

Aire Valley Homes Annual Review 2010/11.

AVHL can demonstrate a number of positive achievements over the last 12 months through a clearer focus on tenant priorities, delivering on investment promises, achieving greater value for money in what we do and maximising the skills and potential of the staff team, building further on the retention of 2 stars from the Audit Commission Inspection in 2008.

Stronger partnership working between ALMO's and 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 recent Internal Audit report on corporate governance within AVHL resulted in a rating of 'Good Assurance'.

The Board continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis, with the 3 sub committees;

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

meeting on a quarterly cycle, a move which has enabled 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 alignment of the Performance & Resources Sub Committee with the internal and LCC reporting timetable.

There have been a number of changes to the Board throughout the year with the Chair, Cllr Peter Gruen, stepping down to be replaced as Chair by Andrew Feldhaus and as a Board Member by Cllr Mark Dobson. Tenant Board Member, Brenda Barlow has been replaced by Louise Page-Bulloch and Independent Board Members, Mary Clark and Simon Pearson have been replaced by Steve Vickers and Gill Bennett respectively.

The Senior Management Team has remained stable throughout the year. The benefits of replacing the previous Heads of Asset Management and Corporate Services with Mark Grandfield and Jason Kirk respectively have been visible through a robust approach to asset management and procurement that has seen us deliver 100% Decent Homes and appoint new contractors through procurement 2011 and a strengthened financial control environment and Performance Management Framework which has enabled us to refocus business activity around key priorities.

The focus on priorities and performance has been given additional emphasis by a review of the organisation's Vision, Mission and Objectives and subsequent development of a Balanced Scorecard (Appendix 1 The AVHL House) to underpin this.

PKF were replaced by LCC Internal Audit for 2010/11 and a programme of audits has been undertaken as part of and in addition to, the Assurance Framework developed in conjunction with Strategic landlord, the results of which are detailed below;

- **Procurement** – Acceptable assurance
- **Corporate Governance** – Good assurance
- **Rent arrears** – Acceptable assurance
- **KPI's** – Good assurance
- **Lettings** – Limited assurance

- **Tenancy** – Acceptable assurance
- **Bank reconciliation** – Acceptable assurance
- **Budgetary control** - Good assurance
- **Safeguarding** – Acceptable assurance

Business Plan

The AVHL 5 year Business Plan (2007 - 2012) identified the organisation's Vision, Mission and Objectives which have driven the strategic direction and operational delivery of the organisation over recent years. These have been reviewed and refreshed over the past 12 months to focus more on tenant priorities, performance and value for money in line with recent legislation from the Tenant Services Authority and an increased focus on local accountability from central government, Leeds City Council and the AVHL Board. The new Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives are detailed below;

Vision

To be the best social housing provider in the UK.

Mission

We will provide desirable and affordable homes in sustainable neighbourhoods where people choose to live and work.

Strategic Objectives

1. To deliver excellent services that are designed and driven by customer involvement and expectation.
2. To provide decent, well-maintained homes in communities where people choose to live.
3. To empower, support and value staff to enable them to contribute effectively to the organisation and maximise individual potential.
4. To be a high performing organisation that promotes innovation and learning and demonstrates value for money.
5. To expand and grow new and existing business opportunities that accord with our values and mission.
6. To develop and drive partnerships that supports our business objectives and maximise value for money.

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

- ✓ Continued support of 32 tenants groups, funding of 101 projects through the Area Panels and involvement of tenants in setting the repairs and maintenance and capital programme budget.
- ✓ Customer profiling has increased to its highest level – 74.5% and will be a continued focus of attention
- ✓ Completion of the Management Development programme to increase the skills and capacity of the management team and the launch of the 'Get out of Leeds' programme encouraging staff to undertake external visits, volunteering and mentoring opportunities.
- ✓ 100% completion of annual appraisals and annual staff conference held informing and involving staff in identifying priorities for the coming year. Get Out of Leeds programme has provided opportunities for staff to visit high performing organisations and bring back learning/improvement.
- ✓ Capital and revenue programmes have been delivered within budget and the backlog of Aids & Adaptations referrals has been cleared.
- ✓ Performance has maintained a strong position throughout the year and generated combined incentive payments in excess of £280,000.
- ✓ Active involvement in the Future Jobs Fund programme has generated £222k funding for the organisation to support local people to develop their skills and gain practical work experience.
- ✓ Our Financial Inclusion Officer has worked with 118 households and generated additional income for 41 of these families that total £147k (weekly increase of £69 wk) His debt

prevention work has provided intensive support to 59 households and reduced their collective arrears by over £12k; and

✓ **Delivering 100% Decent Homes against a target for the year of 95%**

The greatest achievement and most significant impact on tenants has been the delivery of Decent Homes. The conclusion of an 8 year period of intensive investment by the ALMO, seeing £150m spent on improvements to 13,500 homes. Undertaking this scale of investment to tenants homes was one of the main reasons the ALMO was created and has resulted in tenant satisfaction with the quality of their home increasing. The volumes of improvements are significant, with 7,000 new kitchens, 3,000 new bathrooms, 5,000 new central heating systems, and new windows and doors to 8,000 properties. The investment also focussed on high investment need properties, which are now successfully let, helping meet local housing need and generate a rental income.

This investment in the housing stock improves energy efficiency, reduces tenants heating bills and helps combat fuel poverty. The preferences and specific needs of tenants are now routinely taken into account as kitchens and bathroom layouts are designed with tenant input. Tenants also make their own choices on styles and colours.

Performance

The performance at AVHL has maintained a strong position throughout the year and built on the good performance from the previous year. The combined incentive payment are in excess of £280,000.

Outstanding performance was seen in achieving 0% non - decency in December. The figure has now risen back up to 2.84% (due to the calendarised nature of elements) but it continues to be the best in the city and AVHL will strive, budget permitting, to maintain this position.

Adaptations performance has improved from its position last year and 541 major adaptations were carried out. However there are a further 284 to complete so there is a need to ensure a strong management of this area to ensure they are undertaken within agreed timescales.

Other areas of performance where incentive was generated include 99.2% of Stage 1 Complaints responded to in 10 days exceeding the target of 95%, 99.8% of Gas services completed 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 58.9 days compared to a target of 50 days. This has been a huge improvement from the beginning of the year but there is still much work to be done in streamlining the end to end process. It is hoped that the change in contractor and a more favourable contract will assist in bringing further improvements in time and cost.
- 97.11% of rent was collected compared to a target of 97.3%, however this was an improvement on the previous year and has been achieved whilst balancing the need for greater support through financial inclusion work.

Other areas of performance to note are:

Financial

Over the last 12 months financial controls have been strengthened further through the development of managers in a zero based budgeting approach resulting in a positive draft end of year outturn indicating that:

- Revenue expenditure will total £20.751M exceeding income of £20.598M by £153K. This figure may well reduce as we translate the FRS17 movements in our income and expenditure account.
- Capital expenditure will total £12.238M, compared to income of £13.867M with an indicative agreement from LCC to carry forward the balance of £1.629m into 2011/12 to deliver the approved capital programme (£955k already agreed earlier in the financial year)
- A net surplus of £3.820m (subject to FRS17 and year end adjustments) will be added to our reserves and utilised in accordance with the 3 year business plan. These funds have been committed in the 3 year business plan and will be utilised to maintain the long term financial stability of the organisation alongside improvements in service delivery.

Repairs and Maintenance

The Right to Repair target was not met due to the very harsh winter we experienced & PHJones inability to cope with the conditions which along with the collapse of Connaught resulted in performance of 95.48% against a target of 98%. However, on the plus side, 'appointments kept' performance exceeded the target of 98% at 99.38%.

Work with Kier and Connaught/Lovell has resulted in repairs completed Right First Time (RFT) year end figures at 95.62% against a target of 95% and PH Jones RFT performance finished the year at 85.56% against a target of 85%.

Anti Social Behaviour

AVHL have been active participants in the review of the ASB service across the City by attending both the Project Board and Project Team. A fundamental review of the service has been completed with the new geographical service delivery teams being introduced, and managed by the ALMO's.

The review will allow more active, and timely interventions, to deal with ASB from an enforcement and preventative perspective. The introduction of the CORE will ensure consistency of service delivery, across all service partners, and will provide more effective performance data.

Annual and New Tenancy Visits

A total of 2545 Annual Tenancy visits were carried out during the year (98 % and against our planned target of visiting 20% of all non sheltered housing tenancies). Focussing on tenants who have had the least contact with us this helps identify any vulnerabilities and make sure both tenant and home are safe, secure and sustainable.

Resident Involvement

Resident involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of services is a key focus for the business. We support 3 Area Panels and a network of 36 Tenants Groups, Community Groups and Community Voices, 21 receive an annual support grant. In addition we held over 30 focus groups, involved tenants in two conferences, met hundreds of tenants at gala's and local events and undertook over 1,000 estate walkabouts.

As in previous years, tenants have been active in driving up contractor performance by setting repairs targets and challenging performance through the Repairs Focus Group. Tenants set the priorities for the capital programme through the Tenants Asset Management Group and shaped the quality and added value requirements for Procurement 2011 which has culminated in a step change in the level of services to tenants that will be brought about during 2011.

With the involvement of customers we have also:

- Designed and produced a new user friendly tenant handbook and new guides to our services
- Created a Tenant Scrutiny Steering group, working with tenants to shape this important new forum.

- Set a 'tenants top 10' list of priorities, helping us report back to tenants our performance in the areas that matter most to them.
- Published the city-wide annual report, tenants setting the standards of service they expect and telling us their priorities we have to meet.
- Reacted to tenant feedback generally to improve services, for example, agreeing to remove fly-tipping more quickly, installing a new CCTV camera in an ASB hotspot, changing how properties are advertised, implementing a gritting policy and other measures to deal better with extreme weather spells etc...

Satisfaction with services remains high with:

- Satisfaction with the overall repairs service at 95.30%, Kier at 96.00%, Lovell 97.00% and PH Jones 93.00%
- 97% 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'.
- 73% of tenants are satisfied with the overall quality of their home and 74% are satisfied that their rent is value for money.

Equality

2010/11 has seen changes to the equality landscape, from the implementation of the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, to the change in government and the emphasis on the localism agenda. AVHL's commitment to equality and service improvement was therefore ever more important and we have continued to make significant progress in this area.

This year the E Project Team was established. This service improvement working group is focused on equality and access to services. The team received training around equality, service improvement, the Social Housing Equality Framework (SHEF) and equality impact assessments, and following this the team undertook a self assessment of their respective service areas, to establish AVHL's position against the SHEF. The results of this gap analysis showed that AVHL demonstrates commitment to progress across all areas, particularly customer profiling, and consultation and involvement work. However, there was less evidence to show the outcomes that this work produces for its key stakeholders.

The focus for 2011/12 is to continue to collate evidence in preparation for an external peer assessment in March 2012

AVHL was successful in incorporating equality and service improvement into Procurement 2011, the focus is also reflected in the contract management, following productive mobilisation. Our contractor has committed to work in partnership with us to ensure the services they deliver are fair and accessible.

Priorities for 2011/12

- A 'Back to Basics' approach to tenancy management and Anti Social Behaviour ensuring that staff are visible in the community and actively challenge breaches of the tenancy agreement through enforcement action and recharges.
- Working with LCC and ALMO's to reduce rent arrears within AVHL and across the city through the sharing of best practice within the city and nationally
- Ensuring tenants are at the centre of what we do by implementing a new Tenant Scrutiny Forum, working alongside, but independent of, our existing governance structures.
- Publishing performance against Service Standard targets in local offices and on the website to increase community accountability
- Implementing the Customer Experience and Communication strategies to ensure customers are central in the design, delivery and evaluation of services and our communication with

tenants, staff and partners keeps them informed and involved in developments within the business.

- Maintaining 100% Decent Homes and delivering Aids & Adaptations within agreed timescales
- Continued development of the LCC/ALMO Assurance Framework to ensure it supports strong governance, high performance and delivers VFM
- Continued participation in the development of the Shared Service Centre (ABC) to ensure it provides a service that supports AVHL business priorities, improves services for tenants and delivers value for money.
- Alignment of existing Service Standards and development of new Local Standards to meet TSA expectations, tenant aspirations and deliver high quality, VFM services (delivering the Leeds Offer)
- Ensure the Quest review is implemented successfully to improve the service to tenants, deliver value for money and reduce the negative impact of ASB in our communities
- Mobilisation of the procurement 2011 contract arrangements through Morrison to secure improved services, value for money and increased tenant satisfaction.
- 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