

Cynon Tâf Community Housing Group

**Delivering quality housing
services, locally.**

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**Welcome to the first bulletin
from the Programmes and
Initiatives Team at Cynon Tâf
Community Housing Group.**

**It is our intention to make
this a twice yearly update
about our capital projects, to
complement our tenants'
newsletter, Through the Key-
hole, that covers develop-
ments in service delivery.**

**If you would like information
about any of the projects cov-
ered here, or discuss any-
thing about our work, please
contact Antonia Forte, Deputy
Chief Executive at the ad-
dress opposite.**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Sight Loss and Refurbishment

**Involving Tenants in setting
Standards**

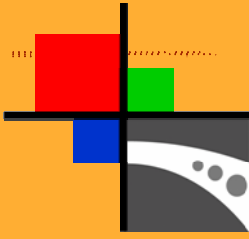
Developing Local Trades

Energy Efficiency

Pathways to Adapted housing

Towers and Beacons, Hirwaun

Low Cost Home Ownership



Cynon Tâf Community

Housing Group

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“MAKING A DIFFERENCE” – SIGHT LOSS AND REFURBISHMENT

In 2007, CTCHG acquired Penllw Court, Aberdare from Gwerin Housing. The scheme, a mix of bedsits and onebed roomed flats, was originally built in the 1970s. It was the Association's aim to improve the accommodation and communal areas to standards that our older tenants had a right to expect.

We had in depth discussions with tenants about their longer term aspirations for the scheme and the services and facilities that could be provided there. The scheme is a sheltered housing development, and the fittings, fixtures, components and specifications have been reviewed with the tenants

needs in mind. Tenants indicated that they were experiencing problems with using the existing baths, and as a result we considered and agreed



A delighted tenant shows her newly refurbished kitchen

that these would be replaced with level access showers.

We took the tenants aspirations further and met

with representatives from both the Thomas Pocklington trust and RNIB Cymru. We have adapted the scheme to include as much of the advice we received as we could, bearing in mind the Assembly's Design Quality Requirements for housing association. The areas that received the most attention were lighting, kitchens, flooring and wall finishes.

The extent of works has been a real challenge to manage, not just for staff, but for tenants as well. But the Association has been commended for its good practice, and we intend to build on this experience for other accommodation.

The scheme.. and the fittings, fixtures components and specifications have been reviewed with the tenants' needs in mind

INVOLVING TENANTS IN DEVELOPING THE ASSOCIATION'S WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD

We recognise the importance of tenant involvement and in particular the benefits of having the Associations WHQS Strategy developed with tenants views in mind. As a result of this DEVCO, our consortium was successful in obtaining a Tenant

Empowerment Grant in order to pursue this work.

We asked tenants to share ideas and offered tenants to become involved in increasing their knowledge with regard to the standard. We now have a wide representa-

tion of tenants and are confident that working together will enable us to develop a strategy that both meets our tenants needs/aspirations and one that is effective to implement.

HELPING TO DEVELOP LOCAL TRADES

The Cynon Tâf Community Housing Group is aware of the shortage of local construction skills and has been committed to tackling this problem.

As a result we have been liaising with the Head of Ferndale Community School Mr Peter Jenkins. There are a number of students at the school undertaking NVQ level 1 in Maintenance Operations.

The Association along with our subsidiary, Rhondda Cynon Taf Care and Repair Agency has offered to help the students achieve a number of units within their qualification.

The students will be placed in the two organisations, shadowing various experienced technical direct labour operatives.



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OUR COMMITMENT TO ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Association is committed to upgrading the homes we manage to achieve maximum energy efficiency levels, so assisting our tenants to have more affordable warmth, and also helping the environment.

Our consortium DEVCO in conjunction with GENUS has linked up with the Building Research

Establishment to draw up a pilot scheme that evaluates ways of minimising the adverse effects of buildings on the global and local environments of existing properties.

This pilot will be the first in Wales.

We have been lucky enough not only to have

the backing from the Welsh Assembly Government but also obtaining some grant monies toward the development of the project.

PATHWAYS TO ADAPTED HOUSING

“This property had been extended to accommodate a ground floor shower room and bedroom



The Association has been working in partnership with the Local Authority for the past 18 months in acquiring properties to re-housing applicants on the Pathways to Adapted Housing Register. The properties that have

been acquired to date vary from those that have already undergone adaptation work through Disabled Facility Grants to bungalows which meet the individuals' needs. This method of delivery has proven more successful over the new purpose-built

properties, as development process from acquisition to completion can be a lengthy one. Also this process gives the added benefit of being able to acquire properties within already established communities and provides a better mix of tenure.

TOWERS AND BEACONS, HIRWAUN



Artist's impression of the proposed development at the former Towers and Beacons site, Hirwaun

In October 2007 the Association purchased the site of the former Towers and Beacons high-rise flats from Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, having previously been involved with the local authority is assessing the feasibility

of refurbishing the flats.

The site now has planning permission for 33 family homes and the Association has been working with the Building Research Establishment on constructing properties that meet a mini-

mum level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The Code for Sustainable Homes is a comprehensive measure of the sustainability of new homes, in regards to reducing pollution and improving the environment.

This scheme has been chosen by the Welsh Assembly Government as part of their pilot project for achieving code level 4/5 and the improvements in energy efficiency within the design and construction of this scheme will go towards the Welsh Assembly's target for reducing carbon emissions by 2011.

We are aiming to achieve Code Level 4 for Sustainable Homes.

LOW COST HOMES AT MAES Y FFYNNON

Cynon Tâf Community Housing Group embarked on its first low cost home ownership this year, funded from its own internal resources. Negotiations with Barratts resulted in the acquisition of 6 two bedroom properties on their new site at Meas Y Ffynnon, Abercynon. Cynon Tâf Community

Housing Group's aim is to help first time buyers get onto the first rung of the property ladder in their local community. Under this scheme the Association is retaining 25% of the market value of the property with the purchaser acquiring 75%. The Association has worked in partnership with

the Local Authority's Homestep Scheme to identify



potential purchasers.