

## **DIRECTORS' UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2010**

This is a joint report prepared by the Director of Investment & Regeneration and the Director of Housing & Customer Service. The report provides Local Housing Board Members with a general overview and update on current issues.

### **ALMO New Build**

Our first properties have now been handed over. These are two four bed houses at Penalt close, Allenton. We expect others to be handed over across the other sites over the next month.

All homes have achieved the Code 4 standard and are very energy efficient.

### **Capital Projects**

We have two large one-off projects in progress at the moment. Exeter house is being refurbished and brought back into use. The work is going well and the LHBs will be invited to a grand re-opening once the work is complete. Rebecca house is currently having all the bedsits converted into one or two bed flats. We did incur a small delay as a result of the main contractor going bust but have appointed another contractor to finish the work and good progress is being made on site. This work will make the block more sustainable into the future. Again, we will be happy to organise a visit to the block when the work is completed.

### **Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP)**

We have been negotiating with a number of fuel suppliers over the past few months to obtain grant funding for energy efficiency improvements to pre-war homes. We have secured just over £3m in grant funding to help us to insulate any un-insulated solid walled homes and to fit efficient heating systems to those that need them. A report is being prepared for Cabinet and we hope to start some of the work this Autumn.

### **Environmental Services Department Transfer**

The transfer has been completed successfully. Derby Homes now has a total workforce of over 450 and is now responsible for the direct delivery of over £9m worth of repairs and investment projects. The transfer went relatively smoothly with many operatives looking forward to working for Derby Homes.

We are currently focusing our effort on combining the teams and eliminating any wasteful duplication as we go. We are certain that we can improve the standard of services over time and are developing an action plan to help us to achieve this aim.

We have appointed a new Head of Repairs and he is due to start with us in October.

## **Resident Involvement**

The Resource Centre has now reopened at St Peter's House and has been providing services to tenants and leaseholders since 1 June 2010. The opening hours are 10.00am to 2.00pm Monday to Friday. Officers from Derby Homes are working alongside tenant volunteers to provide an advice and signposting service. We are continuing to provide free internet access from the centre. Other volunteer agencies are continuing to provide surgery based services from the centre.

## **Derby Homes Website**

We launched the first phase of the new look Derby Homes Website on 7 May 2010. The new site provides on line access to rent accounts and other opportunities to make requests for services. Over the coming months we will be continuing to work with tenants to evaluate and further improve the site.

## **The United Credit Union**

As part of our ongoing work to promote financial inclusion for tenants and leaseholders we are now supporting the United Credit Union by funding an Officer to work with and promote their services. Samatha Cholerton, formally an employee within our Arrears Team has been appointed as Marketing and Development Support Officer. Sam's first task will be to produce new marketing material and service standards which will be circulated to our tenants and leaseholders. Sam will also be visiting Housing Focus Groups and Derby Association of Customer Partners to introduce herself and the service over the next few months.

## **Derby County in the Community**

We are pleased to announce that for the second year running Derby Homes will be working in partnership with Derby County Football Club to promote sporting opportunities on our estates. We have agreed a series of events during the summer for young people to join in football training events. These events will be published through local schools and targeted at our Junior Wardens and children of tenants and leaseholders.