

Aire Valley Homes Annual Review 2009/10.

AVHL can demonstrate a number of positive achievements over the last 12 months, building on the retention of 2 stars from the Audit Commission Inspection in 2008, despite some significant changes to the Senior Management Team and a financial challenge arising from an overspend of the capital programme in 2008/09.

Strong partnership working with Leeds City Council, Kier, Connaught, Jobcentre Plus, Groundwork and other agencies has enabled us to deliver improved services and properties for tenants, support people into employment, training and education, improve the local environment and increase tenant satisfaction with and involvement in our work. Progress and performance over the last 12 months includes:

Governance

The Board continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis and a recent decision extended the number of sub committees from 2 to 3:

- **Resources & Performance** (Finance, Performance, HR, Equality & Diversity)
- **Customer Services** (Customer Engagement, Customer Satisfaction, Communication Strategy)
- **Audit & Risk** (Assurance framework, Audit, Risk Register, Health & Safety)

to incorporate an increased focus on Audit & Risk including responsibility for the new Assurance Framework.

The creation of a third sub committee also incorporated a decision to move to a cycle of quarterly meetings to enable more meaningful and informative reports to be produced, members to have a real sense of how the organisation is performing through the analysis of spending and performance trends and to align the Performance & Resources Sub Committee with the internal and LCC reporting timetable. Terms of Reference for the Audit & Risk Sub Committee have been developed alongside a review of the Terms of Reference for the existing Sub Committees to strengthen governance by clearly defining their roles, responsibilities and decision making authority.

During the year we have successfully recruited to a vacancy for an Independent Board Member, with the appointment of Simon Pearson, Chairman of Pearson's Recruitment, who came to us through Leeds Ahead. There have also been a number of changes in the Senior Management Team with the appointment of John Clark as Chief Executive, Simon Costigan as Deputy Chief Executive (with responsibility for Housing Management) and Richard Corbishley, Head of Asset Management and Gail Teasdale, Head of Corporate Service being replaced by Mark Grandfield and Jason Kirk respectively.

The key change within the Organisational structure has been the creation of a Regeneration & Investment division from what was formally Asset Management. This included the rationalisation from 5 to 4 management posts streamlining responsibilities and decision making and creating a dedicated Health & Safety role as shown in the diagram below.

PKF were re-appointed as internal auditors to AVHL for 2009/10 and a programme of audits has been undertaken including Core Financial controls, Fraud, IT applications, Repairs and Maintenance. It is proposed that the contract for Internal Audit Services with PKF is not renewed for 2010/11 and a new arrangement is initiated with LCC Internal Audit to compliment the work associated with the Assurance Framework.

Business Plan

The AVHL 5 year Business Plan (2007 - 2012) identifies six strategic objectives which drive the strategic direction and operational delivery of the organisation;

1. To deliver excellent customer driven services.
2. To provide decent, well maintained homes and environments.

3. To support social inclusion and community regeneration.
4. To empower colleagues and customers to achieve our mission.
5. To be a well managed and efficient public service business.
6. To seek new business opportunities that accord with our values and mission.

Over the last 12 months progress against the Business Plan priorities includes:

- ✓ Reducing non decent properties from 13.44% to 7.08%
- ✓ Continued partnership working with LCC to deliver shared objectives e.g. development of Affordable Housing programme in Middleton and PFI scheme in Beeston Hill & Holbeck
- ✓ Continued participation in the 'Future of Council Housing' review, including joint development of Service Standards, future investment needs and delivery models for the 'one' and 'three' ALMO options.
- ✓ Further development of the Middleton Regeneration Strategy including in securing an Asda store, improvements to Middleton Circus and obtaining funding for Middleton Park
- ✓ Achieving Housing Management status with the HCA

Over the last 12 months financial controls have been strengthened and draft end of year budgets indicate that:

- Revenue expenditure totalled £20.642M exceeding income of £20.307M by £235K.
- Capital expenditure totalled £9.437M, compared to income of £11.579 with agreement from LCC to carry forward the balance of £2.142 into 2010/11 to deliver the remainder of the Decent Homes programme.
- SCA expenditure was £435K compared to income of £4.843 and £4.408M will be carried forward into 2010/11 to enable the organisation to remain solvent and deliver it's priorities throughout the next 2 financial years.

Performance

Performance over the last 12 months has been strong in a number of areas generating an overall incentive payment of £212, 585.

We have made good progress in reducing the percentage of properties that are non decent from 13.41% (1790 properties) at the start of the year to an end of year figure of 7.08% (940 properties) well below the target of 12% non decent. This has been assisted by a programme of full stock condition surveys and data cleansing with support from Strategic Landlord, and a decision by the AVHL Board and Strategic Landlord to focus the capital programme on achieving the Decent Homes standard.

Conversely this has resulted in a growing waiting list for Aids & Adaptations and a failure to deliver standard priority referrals within target timescales despite a commitment of £2M from a capital budget of £12M. This situation will be addressed in the next 12 months through a re-focus of the Adaptations team on re-housing, utilising the 3777 properties on our adapted property register and an increase of resources including a bid for additional HRA resources. AVHL is also actively involved in the development of an Adaptations Strategy for the City which will challenge current working practices and assist in targeting resources where they are most needed.

Other areas of performance where incentive was generated include 96.5% of Stage 1 Complaints responded to in 10 days exceeding the target of 95%, 99.71% of Gas services completed exceeding the target of 99.36% and 100% CORE Recording forms completed meeting the target of 100%.

Areas of performance where targets were not met include:

- A Gross Re-let time of 67.54 days compared to a target of 62 days which masks the fact that over the last 4 years the average number of properties let per week has increased from 21 in

2006/07 to 26 in 2009/10 equating to a 24% increase in productivity and reflecting an upward trend in terminations, rising from 20 properties per week in 2006/07 to 26 in 2009/10.

- Only 96.79% of rent was collected compared to a target of 97%, however this was an improvement on 96.45% in 2008/09 and could be considered a major achievement in light of the recent economic crisis.

Both of these areas have been targeted for improvement in the coming year.

Other areas of performance to note are:

Repairs and Maintenance

Work with Kier and Connaught has resulted in repairs completed Right First Time increasing to 98.55% against a target of 96%, urgent repairs 98.08% against a target of 98% and appointments kept to 98.55% against a target of 98%.

Anti Social Behaviour

In 2009/20 there were 175 new cases of ASB reported, 189 were resolved and 145 that remain open and ongoing.

Estate & Environmental Walkabouts

A total of 216 walkabouts were completed and 1995 actions raised and resolved as a result of issues identified during the walkabout.

Annual and New Tenancy Visits

A total of 3,062 (101%) Annual Tenancy visits were carried out during the year against a target of 3,025 which equates to 20% of tenants visited. Only 679 (58%) New Tenancy Visits were undertaken during the year compared to the 1163 visits required to meet the target of 100%.

Equality and Diversity

2009/10 saw the development and approval of the Single Equality and Cohesion Strategy 2009-12 and Single Equality Action Plan. The Strategy identifies 10 equality outcomes around different areas of service delivery and employment and reflects the council's corporate and employment outcomes and priorities. Equality and service improvement work at an organisational level is now embedded and monitored within the Performance Management Framework. Managers are now obliged to report improvements identified and outcomes achieved as a result of Equality Impact Assessments and Lessons Learnt exercises.

An Equality Focus Group has been established involving tenants with disabilities, BME communities, older and younger tenants etc to ensure our services are informed by and respond to their needs.

The customer profile data we hold has increased by 10% since 2008/09 to 65% overall through a range of initiatives throughout the year and we are working towards achieving 100% in 2010/11.

Resident Involvement

Resident involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of services is a key focus for the business and AVHL supports 3 Area Panels and 32 Registered Tenant Groups, of which 28 receive an annual support grant.

Over the last 12 months tenants have been actively engaged in driving up contractor performance by setting repairs targets and challenging performance through the Repairs Focus Group, setting the priorities for the capital programme through the Asset Management Group and shaping the contract for Procurement 2011 through participation in working groups to define an excellent repairs service . With the involvement of customers we have also:

- recruited to new senior positions
- agreed new service standards

- developed a communications forum, and 'tenant approved' logo
- changed the way we send text messages to make the messages clearer
- reviewed and clarified our approach to giving advocates of tenants consent to access services
- initiated 40+ Area Panel projects supporting community initiatives and environmental works
- consulted over 100 tenants on the proposed Tenant Services Authority standards

Satisfaction with services remains high with:

- Satisfaction with the overall repairs service at 95.71%, with Kier at 95.7%, Connaught 96.8% and PH Jones 95.1%
- 91% of customers satisfied with the quality of service received from the Contact Centre
- 99% of customers rating the quality of service received at One Stop Centres as 'good' or 'excellent'.

Highlights of 2009/10

- ✓ The 1st Annual AVHL Community Awards on Friday 9th April which was attended by over 200 tenants, local councillors and Hilary Benn MP.
- ✓ Tenant Board Member, Roy Birch short-listed for Board Member of the Year at the National Federation of ALMOs awards to be held on 15th July 2010
- ✓ The success of the AVHL Mobile Office which has greeted over 500 visitors and hosted employment, health and financial inclusion sessions since its launch in the summer of 2009
- ✓ Simon Lonsdale, an officer from Job Centre Plus, co-funded by AVHL, becoming runner up for a Civil Service Chief Executives Award for outstanding achievement for the work he has been doing on the Aire Valley Works project which this year saw him assist his 100th long term unemployed tenant into work.
- ✓ Securing Housing Management accreditation from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- ✓ Repayment of the 2009/10 overspend along with exceeding delivery of the Decent Homes target despite a reduced budget
- ✓ Continued success of the Area Panel Grants in supporting local groups and delivering local environmental projects in partnership with Groundwork

Priorities for 2010/11

- Completion of the Decent Homes programme and additional investment in adaptations.
- Implementation and continued development of the LCC/ALMO Assurance Framework to ensure it supports strong governance, high performance and delivers VFM
- Continued participation in the 'Future of Council Housing' review to develop an option that delivers high quality homes and services for tenants and provides VFM.
- Alignment of existing Service Standards and development of new Local Standards to meet TSA expectations, tenant aspirations and deliver high quality, VFM services
- Completion of the Procurement 2011 within agreed timescales to secure a high quality service, deliver VFM and enable the appointment of successful contractors for an April 2011 start
- Completion of the re-housing programme and commencement of the Housing management arrangements for Beeston Hill and Holbeck PFI
- Continued participation in the process to procure a new Grounds Maintenance service that delivers tenant aspirations and priorities within budget
- The Development of 'Living Communities' a Housing and Regeneration Strategy for the Aire Valley Homes area
- Increased involvement and representation in key partnerships including the Affordable Housing Partnership, Aire Valley Regeneration, Beeston Hill and Holbeck PFI, Leeds Housing Partnership.
- Development of 'affordable housing' in Middleton including the building of new council housing on the explosion site to meet community demand and develop AVHL capacity and track record