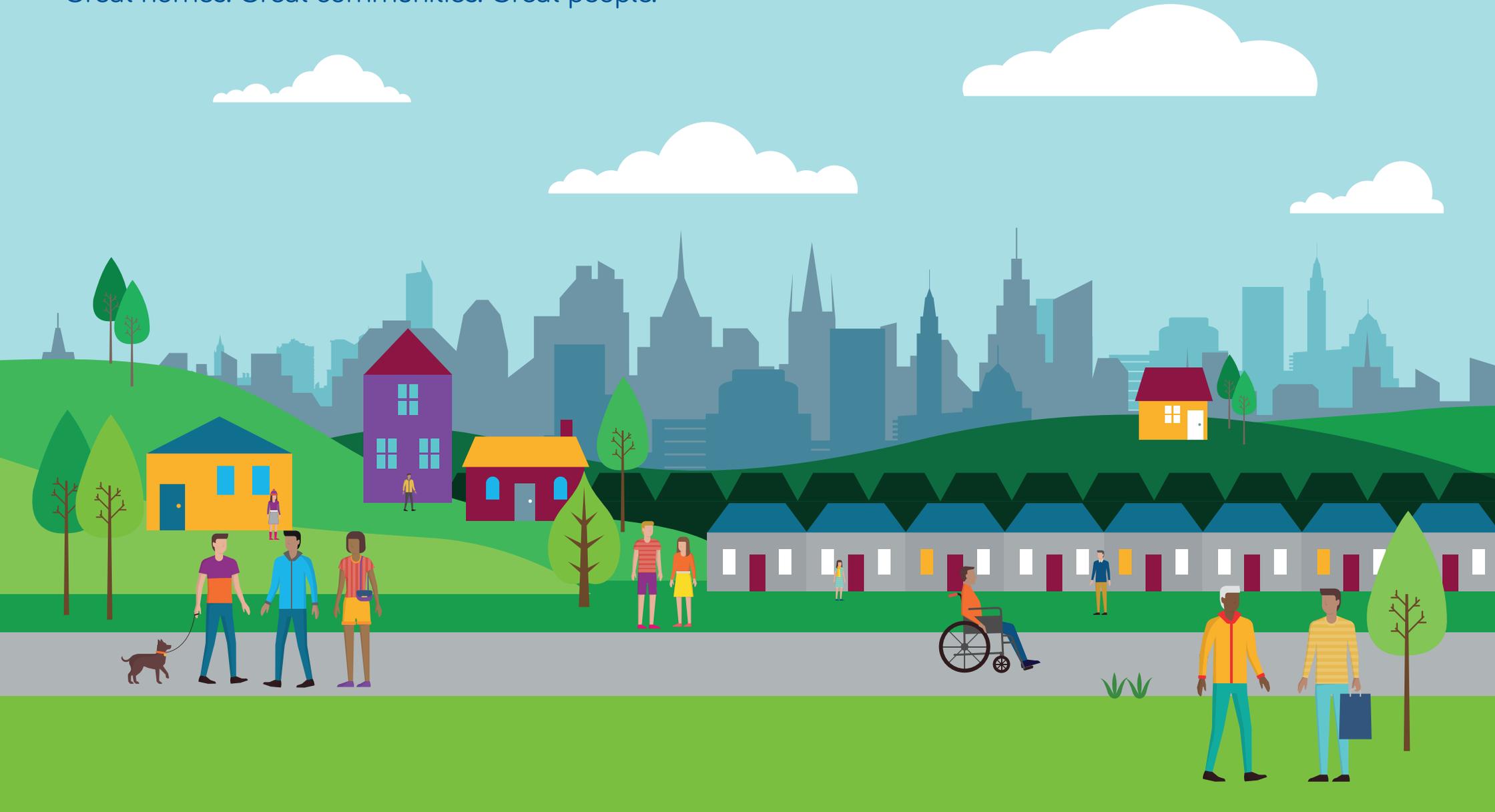


# Annual report 2019

Great homes. Great communities. Great people.





# Welcome.

In our 10th anniversary year, we are celebrating another outstanding year for Great Places. We have come a long way since 2009 and key to our success over the past 10 years has been our commitment to delivering our vision: **maximising our investment in sustainable homes, building successful vibrant communities and providing outstanding customer service and support. It's our mantra... Great homes. Great communities. Great people.**

## Some of the ways in which we have done this in our 10th anniversary year include:

- We were chosen as the preferred partner for Equity Housing Group to create a new organisation, which will work to deliver better services and more new homes for our customers
- We invested £62m into building homes, with 243 homes completed and 584 on site
- We've had our G1/V1 status confirmed following an In Depth Assessment by the Regulator for Social Housing
- We have made significant progress in our Strategic Partnership with Homes England signed in July 2018. We have delivered our first year target and secured £49m to build 1,234 homes in the next 4 years
- We were appointed as the accountable body for Greater Manchester Housing First (GMHF) a three-year pilot that aims to provide safe, secure homes for more than 400 people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless across all 10 Greater Manchester districts
- We invested almost £9m in over 2,600 improvements to 1,900 properties in our existing portfolio
- We supported over 800 households into work or training
- Over 1,400 people took part in our community projects
- We achieved savings of £5.8m in our operating costs against a stretch target of £5m. This included procurement savings of £1.3m
- We continued to see strong sales performance for our shared ownership and market sale developments (145 shared ownership, 17 market sale)
- We provided tenancy support to over 500 people
- We employed 30 new graduates and apprentices as part of our "Growing Greatness" initiative
- We increased our turnover to £109m and our surplus was £13.7m
- We secured £145m from the Capital Markets through a bond tap
- We have approved the investment of up to £3m into Hive Homes, a joint venture between 10 Greater Manchester housing associations and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). This will build and sell homes on the open market, with profits being invested back into funding our core business

Looking forward, we remain confident that we have the skills and business model needed to be competitive and successful in the next 10 years while staying true to our social purpose and supporting the people and communities we work with.



**Matthew Harrison**  
Chief Executive



**Tony Davison**  
Chair



# About Great Places Housing Group

We have around 600 colleagues and manage over 19,000 homes across the North West and Yorkshire. We have a 'whole market offer' that includes social and affordable rented homes, market rent and sale, shared ownership and supported housing that promotes independence and wellbeing for some of the most vulnerable people in society.

## The group consists of:

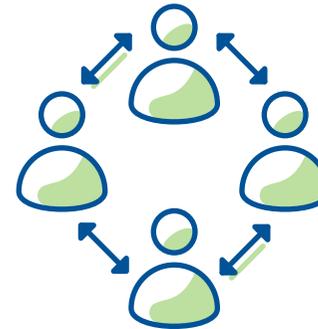
- Great Places Housing Group – providing central and corporate services such as Finance, HR and Technology Services to all group members
- Great Places Housing Association – property management, customer and support services community investment activity and buildings, estate and tenancy management
- Plumlife – shared ownership and market sales, managing our shared ownership and market rent portfolio, leasehold services and buildings, estate and tenancy management
- Cube Homes – developing new homes for market sale and rent



### Great homes

Maximising our investment in sustainable homes

### Our vision



### Great communities

Building successful, vibrant communities



### Great people

Providing outstanding customer service and support

## Our values



We are fair, open and accountable.



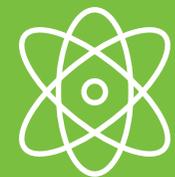
We know, respect and care about our customers.



We appreciate the effort of everyone who works with us.



We promote partnerships, efficiency and value for money.



We passionately embrace creativity, change and innovation.

# Great homes

We take pride in punching above our weight when it comes to tackling the housing crisis with an ambitious target to build 8,000 new homes over the next decade.

In July 2018 we were one of only eight organisations to enter a Strategic Partnership with Homes England to build more affordable homes. This £30m additional grant meant £100m more development spend on 750 extra homes. In August 2019 we secured a further £20.5m to build an additional 534 affordable homes.

The Development team has grown in response to this ambition and partnerships are delivering successfully. We have also successfully developed a large pipeline of sites in readiness for future delivery.

This year we invested **£62m** in building new homes. A further **£9m** of investment has facilitated over **2,600 improvements to 1,900 properties** in our existing portfolio, in addition to another **£11m** outlay on our responsive, re-let and servicing maintenance activities.

**£62m**  
invested in building  
new homes

**243** homes  
completed in the year  
with **584** on site

**£9m**  
invested in  
improvements

Over  
**2600**  
programmed  
improvements

**£11m**  
outlay in responsive,  
re-let and servicing  
maintenance

## Completions

 **243** units in total

 **112**  
Affordable Rent

 **114**  
Shared Ownership

 **17**  
Market Sale

## On site

 **584** units in total

 **264**  
Affordable Rent

 **18**  
Social Rent

 **20**  
Supported

 **149**  
Shared Ownership

 **130**  
Market Sale

 **2**  
Market Rent

# PLUMLIFE.

Plumlife had another excellent year completing 145 shared ownership sales and 17 market sales generating a sales income of £14m.

Plumlife sold across 15 different developments in Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, Wigan, Fylde, Lancaster, Ribble Valley, Wyre, Cheshire East and Sheffield.

It has been another award-winning year too, with Plumlife winning the Best Large Development at the First Time Buyer Awards for the Cube Homes Arkwright Place development in Manchester and Home Ownership Team of the Year at the National Housing Awards 2019.

Customer satisfaction with the service provided by the sales team remains extremely high at 97%.

97%

of customers  
were satisfied with  
the services provided  
by Plumlife Sales

Sales revenue  
generated

£14m





## CUBE HOMES

Cube Homes is the private residential arm of Great Places. Established in 2007 to undertake profitable activity, it generates funds that can then be invested to support our charitable activities. Cube Homes develops a range of homes for market sale and private rent on its own sites along with mixed tenure schemes and in joint ventures with other partners.

In 2018/19, Cube's total turnover was £5m. It generated a total profit after tax of £839k and gift-aided £409k of this back to Great Places. Cube retained profit of £430k after tax to support its current and future development plans.

Over the last year, the business has rebranded as Cube Homes (from Cube Great Places) and continued to expand with new sites secured in Prestwich, Whitefield, Oldham, Stockport and Salford. Currently, Cube Homes has nine development sites under construction, in planning or due to commence shortly.

Cube Homes is not just about homes for sale. Cube Homes also owns and manages private rented homes and, working in conjunction with Plumlife, provides buildings management, lettings and estate management services both for its customers and for other organisations. Cube Homes has continued to expand its work with partners and has secured further management work in Sheffield and Manchester in the last 12 months. This included a prestigious estate management contract for the Cotton Field Park, New Islington estate and marina in Manchester.

Generated  
turnover of  
**£5m**  
in 2018/19



# Great communities

Our neighbourhood teams help to create successful, vibrant communities that our customers want to live in.

We aim to be more than just a great landlord. Our objective is to make life better for our customers, provide them with homes that meet their needs, help them to take control of their lives, support them when they need it most, and work with them and partners to create thriving communities.

We have redesigned our services and operating models to enable a new two-way relationship, working 'with and not for' our customers. Our Service Delivery Frameworks underpin this new relationship with clear responsibilities on either side, which provide the foundation for sustainable tenancies. Our new operating models give customers responsibility and provide them with the means and confidence to carry out more straight forward transactions for themselves, which frees up resources towards those customers and areas where they are needed most.

This approach means we are able to support the delivery of a range of activities to help improve the lives of our customers in our communities. We realise the social value from our business activities and work with customers and partners to create insight-led services that are focused on outcomes and make the greatest impact.

Supporting the work of organisations like schools and community centres in anchor neighbourhoods, our clear focus is on creating sustainable communities, reducing the impact of poverty and improving the life chances for our customers.

Over the last year through benefit advice, utility savings and affordable credit our team has supported 2,104 customers to save £2.3m. Hundreds of customers have cut their energy bills through our home energy visits and 'check, switch and save' events, saving them 20 million litres of water and £30,000.

## Case Study MacKenzie/Parkin Alley Pals

The Mackenzie Parkin Alley Pals is just one of our community success stories. This group of green-fingered residents were keen to improve the alley they share as neighbours in our Northmoor neighbourhood from a derelict and neglected space. Our support alongside Northmoor Together and Manchester City Council, has seen them transform this into an environmentally friendly and sociable hub for everyone who lives locally to enjoy.



Our work as part of the Gateways to Oldham PFI project has successfully developed new community centres at our Primrose Bank and Crossley neighbourhoods as thriving community hubs. These have now achieved charitable status, which will allow them to build on their success to date and apply for significantly more funding for longer-term projects.

### Case Study Chloe's Story

Our annual resident fund continues to help provide life-changing opportunities for customers like Chloe in Trafford, who was able to set up her own business after finding herself unemployed.

You can read Chloe's story here:  
<https://www.greatplaces.org.uk/for-customers/my-great-place/great-people-great-stories/chloe>

### Case Study GM Housing First

This year we were appointed as the accountable body in Greater Manchester Housing First (GMHF). This three-year pilot project that aims to provide safe, secure homes for more than 400 people who are homeless or at the risk of being homeless across all 10 Greater Manchester districts.

Find out more about GM Housing First here  
<https://www.gmhousingfirst.org.uk/>

Our Community Investment activity has continued to make a real difference to people's lives: providing employment, training and volunteering opportunities for our customers and for other people living in our communities. In the last year, we have supported nearly 900 people into work, training or volunteering, and over 1,416 people who took part in our community projects.

The work done by our Independence and Wellbeing team also helps some of the most vulnerable people in our society achieve greater independence.

### Case Study Community Stars

In addition, every year we celebrate the relationships we enjoy with our customers and our communities with our Community Stars awards – one of the highlights of the year.  
<https://www.greatplaces.org.uk/about-us/latest-news/detail/2019/07/05/customers-take-centre-stage-at-our-community-stars-awards-2019>



# Repairs

Our customers value our repairs service. We continue to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction with an overall performance of 93% satisfaction with a huge 3,638 customer satisfaction responses received over the past 12 months.

Nearly 39,000 repairs were undertaken on our properties in 2018/19 with 88.7% being completed first time - a new record. Part of the high satisfaction performance was the speed at which we are completing repairs, with an average of 8.6 days being achieved for the year.

In June 2018, our Distribution Centre began working in a pioneering partnership, supplying materials to the repairs service of Trafford Housing Trust. To date our Distribution Centre has also:

- achieved on-going savings of 25% per year after re-negotiating prices on the top 1,400 material items used
- saved £31,000 by better on/off hiring of equipment



# Great people

Our colleagues are our greatest asset and help us drive our success and achieve our ambitions. We continue to invest in developing talent via our Growing Greatness programme which, to date, has created over 30 apprentice and graduate posts, with plans underway for another nine in 2019. We also provide a variety of training programmes that help us recruit, support and reward our diverse and high-performing workforce whilst ensuring we provide our customers with an excellent service.

We are currently focusing on development of internal solutions in areas such as customer service, which allow us to deliver our own training content across the business in a more flexible way and will expand on this portfolio going forward. We also understand the need for more specialist knowledge and support colleagues to attend industry conferences that ensure we stay ahead of changes and innovation within our sector.

Our People and Culture Directorate's commitment to work with everyone to ensure their professional growth, health and well-being. This resulted in 83% of colleagues saying they felt fully engaged in their role at Great Places in our most recent engagement survey.

## 91%

of colleagues said their team is fully committed to delivering excellent service for our customers

## 95%

of colleagues said they are prepared to go the extra mile for Great Places to succeed

## 79%

of colleagues love working for Great Places



# Performance matters

Our focus on performance is reflected in the near 100% collection of all rent due over the year (99.4%).

We are celebrating our fourth consecutive year of being 100% gas compliant – this means every single one of our tenanted homes has been Gas Safety certificated every day of the year for the past four years.

Each year, the Great Places Board identifies critical success factors (CSFs) to help us monitor progress and performance against key business priorities detailed in our corporate plan (2018–2021). This helps us measure our success, what we are doing well and where we need to improve.



Critical Success Factor	2017/18 Year End	2018/19 Target	2018/19 Year End	Success?
Overall Satisfaction*	7.75/10	7.70/10	7.79/10	✓
Repairs Right First Time	-	86.5%	88.7%	✓
Validated Stock Condition Data	100.0%	55%	63%	✓
Number of Properties below Band C	-	3,665	3,496	✓
Group Surplus	£10.4m	£12.2m	£13.2m	✓
Current Arrears including Housing Benefit	2.8%	3.8%	3.7%	✓
Average Re-Let Time (Days)	21.0	24.0	19.3	✓
Development Completions	-	281	281	✓
Building Greatness Savings	£2.1m	£4.9m	£5.8m	✓
Sickness Days per Employee	11.7	10.0	11.3	✗
Households into Work, Training & Volunteering (including tenants %)	-	810 (60%)	880 (68%)	✓
Digital Customer Contacts	-	40%	54.6%	✓

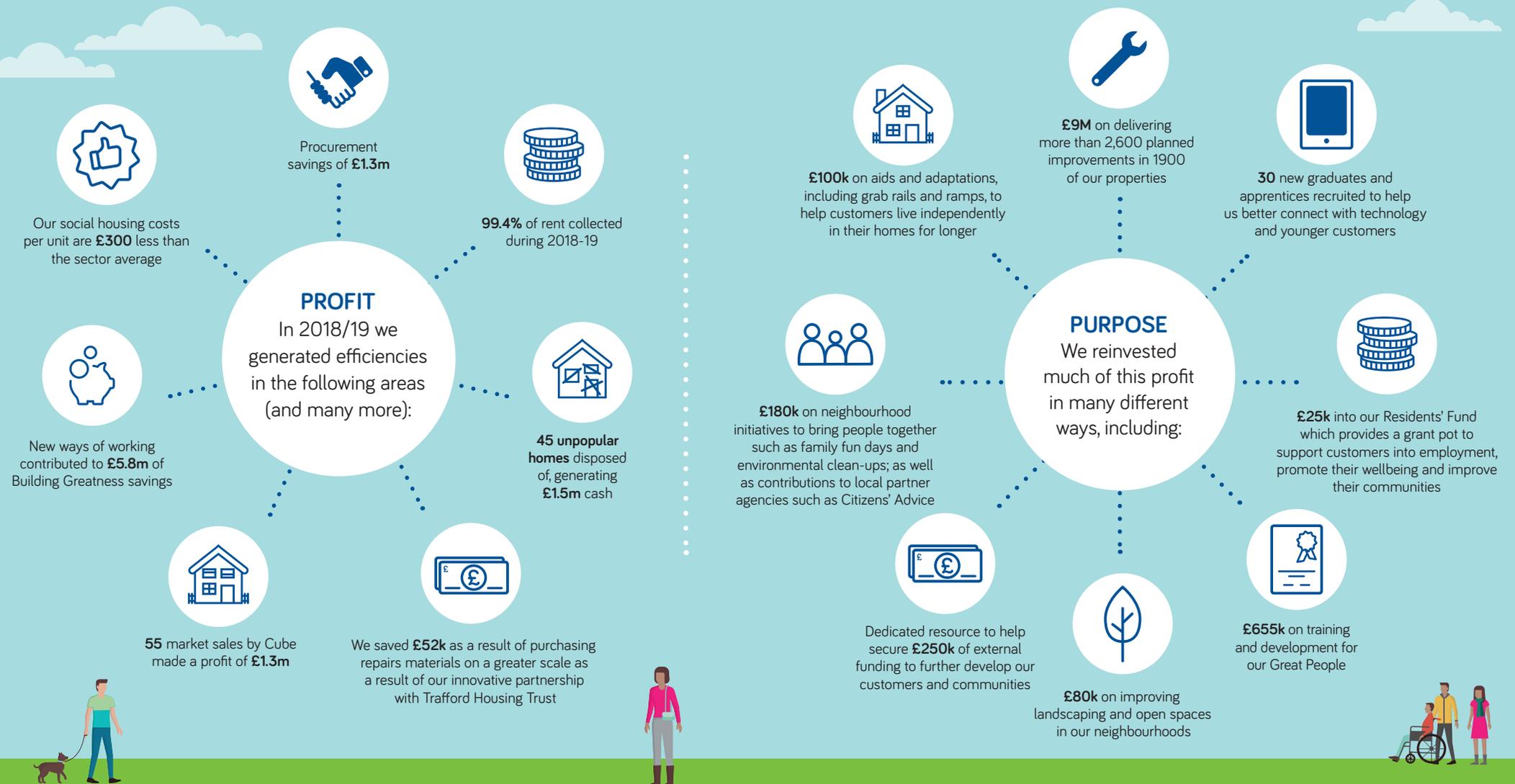
\* Overall satisfaction is collected using the Institute of Customer Service methodology.

# Profit for purpose

Great Places is proud to be a profit-for-purpose organisation that gives back to our customers, communities and colleagues.

Our aim is to be as efficient as possible and remain a top performer in the industry. However, we then make a very conscious decision to use a large part of our surplus to be much more than just a landlord and improve our customers' lives.

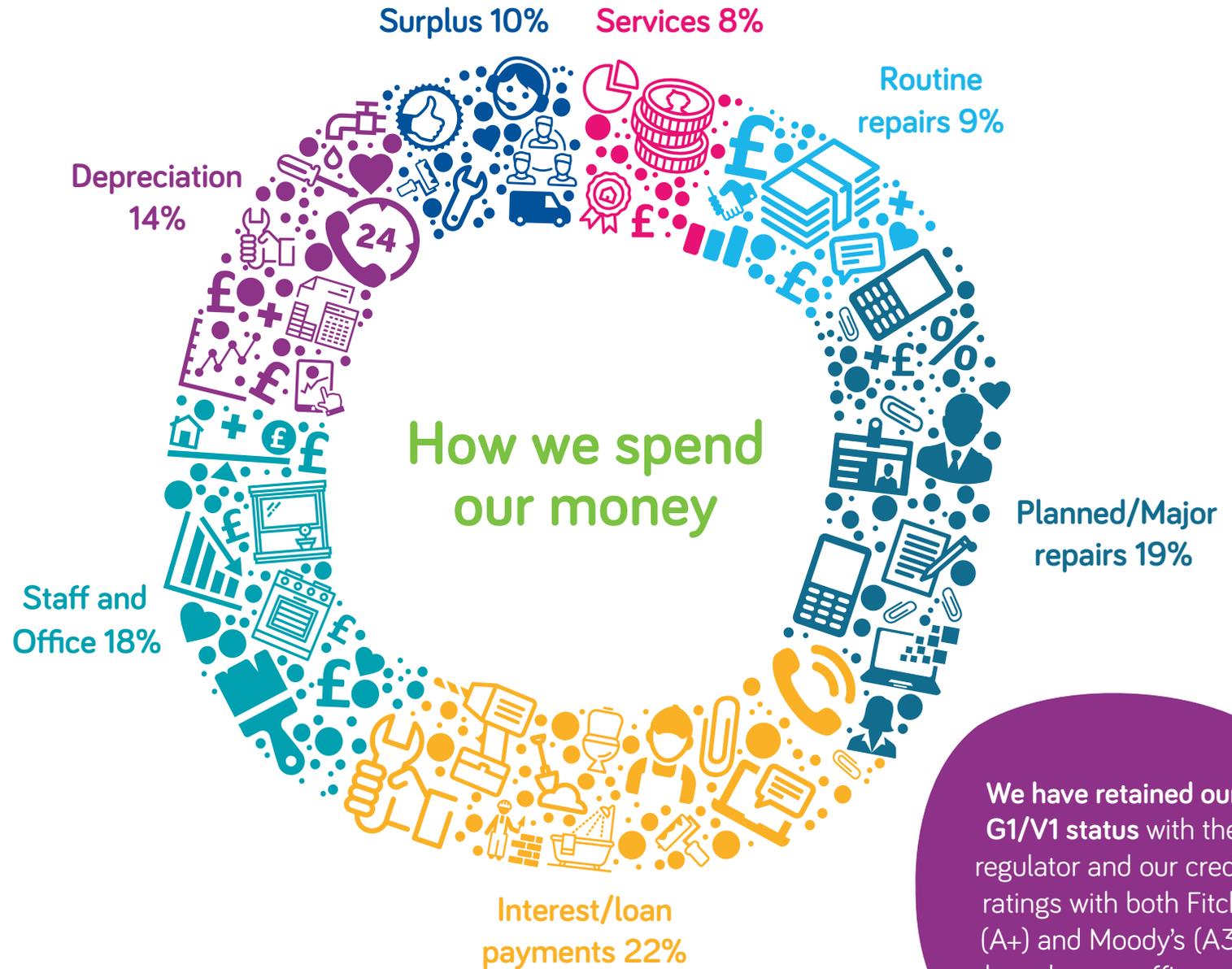
Last year our surplus would have been £15.8m. However, we chose to plough significant amounts of this into going over and above our core landlord duties to really make a difference and help us realise our vision of Great homes, Great communities, Great people.



# Financial viability

This year we have continued to achieve savings in response to the 1% rent cut through our Building Greatness continuous improvement programme.

This programme will also maintain the focus on achieving savings going forward. The Regulator for Social Housing benchmark data shows us to be in the top quartile in terms of social housing cost per unit and we have maintained financial headroom to ensure we meet all funding covenants.



We have retained our G1/V1 status with the regulator and our credit ratings with both Fitch (A+) and Moody's (A3) have been reaffirmed.

# Financial summary

Income	2019 £000s	2018 £000s
Gross income from lettings	88,653	85,463
Other turnover	20,464	15,220
Surplus on sale of properties	3,611	2,283
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>112,728</b>	<b>102,966</b>

Expenditure	2019 £000s	2018 £000s
Services including Supporting People expenditure	8,045	8,450
Management	15,692	14,070
Maintenance	11,060	10,604
Major repairs	5,019	4,755
Cost of sales	13,195	8,337
Other operating costs	22,038	21,896
Interest received	(579)	(319)
Interest paid	24,763	23,352
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>99,233</b>	<b>91,145</b>
<b>Net Surplus for the year before tax</b>	<b>13,495</b>	<b>11,821</b>

Assets	2019 £000s	2018 £000s
Housing Stock	1,047,507	1,037,024
Other fixed assets	25,859	26,405
Investments	7,848	8,620
Net current assets	60,909	63,927
Less loans and other liabilities	608,770	600,851
Less grant	464,931	467,764
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>68,422</b>	<b>67,361</b>

Financed by	2019 £000s	2018 £000s
Revenue reserves	110,449	108,222
Other reserves	(42,027)	(40,861)
<b>Total reserves</b>	<b>68,422</b>	<b>67,361</b>

# Board and senior team

## Great Places Housing Group Board

**Tony Davison** – Chair

**Jenny Rayner** – Deputy Chair/Chair of Remuneration and Appraisal Committee

**Jerry Green** – Chair of Audit and Assurance Committee

**Celia Cashman**

**Jan Fitzgerald**

**Matthew Harrison** – Executive Director

**Brendan Nevin**

**David Robinson**

**Christine Amyes**

**Mike Hanson**

**Sam Young**

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## Executive Directors

**Matthew Harrison** – Chief Executive

**Peter Bojar** – Executive Director of Growth and Assets

**Guy Cresswell** – Executive Director of Customer Services

**Alison Dean** – Executive Director of People and Culture

**Phil Elvy** – Executive Director of Finance

## Directors

**Sarah Costigan** – (Interim) HR

**Craig Daniel** – Business Intelligence

**Mark Foster** – Repairs and Facilities Management

**Sharon Hayes** – Technology Services

**Carl Holloway** – Communications

**Kal Kay** – Finance

**Emma Richman** – Assets

**Simon Robinson** – Neighbourhoods

**Helen Spencer** – Development

**Sally Watts** – Independence and Wellbeing

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## Cube Board

**David Robinson** – Chair

**Babar Ahmed**

**Matthew Harrison** – Executive Director

**Emma Prichard-Selby**



[www.greatplaces.org.uk](http://www.greatplaces.org.uk)  
[www.plumlife.co.uk](http://www.plumlife.co.uk)

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 [www.twitter.com/MyGreatPlace](https://www.twitter.com/MyGreatPlace)

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