

HOUSING INSPECTORATE - SELF-ASSESSMENT PRO-FORMA

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| Name of organisation: | Chorley Community Housing |
| Title of Inspection | Self assessment for mock inspection |
| Date: | 17 th November 2009 |

| Section 1 – Setting the Scene | Maximum of four A4 pages |
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| <p>Chorley Community Housing (CCH) is a Registered Social Landlord, set up with the assistance of Chorley Borough Council, following a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the Council's housing stock in March 2007. CCH is an Industrial & Provident Society, with charitable status, and a subsidiary of the Adactus Housing Group, which also includes Adactus (AHA) and Beech (BHA) housing associations.</p> <p>CCH was set up in response to the need for investment in the housing stock and a desire from residents for a locally accountable landlord. This resident interest has been carried through since transfer and is manifest in the high levels of customer satisfaction achieved in the 2008/09 STATUS survey carried out for CCH.</p> <p>CCH's core business is to provide and manage affordable housing for rent. It has a Board of 12 volunteer members, comprising 4 tenants, 4 council nominees and 4 independents. The Board have adopted the following vision for CCH: "Working together to make great homes and sustainable communities".</p> <p>The Group's vision is to achieve Quality, Expansion and Diversity (QED) in all of its activities. The vision provides the framework for CCH's strategic objectives as set out in the Group's Business Plan. The annual business planning cycle, involving Board Members, staff and customers, is used to establish annual projects for CCH to help deliver the Group's objectives. Projects are monitored through Clearview, our project management software. Projects are cascaded down to individual members of staff through performance reviews.</p> <p>CCH's core approach to delivering a housing service is a commitment to a local presence through its offices in Gillibrand Street in Chorley, supported by the benefits of the economies of scale that are achieved by being part of a group structure. Customer services staff are trained to resolve the majority of enquiries at the first point of contact. CCH undertakes around 90% of responsive repair and maintenance activity in-house via its Direct Labour Organisation. The Board have adopted the 'People First' Housing Corporation Policy, and an action plan to ensure compliance. Our aims for resident involvement are clear, well-established and are agreed with customers.</p> | |

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Adactus Housing Group

The members of the Adactus Housing Group now currently own or manage almost 13,000 properties across 18 local authority areas in the North West of England. The Group employs over 500 staff and has an annual turnover of over £43 million. The Group is a non-asset holding parent body and provides a range of services to its subsidiaries, including CCH, via an intra-group agreement and a menu of services. The services provided by Group are company secretarial services, finance, human resources, development, asset management, planned and responsive maintenance.

Since its formation in 2002 the Group has achieved significant growth. CCH joined the Group following the LSVT from Chorley Borough Council and further growth has been achieved by securing the Miles Platting Housing PFI contract in east Manchester (1,900 local authority properties) and the transfer to Adactus HA of properties from Riverside (214), Servite (405) and PfP (383) and transfers of engagements from Quest HA to Beech HA and from Neston & Parkgate Housing Society, Croke Village and Barkhill Terrace to Adactus.

The Group's vision of achieving Quality, Expansion and Diversity through its activities provides the framework for the Group's strategic objectives. Following the completion of Chorley Borough Council's stock transfer plans and the acceptance of Chorley Community Housing Ltd into the Group in March 2007, the Group comprises six independent companies:

- Adactus Housing Group Ltd – the non-asset holding parent body which provides corporate, financial, development, housing management, maintenance and administrative services to the group.
- Adactus Housing Association Ltd – currently manages approximately 5,000 properties. These are predominantly general needs and sheltered accommodation but with a significant portfolio of supported units. It also acts as corporate trustee for the James Tomkinson Memorial Cottage Trust and is a member of the Renaissance Consortium set up to deliver a range of services as part of the Manchester City Council private finance initiative (PFI) in Miles Platting, which added approximately 1,600 properties into the Association's Management in 2007.
- Acuna Ltd – an income generating subsidiary which manages commercial premises including shops and a gym.
- Beech Housing Association Ltd – Beech specialises in the development and management of shared ownership properties and currently owns approximately 1,000 properties.
- Chorley Community Housing Ltd (CCH) – formed in March 2007 to accept the transfer of Chorley Borough Council's housing stock. CCH currently manages approximately 2,900 properties.

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- Palatine Contracts Ltd – a subsidiary that acts as a subcontractor managing development activity to generate savings in VAT for the group.

Investment

A £29m programme of investment commenced after stock transfer and is the first step towards bringing the homes up to the Chorley Standard. This is the local standard for homes, which exceeds the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The total of all stock condition costs built into CCH's financial model is £107m million (excluding fees, VAT and preliminaries). The current main programme of works commenced in January 2008 and is estimated to finish in 2011/12 and totals approximately £42m including VAT. Already expended on the programme in 2008/09 is £8.26m including VAT. Finance for the stock transfer and improvement programme was provided by the Abbey National plc via a loan agreement dated 26th March 2007 for £35million of facilities.

Leadership of the Housing Management Service is provided by the Group Director of Housing Management (who oversees the housing management activities of all subsidiaries), with management supervised locally by the Director of Operations for CCH. Responsive, planned and cyclical maintenance is overseen by the Operations Director for Asset Management employed by Adactus Housing Group.

From 1st April 2009, CCH became the management agent for Lune Valley Rural Housing Association, managing 77 properties in the districts of Wyre, Lancaster and Craven in return for a management fee.

From 1st September 2009, CCH took on management of approximately 1,400 properties on behalf of AHA in Lancaster, Preston, Chorley, Ribble Valley, Sefton and Wigan. The management agreement means that CCH manages approximately 5,000 properties, making it an equal partner with AHA in terms of its relative size within the Adactus Housing Group. The transfer has enabled the Group's housing management arrangements in Lancashire to be rationalised.

The management of AHA and BHA stock by CCH is expected to generate £300k per annum of additional benefit to CCH, and will bring management efficiencies.

Financial Services are led by the Group's Director of Finance, with support from the internal audit sub committee and the Group's internal auditor. The Group provides CCH with all of its financial services e.g. payroll, treasury management, management accounts, financial reporting, paying suppliers.

Customers

Knowing our customers is a key element in helping us plan and deliver a customer focused service. Our customer profile information is

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currently 98% for gender, 74% for date of birth, 62% for ethnic origin, 23% for disability and 4% for sexuality. We acknowledge this is an area where we need to improve our performance so that we can build up a better picture of the needs of our tenants and we are focusing resources on collecting more customer information through annual tenancy visits, data collection on sign up and post let visits and by utilising our customer relationship management (CRM) software.

Partners

CCH actively engages with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies to develop solutions to the housing, economic and neighbourhood issues we jointly face. Partnership activity includes

- providing a community house on the Chorley Moor estate as a focus for inter agency working
- funding an option appraisal into the viability of a credit union for central Lancashire in partnership with the district councils, Lancashire County Council and three RSLs
- launch of the Quality Streets Initiative in partnership with Chorley BC, police and local residents to raise estate management standards on the Chorley Moor estate
- a partnership with Bullock Construction Limited, Chorley Borough Council and various sub contractors to create three new training places in the construction industry
- a partnership with Runshaw College and Places for People to provide a Certificate in Supporting Youth Work as an opportunity for residents working with young people to gain a vocational qualification as a stepping stone into a career in youth work whilst at the same time increasing understanding between different age groups
- joint funding of the extension of the SelectMove choice based lettings scheme to become a sub regional scheme covering Preston, South Ribble and Chorley in partnership with the relevant local authorities and other RSLs
- agreement to make available and part fund a property to act as a “community hub” on the Longfield Avenue estate in Coppull.

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| Section 2 – Service Areas | Maximum of twenty A4 pages |
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| ACCESS AND CUSTOMER CARE | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------|--|
| Strengths | Areas for improvement | | | | | | |
| <p>CCH is committed to delivering services that are accessible for all customers. CCH's customers are very happy with the services provided. Our 2008/09 STATUS survey revealed that 84.4% of tenants were satisfied with the service overall, with satisfaction with repairs at 83%, and 47.2% of respondents feeling that CCH's services had improved in the past twelve months. Satisfaction with staff was 89.5% and 83.8% of customers felt it was easy to get hold of the right person (rising to 97.6% for the DLO).</p> | <p>We aim to increase the % of residents satisfied with the overall service to 87%.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>A mystery shopping exercise was carried out in relation to the investment programme in the summer of 2009. 93% of tenants described themselves as satisfied overall with the programme. This validated the results returned from individual survey forms, with overall satisfaction averaging 95% over the past nine months.</p> | | | | | | | |
| <p>A comprehensive feedback reporting system provides customer satisfaction data on individual service areas, which is used to track trends and develop services. The service satisfaction questionnaires are monitored on a monthly basis. A snapshot of activity is as follows (results as at the end of quarter 2 for 2009/10):</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="219 938 1032 1118"> <thead> <tr> <th>Satisfaction Area</th> <th>Customer Satisfaction</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Overall Repairs Satisfaction</td> <td>100% (30 surveys)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Speed and Efficiency of Gas Servicing Works</td> <td>100% (130 surveys)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Satisfaction Area | Customer Satisfaction | Overall Repairs Satisfaction | 100% (30 surveys) | Speed and Efficiency of Gas Servicing Works | 100% (130 surveys) | <p>We will introduce telephone based satisfaction surveys in 2010, via the new contact centre, in order to increase the response rate and obtain more robust data.</p> |
| Satisfaction Area | Customer Satisfaction | | | | | | |
| Overall Repairs Satisfaction | 100% (30 surveys) | | | | | | |
| Speed and Efficiency of Gas Servicing Works | 100% (130 surveys) | | | | | | |
| <p>Customer Service Standards have been developed with our customers and are published in our newsletters. These include a range of services such as telephone answering and responsive repairs. Improvements as a result of the service standards are illustrated by earlier completions of responsive repairs and faster telephone call answering, where response times have fallen to an</p> | | | | | | | |

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| <p>average of 6 seconds (Q1, 2009-10) compared with over one minute in the twelve months to 31st March 2009. This is as a result of ending the service level agreement with Chorley BC and bringing the telephone call handling service in house. CCH regularly monitors the telephone answering service against agreed service standards. Reports on performance are provided to the Board and customers.</p> | |
| <p>Customer care training is given to all staff and is part of the Group's Annual Training Programme. Training passports have been adopted for all staff, giving them a personal record of achievement. The customer care training programme includes comprehensive workbook training modules, developed with an external provider of excellence in customer care. CCH has adopted a Customer Charter, which was developed in consultation with residents.</p> | |
| <p>Customers can access services through a wide variety of methods, including telephone, email, fax, post, face to face at the office or via home visit or surgery sessions, dependant on customer preference. Our Gillibrand Street office has been open to the public from 8am to 6pm five days a week since 1st September 2009.</p> | |
| <p>Reception at Gillibrand Street is staffed by trained Customer Services Officers who can advise and signpost customers across a range of Group and subsidiary services, as well as advise on other public services they may wish to access. Our reception area meets an in-house standard which is tested for compliance by regular tenant inspector visits.</p> | |
| <p>Repair requests are taken by a central repairs reporting team managed by Adactus Housing Group on our behalf.</p> | <p>The repairs reporting team will form part of the new customer contact centre from 1.12.09. We will put in place a service level agreement between the contact centre and CCH spelling out the level of service we require.</p> |
| <p>Housing management services are delivered by the Neighbourhood Services team, which comprises specialist anti social behaviour and income management teams along with seven Neighbourhood Officers who are the first point of contact for estate and tenancy</p> | |

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| <p>management issues. Direct dial numbers are publicised for the specialist teams and for Neighbourhood Officers.</p> | |
| <p>A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has recently been implemented that supports the delivery of a more consistent approach to customer engagement. New call distribution software has been introduced and the Customer Services team has recently undergone a comprehensive training programme on all aspects of housing management, equipping them to deal with a higher proportion of calls on a 'right first time' basis. This has freed up Neighbourhood Officers to deal with the more complex enquiries and to be more pro active in the management of their neighbourhoods.</p> | |
| <p>A new customer contact centre will go live from 1st December 2009, with all incoming calls to the main switchboard handled there. This will lead to improved services for customers as a higher proportion of calls will be able to be resolved at the first point of contact.</p> | <p>We will provide additional resources for the customer contact centre through the provision of a housing management expert whilst the contact centre beds in and the scripting solution is fully developed.</p> |
| <p>Gillibrand Street is DDA compliant. Customers are able to report emergency and routine repairs and ASB complaints 24-hours a day.</p> <p>Customer incentives are offered for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a £30 incentive for customers to switch to paying their rent by direct debit for the first time. Since the incentive was introduced in February 2009 alongside more flexible payment options, 229 tenants have switched to paying by direct debit - entry into a £50 monthly prize draw for granting the gas servicing team first time access to carry out the annual appliance service. 99.75% of properties have a current gas safety certificate. - entry into a £50 monthly prize draw for responding to the repairs satisfaction survey which all residents having a repair carried out are invited to complete. | <p>We will introduce an eleven month payment cycle for direct debit payers to improve our performance on rent collection.</p> |

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| <p>CCH reviewed its Tenants Handbook, working with residents, in 2008. All of our documents include standard language straplines. CCH's tenant newsletter – which is written and edited by tenants - can be requested in a variety of formats (audio, large print, etc). The Group subscribes to Language Line and an agreement is in place with Legal and Technical Translations Ltd whereby staff can access services if translation is required. Gillibrand Street has a hearing loop systems for those customers with compatible hearing aids and CCH has staff trained to BSE Level 1 in sign language. A register exists of staff language skills to support other translation options.</p> | <p>We will review our Tenants Handbook in 2010 to ensure that it takes account of recent changes in the way we deliver services.</p> |
| <p>CCH has a Complaints, Compliments, Comments and Compensation Policy, and a leaflet informs customers of the standards of service they can expect to receive. This policy enables staff (where possible) to resolve complaints quickly and satisfactory at a local level. To support early resolution, staff are encouraged to make use of a Gesture of Goodwill budget that can be used in cases where service standards have fallen below agreed levels. The process is streamlined with four stages, culminating in a panel review by board members at which complainants are welcome to present their case. The complaints leaflet explains in detail how complaints may be made, but CCH accepts complaints through whatever means a customer may wish to use. All complaints are registered on a database and receive a unique reference number and all customers who make a complaint receive a follow-up questionnaire to enable CCH to carry out qualitative and quantitative analysis.</p> | <p>We will review our complaints policy in 2010 with a view to streamlining the procedure in line with good practice.</p> |
| <p>Complaints are analysed strategically in order to identify ways in which services can be improved. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduction of a worked example of an ASB incident diary - removal of the screens in the interview rooms | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduction of a 'sign off' sheet on the improvement programme to provide clarity on what works are still to be dealt with as part of the snagging process. | |
| <p>Resident involvement is a key part of our delivery of customer care. The overarching tenants group is the Tenants and Residents Panel, comprising a mixture of tenant representatives and individual tenant activists. This group meets six times a year to consider policy proposals going to the Board of CCH. Tenants are also involved in reading customer-facing information which, once amended, receives the 'Tenant Approved' logo.</p> | <p>In response to resident requests, we are setting up a Tenants Forum in 2010 to provide more opportunities for residents to become involved.</p> |
| <p>The changes made to services following consultation are monitored and reported to residents through newsletters and our website. Some key changes have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - evaluation of payment of decoration allowances by cheque or direct bank transfer in response to tenants' concerns that decoration vouchers limited customer choice as to where they could spend their money - rewording of the relet specification to make it easier for customers to understand - changing the sizes of boxes provided on the investment programme to give a variety including smaller ones more manageable by elderly residents - changing the notice period for improvement works from 21 days to 28 days and putting it in a red envelope (rebranded as red letter day) to give residents more notice and make sure they see this - introduction of a DVD to show residents about to have their homes improved what the work will entail and how they can | |

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| <p>prepare their homes and what additional support they can access.</p> | |
| <p>CCH provides advice, training and membership of TPAS and grants to recognised residents groups. The Green Grants scheme allows residents groups the chance to bid for funding for green projects in order to improve an area. The scheme is operational for the first time in 2009/10. A panel of customers make all decisions on Green Grant funding bids. An annual training plan is developed that seeks to address residents' training needs.</p> | |
| <p>DIVERSITY</p> | |
| <p>Strengths</p> | <p>Areas for improvement</p> |
| <p>CCH's commitment to diversity flows from the Group's Vision Statement to achieve Quality, Expansion and Diversity (QED). CCH puts equality and diversity at the forefront of all its activities to ensure that it delivers a consistently high level of service to all our customers. The Group's strategic objectives are linked back to this Vision Statement and the Group has clear Corporate Objectives relating to diversity. CCH has adopted an equality and diversity policy to support the delivery of its corporate objectives and summarises what customers, staff and partners can expect from CCH in this area. It publishes an equalities scheme to publicly evaluate its equality and diversity work and to set out an action plan which is delivered by the Group's Equality & Diversity Continuous Improvement Group, established in 2007.</p> | |
| <p>CCH has adopted targets on diversity and reports performance against these each quarter to its board. 3.15% of CCH's employees are from a BME background. Currently, no Board members are from a BME background. Staff and board member induction sessions include an overview of CCH's approach to Equality and Diversity. The Employee Handbook and Board Members Handbook clearly explain CCH's expectations in terms of commitment to E&D. The Group is a member of the Housing Diversity Network and senior managers within the Group are participating in mentoring staff from</p> | <p>We will actively seek to recruit a Board member from a BME background when we next have a vacancy.</p> |

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| <p>other organisations to develop their careers. Mentoring is also offered to CCH staff as part of this programme.</p> | |
| <p>CCH subscribes to Language Line and front line staff have been trained to use the service. Staff carry language cards so that customers can point at their preferred language to ease access to translation services.</p> | |
| <p>CCH has adopted equality and diversity service standards which include commitments to produce information in alternative formats such as translated languages, large print or in audio within five working days of request. The communication preferences of customers are recorded on the QLX housing management system and this is used to issue correspondence such as rent increase letters and satisfaction surveys in alternate formats. Equality impact assessments are undertaken when a service is introduced or reviewed. An example of this is the introduction of the new allocations policy for CCH, introduced in 2009.</p> | |
| <p>Customers requiring additional support are flagged on the housing management system. Staff training has been delivered to promote greater awareness of the needs of customers requiring extra support. CCH employs Tenancy Support Officers to provide support to customers and make referrals as appropriate, including to agencies such as Families First, who co-ordinate inter agency support for vulnerable families.</p> | <p>We will develop links with BME groups working in the community in Chorley.</p> |
| <p>The Group's marketing team work to Visual Standards Guidelines on the design and format of customer literature and website content. These have been developed through resident consultation and following good practice. The website has been developed to provide a comprehensive range of services. The website presents information in a variety of formats to cater for the needs of people with different disabilities and language requirements. Website content is produced to exceed the 'A' rating of the World Wide Web Consortium Web Access Initiative (W3C WAI).</p> | <p>We will provide tenants with the facility to access their full rent account and repairs history data from 2010.</p> |
| <p>CCH has a racial harassment and hate crimes policy and procedure.</p> | <p>We will promote CCH as a hate crime reporting centre.</p> |

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| <p>This policy links into the anti-social behaviour procedures. Front line staff have received training to ensure a complainant centred approach when dealing with reported cases. CCH has recently reviewed its domestic abuse policy and procedure to adopt a survivor centred approach when dealing with reported cases. CCH's office is a hate crime reporting centre.</p> | |
| <p>As a cross-cutting issue, equality and diversity issues are considered in most resident consultation exercises. Examples include the development of the equality and diversity policy and a clear Standard for Accessible Venues to ensure that meetings and events are open to everyone. Transport, travelling expenses and reimbursement of registered childcare costs are offered to customers attending meetings.</p> | <p>We will promote the availability of transport and travelling expenses to encourage attendance at meetings.</p> |
| <p>CCH requires contractors to meet qualification criteria including detailed diversity requirements and to sign-up to equality principles set out in a Contractor Code of Conduct.</p> | |

KLOE 3 Stock Investment & Asset Management (Responsive repairs)

| Strengths | Areas for Improvement |
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| <p>The Audit Commission published its inspection of Chorley BC's building maintenance service, including housing repairs, in November 2003 and rated it as a 'fair' one star service with uncertain prospects. Since then, the Council has transferred its stock to CCH and the service is radically different from that which was inspected six years ago. Key achievements to address previously identified areas of weakness include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing the balance between the proportion of spend on planned maintenance rather than responsive • increased publication of the investment programme, including | |

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| <p>updates as necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99.75% of properties having a valid CP12 gas certificate as at 30th September 2009, with servicing done on an appointment basis • publication of a 'relet standard' for empty homes agreed with tenants | |
| <p>The prospects for improvement were judged as uncertain because the Council's investment plans were viewed as inadequate and the Council had not determined with tenants a standard that they aspired to in relation to their homes and the Decent Homes Standard. Tenant consultation in the run up to the transfer ballot devised the Chorley Homes standard, which formed the basis on which tenants were balloted and the foundation of the thirty year investment programme.</p> | |
| <p>The repairs service, as at the time of the 2003 inspection, continues to be delivered via an in house DLO. A number of changes have been carried out in relation to the way in which the DLO delivers the repairs service for CCH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - appointments are now offered for non urgent repairs, with 93.1% of repairs being appointed in Quarter 1 (2009/10); - the Bengal Street stores was closed in December 2008. Materials are now supplied by builder's merchants Jewson in a partnering arrangement that was piloted in Chorley and which has since been rolled out across the Group; - CCH has ceased occupation of the Bengal Street depot, which it previously occupied on a licence from Chorley | |

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| <p>Borough Council. Operatives now travel to their first job directly from home, increasing productivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the introduction of hand held PDAs so that completion of job tickets can be notified to the repairs call centre and emergency jobs communicated via e-mail as necessary - centralisation of the management of the DLO across the Group in order to standardise working practices and eliminate inefficiencies as a result of operatives travelling further to jobs because of pre-defined areas of operation - the centralisation of repairs reporting to ensure a consistent approach. | <p>We will evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot scheme to centralise the DLO management.</p> <p>We will evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot scheme to centralise repairs reporting and the introduction of the customer contact centre.</p> |
| <p>DLO staff have monthly appraisals and regular team meetings and are managed via the Operations Director for Asset Management. 83% of tenants described themselves as satisfied with the way repairs and maintenance was dealt with in our 2008/09 tenant satisfaction survey. 93.2% of respondents to repairs satisfaction questionnaires described themselves as satisfied with the overall job in Q1 (2009/10).</p> | |
| <p>Customers can report repairs in a variety of ways as detailed in the Tenants' Handbook – by telephone, online or in person. CCH uses bespoke software to simplify the reporting process to enable more first time completions. This is supplemented with Locator Plus diagnostic software that also ensures the correct priority is given for the repair. Alerts from the housing management system, e.g. overdue gas servicing, tenant vulnerability, planned work etc, enable staff to take account of the specific need of customers.</p> | |
| <p>Appointments are offered for all non-emergency repairs. CCH is</p> | <p>We will review our approach to post inspections to ensure that risks</p> |

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| <p>currently reviewing service delivery times to offer extended appointment times. CCH uses Orbis for out of hours call handling. A 10% post inspection of all completed work is carried out. This is on a risk basis and in accordance with the inspections procedure.</p> | <p>continue to be effectively managed.</p> |
| <p>DLO operatives are encouraged to take ownership of jobs, including pre-inspection, completion of the work required and attending to other unreported repairs required. CCH makes use of hand held technology to enable remote/mobile working and satellite tracking to improve service delivery and make best use of resources.</p> | <p>We will introduce new hand held technology for operatives in 2010 to further automate the repairs process and improve the efficiency of the DLO. We will embed Optitime software and evaluate the benefits in productivity terms of the new handheld devices.</p> |
| <p>CCH has an arrangement with British Gas for utility card meters to be reset within 24 hours of a property becoming void and for the energy supply to be transferred to beneficial tariffs for incoming tenants.</p> | |
| <p>CCH benchmarks its repairs service both internally and externally including the use of House Mark.</p> | |
| <p>The stores function which transferred to CCH from Chorley Borough Council in March 2007 was closed in December 2008 and the stores function is now provided by Jewson, the builder's merchants, from their branch in Lyons Lane, Chorley. The partnership has shown a saving of £90,000 in the first six months of operation, and this arrangement has now been rolled out across the Adactus Housing Group.</p> | <p>We will evaluate the benefits of the partnership with Jewson during 2010.</p> |
| <p>This saving is purely on purchase of materials and does not include savings on back office functions, reduced costs associated with fewer invoices, etc. The arrangement also provides greater control over van stocks, enabling more first time repairs to be carried out.</p> | |

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| HOUSING INCOME MANAGEMENT | |
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| Strengths | Areas for Improvement |
| <p>CCH seeks to balance financial inclusion and income recovery. CCH has a Income Management Policy and Procedure, a Rent Setting Policy and Financial Inclusion Strategy (adopted by the Group Board in May 2008). CCH has recently completed a service review and undertaken a Peer Review of the Income Management Service.</p> | |
| <p>As well as paying by card or cash at CCH's offices, tenants can pay rent by direct debit, standing order, debit card, text and by cash payments using Allpay cards at shops and other businesses. Payment can also be made by telephone at CCH's office, via telephone using Allpay's 24 hour automated payment facility or via CCH's website or at the local office. CCH introduced a £30 incentive to tenants switching to paying their rent by direct debit – payable after three months – and this has led to 229 customers switching to this payment method. Overall, 21% of tenants pay their rent by direct debit and 68% of tenants are satisfied with the advice provided to them on rent payments.</p> | <p>We will continue to promote online payment and payment by text as alternative rent payment methods.</p> |
| <p>62% of tenants are on full or partial Housing Benefit. CCH appointed its first Financial Inclusion Officer in April 2009. At sign up an affordability check is carried out to ensure the property is affordable. A benefits check is also carried out and advice given on any benefits to which the tenant may be entitled. If the Neighbourhood Officer has any concerns about the tenant's ability to pay the rent they will make a referral to the Financial Inclusion Officer.</p> | <p>We will continue to promote the services of the Financial Inclusion Officer to tenants to ensure that awareness of the service is more widely known. We will participate in a Financial Inclusion mapping exercise with DWP and other stakeholders to ensure that agencies providing debt advice are working in a co-ordinated manner.</p> |
| <p>The Group has developed a low cost home contents insurance scheme in conjunction with AON Insurance which is available to all CCH customers. There is a Group wide project in 2009/10 to increase the take up of home contents insurance amongst tenants</p> | <p>We will seek to increase the take up of home contents insurance amongst financially excluded households and monitor the activity carried out to promote HCI</p> |

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| <p>and leaseholders. An action plan has been developed to raise staff awareness of the need for low income households to consider home contents insurance and the opportunities available to front line staff to do so.</p> | |
| <p>Basic bank accounts for customers are publicised with an introduction letter from the financial inclusion service. A partnership with NatWest Bank is in the process of being put in place which will see CCH tenants offered the opportunity to be taken through the sign up process.</p> | <p>We will finalise the partnership with Nat West Bank and train the income management team to assist tenants to open basic bank accounts. We will set a target for the number of basic bank accounts to be opened by CCH tenants assisted by our staff.</p> |
| <p>CCH complies with rent restructuring. On average properties subject to the rent restructuring process are 8.7% below target rent levels in 2009/10. The aim of the policy is to set charges in a fair and consistent approach. This ensures the future viability of CCH whilst complying with TSA requirements.</p> | |
| <p>Customers receive details of rent increases through the 'increase in rent information letter' each year. It explains the way rents and rises are calculated and itemises services costs. A 'How to pay rent' leaflet provides basic information on the various ways to pay the rent, what will happen if a tenant falls into arrears and details of the financial inclusion service.</p> | |
| <p>CCH recognises that income management is an area where performance needs to improve. CCH faces particular challenges as the 2009/10 rent increase averaged 9% (due to a combination of the September 2008 RPI figure and the need to raise rents by up to an additional £2 a week in order to meet the rent restructuring requirements) at a time when the credit crunch is affecting households generally. CCH undertook a peer review in October 2008 in order to identify ways in which it can improve performance.</p> | <p>We will evaluate the benefits of closer working with the income management team at AHA. We will develop a strategy for recovery of former tenant rent arrears, including consideration of the use of a debt collection agency.</p> <p>We will introduce low level arrears chasing by the customer contact centre.</p> |

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| <p>This has led to the decision to introduce a specialist income management team. The new income management team went live in August 2009 and has had an immediate impact on rent arrears.</p> | | | | | | |
| | CCH | | | North West Performance Improvement Club | | |
| | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 Q2 | quartile | | |
| | | | | U | M | L |
| Rent colln | 97.15% | 98.2% | 97.09% | 99.5% | 98.4% | 96.3% |
| Current arrears | 2.47% | 3.42% | 1.74% | 2.56% | 3.63% | 4.88% |
| Former arrears | 0.9% | 0.96% | 7.24% | 1.02% | 1.31% | 2.65% |
| <p>Performance is understated on rent collection as a result of CCH operating a 48 week rent year with four "rent free" weeks – two at Christmas and two at the end of March. The result of this is that those tenants paying their rent by direct debit over 12 months are behind with their rent until the end of the financial year</p> | | | | <p>We plan to improve rent collection performance in 2010 by moving direct debit payers onto an eleven month payment cycle.</p> | | |
| <p>Rent payment cards are provided within the first week of occupancy so that customers can pay their rent within seven days of taking up the tenancy and direct debits are also set up at the same time as the tenancy is created on the housing database. Customers receive quarterly rent statements. Customers in arrears are referred to the Financial Inclusion Officer at an early stage. Separate records are maintained for rent arrears, court costs, rechargeable repairs and other debts. Our arrears procedure ensures that referrals are made to the relevant housing authority when a household is threatened with homelessness as a result of possession action.</p> | | | | <p>We collect the first week's rent from 46% of tenants on sign up but will look to increase this to 100% of tenants who are not in receipt of full housing benefit.</p> | | |

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| <p>CCH's Financial Inclusion Strategy aims to ensure that financial inclusion is incorporated into appropriate aspects of its planning, risk and operational management. CCH provides direct debt counselling, welfare benefits, fuel poverty and money advice to customers. Customers are referred by Neighbourhood Officers but can contact the Financial Inclusion Officer themselves. CCH have produced a Financial Inclusion leaflet that is given to customers with financial difficulties. The Income Management Team will visit customers whose arrears are increasing and who have not responded to communication, or where arrears are likely to result in possession. The visits are planned to take place prior to any enforcement action being taken. The Financial Inclusion Officer will also visit or arrange for the tenant to visit the office and the procedure allows for an alternative strategy to legal action to be pursued if the Financial Inclusion Officer can help the tenant to pay the required rent.</p> | <p>We will produce a DVD aimed at financially excluded tenants with low literacy skills.</p> |
| <p>CCH is working in partnership with Community Gateway Association, New Progress Housing Association, Accent Housing, Lancashire County Council and the three district local authorities in central Lancashire to look at the scope for establishing a credit union in the area with a 'live or work' common bond. CCH holds regular liaison meetings with Chorley BC and has an SLA with Chorley Housing Benefits.</p> | <p>We will evaluate the results of the option appraisal into a central Lancashire credit union and will, subject to the support of other partners, continue to develop options for affordable credit in Chorley.</p> |
| <p>CCH is also a member of the court user group for Chorley and complies with the Ministry of Justice's Pre-action Protocol for Possession Claims based on rent arrears. Legal costs are kept low by Neighbourhood Officers making possession claims online, which reduces the court fee, and by presenting routine arrears cases in court themselves rather than using solicitors.</p> | |

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| VOID MANAGEMENT | |
|--|---|
| Strengths | Areas for Improvement |
| <p>Effective management of the void process to ensure the prompt reoccupation of homes in Chorley is a key business driver due to the high levels of housing demand in the Borough. With the exception of sheltered bedsit accommodation and some family houses on the Longfield Avenue estate in Coppull, demand for all types of accommodation in Chorley is good.</p> | <p>We will implement a strategic review of sheltered bedsits.</p> <p>We will review the local lettings policy for Longfield Avenue in 2010.</p> |
| <p>Where a tenant gives four weeks' notice, a pre termination inspection is carried out by the maintenance inspector and any works that the outgoing tenant is required to carry out are notified. Where four weeks' notice is not given by the outgoing tenant, this is enforced and the tenancy termination date adjusted to four weeks after the receipt of the keys.</p> | <p>We will consider introducing a "golden goodbye" scheme.</p> |
| <p>Empty properties have the gas capped off within one working day of the keys being received, and the locks changed to enable all voids to be accessed using a suited key.</p> | |
| <p>A full inspection is carried out within two working days and a target date for when the property is likely to be returned from works is agreed at the weekly voids meeting. The void process is monitored from termination to re-let, with weekly meetings chaired by the Neighbourhood Services Manager.</p> | <p>We will set clear targets for the turnaround of voids which do not require major works in order to further improve on recent void performance.</p> <p>We will aim to turnaround voids in five working days where minimal works are required and a prospective tenant has been identified</p> |
| <p>CCH has developed with customers a homes relet standard for new customers. This is explained to prospective customers at the accompanied viewing carried out by Neighbourhood Officers. At sign up a standardised sign up check list is also completed. This has been introduced to ensure that advice and information given is both consistent and relevant. New customers also receive a new tenant starter pack which is used to provide advice and information relating</p> | <p>Post let visits are an opportunity for qualitative feedback and we will ensure that 'post let' visits are carried out on a systematic basis and that customer satisfaction with the relet process is captured.</p> |

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| <p>to a range of services. A new tenancy home visit is made 6 weeks after the new tenant has moved into their home. CCH also uses starter tenancies which, providing there are no breaches, are automatically converted to an assured tenancy after 12 months.</p> | |
| <p>Void properties meet the re-let standard and are tested as part of our resident inspection process.</p> | <p>We will review the relet standard with the Tenants and Residents Panel during 2010 to ensure that it continues to meet customer expectations.</p> |
| <p>Performance on carrying out void inspections and void works in a timely manner is monitored via the QLX housing management system, with the different stages of the void coded to reflect the stage it has reached in the process. Further refinements are being carried out to this coding system to ensure that it accurately reflects the status of properties that are not undergoing or awaiting minor works.</p> | <p>We will introduce a void monitoring process via the Clearview project management system to provide at a glance KPI information for managers in 2010.</p> <p>We will provide further QLX training for staff on an ongoing basis</p> |
| <p>In October 2009 the improvement contractor Bullock also began improving void properties after setting up a 'voids stream'. The first properties to be improved by this team have yet to be handed back and we are putting in place processes to ensure that voids are processed smoothly and that relet works following improvements are carried out without undue delay.</p> | <p>We will review with Bullock Construction and with customers how the void process works for properties that are undergoing major works.</p> |
| <p>Members of the Tenants and Residents panel took advantage during 2009 of an invitation to sit in on a voids meeting in order to see how the voids process is managed.</p> | <p>We will provide further opportunities for residents to engage with the void management process during 2010 so that they can suggest ways in which the process can be improved.</p> |

VALUE FOR MONEY

| Strengths | Areas for Improvement |
|---|--|
| <p>VFM is an essential element in ensuring that CCH delivers efficient, effective and economic services to its customers whilst maintaining</p> | <p>We are reviewing our vfm strategy and will complete the review in 2010.</p> |

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| <p>high levels of satisfaction. In 2007 the Group adopted a vfm strategy, which incorporates the work of all its subsidiaries and aims to embed a vfm culture across the organisation. The strategy has four key components: vfm in service delivery; in procurement; through internal business processes; and by maximising resources/inward investment.</p> | |
| <p>VFM in service delivery</p> <p>CCH adopts a zero-based budgeting approach, with a budgetary review process that operates on a rolling basis. Data sources on cost and performance include: Housemark; Tenant Services Authority returns; our annual Efficiency Statement (now discontinued); and customer and staff satisfaction surveys. A benchmarking exercise is undertaken for each service area every year. The tools used to ensure business processes contribute to maximising vfm are brought together in the Business Improvement Framework, which sets out the mechanisms employed to ensure continuous improvement and quality.</p> | |
| <p>CCH undertook a major staffing review in 2008, less than twelve months after stock transfer. This review identified savings which were achieved through a combination of voluntary redundancies and deletion of unfilled posts. Some costs were also transferred to the Group, with services purchased by CCH from Group via the intra-group agreement. Some of the efficiencies achieved as a result of the restructure were reinvested in front line services, namely two additional Neighbourhood Officers and a Financial Inclusion Officer.</p> | <p>We will evaluate the efficiencies achieved as a result of further staff changes.</p> |
| <p>Vfm reviews have been carried out in 2008 in relation to gas servicing, painting, and gardening. The results are being used to identify service improvements and review procurement methods.</p> | |

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| <p>A Group-wide internal review of the direct labour service led to a decision to centralise management of the DLS with effect from August 2009. Early indications are that efficiencies of up to 30% can be obtained by changes to the way in which the service is managed. The introduction of job scheduling software, combined with improved hand held devices for operatives, is to be implemented in late 2009. Perceived advantages of these changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduced supervision and management costs - reduced travelling by operatives between jobs - repairs carried out more quickly - a higher proportion of 'right first time' repairs carried out - fewer 'no access' visits. | <p>We will review the efficiencies achieved as a result of centralising the management of the maintenance service over the course of the next twelve months with a view to competitive tendering of the service in 2011.</p> |
| <p>Annual gas servicing is carried out by a team of gas engineers managed centrally by Group, whilst gas repairs are carried out by CCH's own direct labour force, mirroring the structure across the regional offices of AHA. These arrangements are under review with the aim of bringing all gas engineers under management of the Group, enabling a more efficient service to be provided. This will enable engineers to tackle repairs they identify on the annual gas servicing visit rather than having to leave for their next servicing appointment. 99.75% of properties have an up to date gas safety certificate.</p> | <p>We will bring together the gas servicing and gas repairs teams in order to provide a more efficient service in 2010.</p> |
| <p>The grounds maintenance service in Chorley, previously carried out by Chorley Borough Council under a service level agreement following stock transfer, was subject to competitive tender in early 2009. The contract award – evaluated by a panel of staff, Board members and residents – was to an in house bid from Adactus Housing Group. Residents were involved in drafting the specification and determining how the contract should be monitored on an ongoing basis.</p> | |

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| <p>VFM in procurement</p> <p>The CCH stock transfer improvement programme was procured on a partnering basis with Bullock Construction Limited. It was identified by the Lead Consultants (Arcus Consulting LLP) that procurement through the Bloc Alliance Framework, which Adactus Housing Group are member of, would offer good value for money and enable a contractor to be selected through a mini tendering process as opposed to a full OJEU exercise. The contractors selected to be on the Framework had previously completed a tendering process based on demonstration of value for money on both price and quality indicators.</p> | |
| <p>In the second year of the contract, further identified savings from the original Framework benchmark costs have been negotiated as a result of this partnership as follows:</p> <p>Kitchens: £130,905 Bathrooms: £ 90,913 Heating: £ 38,863 Electrical: £ 82,353</p> | |
| <p>The partnership with Bullock Construction has demonstrated value for money, as has the competitive tendering of mini projects. A recent tender return for Longfield Avenue, Coppull was £16,704 under budget and £92,910 less than the nearest competitive quote.</p> | |
| <p>The stores function which transferred to CCH from Chorley Borough Council in March 2007 was closed in December 2008 and the stores function is now provided by Jewson, the builder's merchants, from their branch in Lyons Lane, Chorley. The partnership has shown a</p> | <p>We will evaluate the efficiencies achieved from the partnership with Jewson on a group wide basis during 2010.</p> |

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| <p>saving of £90,000 in the first six months of operation, and this arrangement has now been rolled out across the Adactus Housing Group.</p> | |
| <p>VFM through internal business processes</p> <p>Strategic objectives and spending priorities are linked through the Business Planning process, which includes the identification of three year corporate goals and the preparation of an annual Business Plan. Annual budgets are set by reference to our corporate goals and to a range of other continuous improvement information.</p> | <p>We will upgrade the Clearview project management software during 2010.</p> |
| <p>ICT is a key enabler of our business efficiency. CCH has benefited from technology-based initiatives such as PDAs for DLS staff, improved HR software and the introduction of the Clearview strategy and project management software. The move to using the QLX housing management system from April 2009 has generated an annual saving of £58,000. As well as developing ICT to enable business efficiency, the Group provides an IT service and network that provides excellent vfm. With a network based on thin-client technology, IT device breakdowns/time spent upgrading software on remote PCs is minimised, saving around £100 per device.</p> | <p>We will carry out further enhancements to QLX during 2010 as user requirements are identified and refined. This is an ongoing process.</p> <p>We will evaluate the benefits of introducing job scheduling software and hand held computers for the DLO.</p> |
| <p>Activities to improve the value for money of staff investment have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - revisions to the staff appraisal process, to provide a clear link to the Business Plan; - introduction of a new sickness absence policy in January 2009, using the Bradford Factor scoring system; - introduction of a management development training | |

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| <p>programme, complementing the introduction of Clearview project management software.</p> | |
| <p>Monthly management reports are used to monitor performance and identify budget issues. Examples of business improvements introduced as a result of our benchmarking and financial management arrangements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an incentive scheme to encourage customers to pay rent & service charges by direct debit, which has attracted 229 new payers by this method since April 2009; - a reduction in the number of voids awaiting or undergoing minor works or being relet to 11 (less than 0.5% of the stock) as at 16th November 2009; - introduction of an income management team to focus on debt collection, including former tenant rent arrears and recharges. | |
| <p>The Group maintains a risk register which logs the major risk areas, along with the measures put in place to reduce the risks to the Business Plan. This register is updated and reported to the Boards annually. The current plan alerted us to the amount of borrowing held on variable rates and the Group has saved over £300,000 by switching to fixed rate deals.</p> | |
| <p>VFM by maximising resources</p> <p>CCH, as part of the Adactus Group, takes a selective and strategic approach in seeking inward investment, and will bid for projects/initiatives where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are relevant to business plan objectives; | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is a reasonable likelihood of success based on the Group's expertise and track-record;• there is potential for mainstreaming when external funding is withdrawn;• they offer access to new areas of expertise/knowledge, contributing to organisational and service development;• they meet customer needs and expectations. | |
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| Section 3 – Prospects for Improvement | Maximum of four A4 pages |
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| <p data-bbox="188 266 797 300">Our track record in delivering improvement</p> <p data-bbox="188 336 2011 469">Continuous improvement is firmly established within CCH. This is evidenced by “Quality” being one of 3 key elements of the Group’s vision: “Achieve quality, expansion and diversity in all its activities”. The Group has a Business Improvement Framework in place, which sets out the tools CCH has developed to help us improve; outlines our inclusive improvement planning process; identifies the specialist staff in place to support improvement activity; and sets out the mechanisms through which improvement is delivered.</p> <p data-bbox="188 505 752 539">The key drivers for change within CCH are:</p> <ul data-bbox="188 576 1832 1098" style="list-style-type: none">• membership of an expanding Group;• the transfer of management of 1,800 units from AHA to CCH;• increasing the percentage of telephone calls from customers that can be dealt with at the first point of contact;• maximising efficiencies, particularly in the repairs service;• taking a greater role in the management of neighbourhoods in partnership with other stakeholders;• the operation of a clear, robust and inclusive business planning process that draws on the views of customers and staff;• a committed and motivated workforce;• well-respected and accessible leaders. <p data-bbox="188 1134 456 1168">Our record includes:</p> <p data-bbox="188 1204 1155 1238">Delivery within budget and on timetable of a £29m investment programme;</p> <p data-bbox="188 1275 1637 1308">Being on target with the stock transfer promises set out in Chorley Borough Council’s offer document to tenants;</p> | |

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Establishing Neighbourhood Officers and an anti social behaviour team to provide a more customer facing service for tenants;

Progress in delivering the target of 200 extra homes to rent over five years in Chorley;

External recognition, with IIP status and a Best Companies 1 star award in 2008.

- Providing genuine opportunities for customers to set the agenda, facilitated by an expanded resident involvement service, offering customers a menu of involvement which includes tenant inspectors, mystery shoppers, an annual conference, email consultation.

Further service delivery improvements are planned during 2009/10:

- Reviewing the repairs service pilot and introducing work scheduling software and improved mobile working solutions to achieve efficiencies within the DLO
- Identifying further efficiencies and service enhancements that can be achieved as a result of bringing 1,800 AHA properties under the management of CCH
- Introducing a new customer contact centre to provide an improved level of service and increase the proportion of telephone queries resolved at first point of contact
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the income management team to improve rent collection rates

CCH has achieved improvements to KPI performance across a range of key services:

| Service | KPI | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 Q2 | Upper Quartile: NW Benchmark |
|----------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|------------|---------------------------------|
| Repairs | Urgent repairs complete on target | 88.9% | 84.7% | 80.5% | 95.9% | 97.8% |
| | Routine repairs complete on target | 94.5% | 95.5% | 85.4% | 97.5% | 96.8% |
| Lettings | Time to relet void properties (days) | 28 days | 31 days | 55 days | 50 days | 30.1 days |
| Voids | Void loss % | NA | 1.65% | 2.2% | 2.47% | 1.18% |

Managing performance

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The Business Improvement Framework defines six tools for managing performance and improvement: customer feedback, self-assessment against external standards, external challenge, target setting and monitoring, benchmarking, policies and procedures. These are deployed at all levels of performance management: in devising the Business Plan; developing continuous improvement plans for service areas; carrying out service reviews and managing individual performance.

The Business Plan is reviewed and updated annually, based on Group-wide objectives and goals with measurable outcomes. Senior management and Board members complete a PEST analysis that ensures key external factors influence the setting of goals (e.g. adoption in 2008 of a goal to reduce the Group's carbon footprint by 20%). CCH develops projects to deliver the goals, with each project broken down into tasks to create a clear link for employees to the overarching goals. From 2007, the business plan has been recorded, monitored and developed on Clearview software. The system depicts clear information on actions, deadlines, responsibilities, milestones and progress.

Service reviews are carried out to deliver and implement an action plan to bring about significant performance improvement in the selected area. A range of review types are employed: KLOE reviews, Comprehensive Service Reviews (Day-to-day repairs, voids, income management); Peer Reviews (Income management); Consultant reviews (Mock Inspection 2008); Tenant Inspections (Office access, void properties); and External audit/inspection. A forward plan of reviews is produced and updated annually drawing on customers' priorities.

Customer feedback is an essential improvement tool in our framework. The Business Plan is influenced by the annual residents' conference; A postal consultation on business plan priorities; annual tenant satisfaction survey; the Chief Executive's programme of quarterly employee briefings, and the quarterly staff forum. Staff ideas and customer ideas have been included in the current plan. Regular feedback is received from central and area-based resident involvement activities, based on a comprehensive menu of involvement, a suite of service satisfaction questionnaires and monthly complaints analysis.

The improvement framework highlights target setting and monitoring as it is critical to know and communicate how CCH are performing and what CCH are aiming for. A series of weekly, monthly and quarterly operational performance reports are produced. These complement the Balanced Scorecard of key corporate KPIs which is the basis of Board performance reporting and is available to all employees as an interactive tool on the intranet. Improvements deriving from monitoring activity include: reduction in the use of repairs contractors; re-programming of the phone system to reduce unanswered calls.

The Business Improvement Framework describes the tools and approaches in place to deliver improvement. However, its success is founded in the organisation's culture which promotes continuous improvement. Evidence of this culture is found in:

- The Group's vision statement, objectives and goals

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- Board governance: contributing to, approving and monitoring progress with, the business plan
- Role of the Chief Executive: holding quarterly briefing sessions with all employees to identify priorities and report back on progress.
- Increased investment in resident involvement, based on a robust Impact Assessment method, to ensure customers' commitment delivers the objectives agreed

Our capacity to improve

The Business Improvement Framework echoes CCH's ethos that continuous improvement is the responsibility of every member of staff. The Group's leaders set bold goals and communicate these clearly to customers and staff, who have confidence in their ability to influence the company's improvement priorities.

Investment continues to be made in technology: Customer Relationship Management, BlackBerries and PDAs all contribute to a responsive front-line service; Clearview Strategic management system and the Balanced Scorecard support the performance management framework that plans, prioritises and delivers improvements.

Regular full year forecasts are prepared to show whether CCH can resource additional services / recruit additional staff. Financial plans are regularly discussed at Senior team meetings. CCH use's Brixx financial modelling software to undertake regular business plan and capacity model forecasts. In addition the annual business plan includes a sensitivity analysis on the main market forces.

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| Section 4 – Action Plan | Maximum of two A4 pages |
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| <p>A significant range of actions have been noted in this document. These are linked to projects identified on the Clearview project management system and flow from our Business Improvement Framework. We have clearly identified timeframes for implementation and identified responsible officers. These action plans will assist the organisation in delivering continuous improvement.</p> <p>Business Plan Objectives</p> <p>Quality</p> <p>We will continue to find innovative ways to listen to and respond to our customers views in seeking continuous improvement in our activities - by agreeing action plans for Continuous Improvement with residents, setting and monitoring service standards for all subsidiaries to achieve and exceed, increasing the proportion of our homes which meet the Decent Homes standard by delivering our £29m improvement programme between now and 2012, holding one group wide resident conference each year and delivering a programme of customer service training to ensure our staff are well trained and able to deliver quality services.</p> <p>We will recruit, retain and develop staff- by developing a development programme for all new line managers, investing an average of 4 days training per staff member, completing a staff satisfaction survey and agreeing an action plan with staff representatives. We will work to ensure that our staff are representative of the communities in which we work, including BME and disabled staff representation, and we will develop a plan to harmonise terms and conditions throughout the group including an audit of pay against staff levels and elements of diversity such as gender.</p> <p>We will build a culture of challenge and innovation – by giving all employees and customers the opportunity to participate in the business planning process, by carrying out tenant led inspections, responding to regulatory requirements within deadlines and developing a culture which will ensure that we achieve positive regulatory reports.</p> <p>We will improve the efficiency and sustainability of everything we do – by delivering year on year efficiencies, using expansion and the Group structure to identify and deliver efficiencies, implementation of the sustainability action plan, delivering information system improvements to increase efficiency in working practices, reviewing the company establishment to make best use of VAT savings, and by continuing to extend the procurement methodology and deliver key projects in order to achieve greater efficiencies and better value for money.</p> <p>Expansion</p> <p>We look for opportunities to increase the size of the business by- pursuing selective PFI and stock transfer initiatives, delivering HCA targets for grant funded developments and retaining partnering status. We will fulfil the requirement set out in the SLAs and using innovative</p> | |

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ways to find new potential group members.

We will promote the Group's successes and its ability to deliver – by seeking every opportunity to generate positive publicity in all areas of our work.

Diversity

We will provide services to neighbourhoods as well as to individuals – working closely with Chorley Borough Council to develop its neighbourhood working model.

We will promote choice and deliver services which are sensitive to the needs of our customers – by monitoring satisfaction levels of diverse groups and taking action to ensure that it is equal for all groups, by setting clear service standards for the provision of aids and adaptations, improving the customer profile information we hold and ensure that data is recorded for 90% of our customers, increasing staff awareness on cultural and disability issues through training, by using our policy for people with additional support needs to tailor our services to meet their needs. Producing an equality and diversity position statement each year and moving towards life time homes design for 2008, along with developing group wide standards for suitability of venues for all customers.

We will maintain strong Governance with Board members who have a diversity of knowledge and experience- by improving the diversity balance of all Boards, ensuring Board members receive annual appraisals and development plans and by formulating a succession plan for Board members.

In addition priorities from our Continuous Improvement Groups include:

- Developing common standards for reception areas in respect of DDA compliance and implementing tenant inspection findings
- Developing Corporate Equality Schemes for all areas of diversity
- Developing cross departmental project to work on neighbourhood investment
- Further developing the continuous improvement process
- Developing our financial inclusion strategy
- Improving the standard of the homes we let
- Improve monitoring of performance by implementing and making full use of the Clearview software and use the information to drive up performance and services standards.