

Innisfree

A voice for Irish communities in London

Business Plan

2013-16



A hand holding a kite string with a kite flying in the background. The kite is orange and black, and the string is white. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Watch us fly our kite

**“And now it hovers, tugs, veers, dives askew,
Lifts itself, goes with the wind until
It rises to loud cheers from us below”**

A Kite for Aibhín
Seamus Heaney



Anne McLoughlin
Chair

I am delighted to introduce Innisfree's new Business Plan for the period 2013-2016 at a time of change, challenge and opportunity.

I have just completed my first year as Chair and during that time we have appointed an excellent new Chief Executive to lead our organisation.

John joins a business with a strong financial basis, highly satisfied tenants, a strong committed board and an enviable reputation.

Our story started in 1985 when the unmet housing needs of the Irish communities in London prompted some activists to set up a new housing association. Although times have changed that need is once again growing.

Innisfree is proud of its Irish roots and of our experience and expertise in working with migrant communities. Our future is in continuing to serve the Irish in London - our core group - whilst welcoming residents with other backgrounds and life experiences.

I won't pretend that there aren't challenges for us to face. The global economic circumstances are having a direct impact on the business environment for housing associations and are creating new pressures for our tenants.

We have developed our new Business Plan in that context, with a very positive view that we can take advantage of new opportunities in the next three years.

We will continue to do this in our own, distinctive way characterised by a relationship of trust with our tenants and with continued pride in our Irish roots.

Introduction



John Delahunty
Chief Executive

Innisfree is used to dealing with transitions. The work we do with people who are migrants and the support we give to people who are vulnerable demonstrates this every day.

My arrival is going to support another transition for the organisation - a step change that our board fully support. With the natural energy of a new Chief Executive, I am setting out how we can realise some of the opportunities that are available to us – even in this difficult economic climate.

Our Board are united in their support for this fresh approach and also want to see refreshed governance arrangements in place to anchor the organisation as we move forward.

Some of my early work will be looking at the infrastructure of our organisation and to make changes so we can deliver our longer term vision. Developing our staff and reviewing the tools we use

will be an important foundation for this, but it doesn't stop there. Providing support as well as housing is at the core of what we do. I have the advantage of being able to hear directly from residents how they rate our work: "Innisfree are doing a grand job," and I'm proud of our 89% overall satisfaction rating. But we need more ways to tell this story, so through research and evaluation we will be highlighting the social value of the work.

Our size means that we can be agile and flexible – requirements for any organisation, especially one that meets the needs of migrant communities. We also value highly our strong partnerships with others, like local authorities, the Irish Embassy, other

specialist organisations and other housing associations. We have the capacity to fulfil our ambitions but we also believe that by collaborating with others there is more that we can do to maximise the benefits of our endeavours to our tenants.

This plan is designed to fly our kite so that our key stakeholders understand the changes we are aiming to make.

I am confident you will continue to recognise the uniqueness of Innisfree but with a sense of the momentum we are gathering.

I am looking forward to working with you to make a difference to the lives of the communities we serve.

Vision

That the Irish communities living in London are leading healthy and fulfilling lives, participating in the wider community whilst retaining a positive sense of their particular Irish identity.

Mission

To use our resources wisely to provide more housing and support services that have a real impact on the individuals and communities we serve.

Values

In all that we do, be inspired by our Irish roots and show passion for our work.

Customer Focused

- Committed to delivering high standards of service
- Sensitive to our customers' needs
- Open to new groups who would benefit from our experience

Trusted

- Do the right things, at the right time, in the right way
- Look after our resources wisely
- Be open and fair in all dealings
- Learn from our experiences
- Encourage and act upon challenge from customers, staff and stakeholders

Inclusive

- Accessible and responsive to all those seeking our support
- Take a leadership role in promoting diversity
- Support a high performing, diverse workforce

Strategic Objectives

Delivering great services

- Achieve Customer Service Excellence
- Enhance and improve the services we provide
- Enhance the repairs service to be more customer friendly
- Further guide and develop residents' ability to scrutinise our work

Extending our reach

- Build more homes that people can afford
- Provide new homes of different types
- Explore the provision of market rent homes
- Develop a leasehold scheme for Irish elders
- Explore the potential for working with Travellers and other migrant communities

Influencing others

- Promote Irish identity and contributions to communities
- Develop a new communication strategy
- Ensure more people know about us, that we are "open for business" and want to explore new initiatives
- Take leadership role on some issues (e.g. Travellers, new migrants)

Developing our organisation

- Be open to new challenges and enthusiastic about change
- Work more closely with other organisations where it would benefit our customers

Achieving value for money

- Improve our homes to make them more affordable for residents to live in
- Review the way we buy services to make sure we generate best value
- Refine our methods of measuring and accounting for the social impact of our work

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