

SPECTRUM

matters

Autumn 2008

One Year On A Review by Wayne Morris

It has been a year since our merger and I can't believe how quickly that time has flown past.

The good news is that Spectrum has achieved all of its first year targets. This has included realising savings of around £500,000 through:

- The transfer of Western Challenge's stock in Devon to Signpost Housing Association
- The Cornwall stock being transferred to Ocean Housing Group
- Restructuring of the Executive Team
- Closure of offices in Poole (Signpost Homes) and Exeter (Western Challenge Housing Association)
- The appointment of Signpost Services Ltd as the reactive maintenance contractor for Western Challenge Housing Association

In addition to this is the creation of Source Development Partnership. By the end of March 2008 the partnership provided 1,119 homes across the south with a spend of over £50 million of public money.

Over and above this we have received awards and accreditations for our services including Signpost Housing Association's regeneration work in Plymouth, Signpost Services' Considerate Constructors Award in recognition of its work for Poole Housing Partnership, Medina's advanced accreditation under Quality Housing Services - the first RSL in the country to achieve this and finally, Spectrum's accreditation by the Institute of Management for delivery of management training.

Due to the down-turn in the economy and, like many other housing companies, we are having to review our development commitments and business plan forecasts in terms of sales and valuations expected through home ownership projects. On the plus side, the student accommodation market remains buoyant and Signpost Homes is in the full throes of building out pipeline projects amounting to some 1,100 new units in partnership with Exeter and Bournemouth Universities.

There have been many exciting events and initiatives and we have endeavoured to provide a flavour of some of these in this edition of Spectrum Matters. We have also included an extract from our accounts - the full version can be requested via the contact details on the reverse.



Pictured: Wayne Morris - Group Chief Executive

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Spectrum
housing group 

New Homes Open in Dorset and Hampshire

Thirty-four new affordable homes were officially opened at Ballam Grove in Poole by The Worshipful the Mayor of Poole, Councillor Mrs Joyce Lavender. Ballam Grove is a Western Challenge



Cllr Cleary and Pauline Davies (local resident who named the scheme) cut the tape to mark the official opening of Meybury Close.

Housing Association scheme providing a mix of housing for rent and for shared ownership (part rent – part buy). It has been built on a brownfield site in partnership with the Borough of Poole which nominated residents, with a local connection, to the properties.

The homes have been constructed by Parsons and Joyce, the Employers Agents were McNaughts, Fabre Technical is the Architect and Richard Coleman is the Engineer for the scheme.

A further thirteen new affordable homes were officially opened at Meybury Close, Bransgore in the New Forest. Meybury Close, a Western Challenge Housing Association scheme, provides a mix of housing for rent and for shared ownership (part rent – part buy). It has been built in partnership with New Forest District Council.

Cllr Jill Cleary, Portfolio Holder for Housing at New Forest District Council,

officially opened the scheme saying, "Well done to all those involved in the creation of an excellent scheme that is providing homes for local people."

The scheme has been built with flexibility in mind. The homes allow for future changes in the household with minimal alterations to the fabric of the building i.e. the building can be extended into the roof space as the family grows during the lifetime of the property. The homes encompass 'Lifetime Homes' standards.

Enhanced Standards for Medina

Medina has become the first housing association in the UK to reach the 'Enhanced Certification Standard' set by Quality Housing Services Ltd (QHS). Having joined QHS at the very end of 2006, Medina achieved the levels required for certification within 16 months. Since then, Medina has continued to improve against the set standards, particularly in areas where the Association performed less well.

During the audit, QHS staff visited Medina's offices, carried out mystery shopping activities and used resident surveys to measure performance. The key areas investigated were the repairs service, complaints handling, the telephone service, neighbourhood management and resident involvement.

Martyn Pearl, Managing Director of Medina said, "Our consistently high performance across all areas merited the award of QHS highest level of accreditation: Enhanced Certification. This is an excellent achievement which we will continue to build upon."



Housing for Older People Experiences an Image Make-Over

In a response to changing expectations of housing for older people, Signpost Housing Association has recently rebranded its sheltered housing now known as 'Independent Living'.

As an example of its future intentions to modernise many of the traditional sheltered housing schemes, Chescombe Court in Winterborne Whitechurch, North Dorset, recently opened its doors to celebrate the refurbishment of this scheme – the first to receive a facelift.

Councillor Della Jones MBE unveiled a plaque with Robert Walter MP and Chris Sledge, Chairman of Signpost Housing Association, to mark the official opening. Cllr Della Jones MBE congratulated Signpost on the way they recognised and responded to the needs of the residents in this newly refurbished modern approach

to Independent Living. The outcome was a great credit to everyone who contributed to the tasteful conversion of the building. Chescombe Court is an excellent example of how sheltered housing can be transformed to meet modern, independent living. The upgrades to the scheme include:

- Larger apartments with modernised bathrooms and kitchens
- IT suites
- Storage for mobility vehicles
- Automatic door entry systems
- Built in loop systems for the hearing impaired
- Fully refurbished communal lounge where residents can

meet and hold social events

- Full accessibility throughout for people with a range of disabilities.

Over the next few months Signpost Housing Association will be celebrating Independent Living with events across the region.



From left to right: Bob Walter MP, Cllr Lt Col Mike Oliver, Cllr Della Jones MBE, Mary Nuttall (resident), Peter Robb (Peter Robb Associates), Cllr Michael Cox, Chris Sledge (Chairman of Signpost Housing Association).

Staff Get Recognised



Employees receive professional qualification acknowledgment at the event.

Professional qualifications, management qualifications, and retirement awards were also recognised. Nominations for the awards are sought from staff, votes are then cast and the winners announced at the Awards Ceremony.

Steve Beach, Employee of the Year 2008 said, "I would like to thank those who nominated me and I hope we can continue to maintain the high standards for another year."

Local Contractor Awarded for Consideration

Signpost Services has been recognised by the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) for being one of the most considerate companies in the industry.

Signpost Services, working on the 'Safe as Houses Scheme' for Poole Housing Partnership (PHP), was chosen due to the high marks that the company achieved on site by the CCS inspector. Sites are inspected annually to ensure that they comply with the high CCS standards and awarded marks in 8 areas including consideration, cleanliness, responsibility and accountability.

Mike Harrison, Head of Technical Services at PHP added, "It is fantastic that the hard work both Signpost and PHP have put into the Safe as Houses contract has been recognised at such a prestigious level especially when you consider the very stiff

competition put up by national and international contractors". Signpost Services was particularly complimented on the attention staff give to tenants and the care taken in carrying out the work.

Peter Cattle, a Poole Housing Partnership resident says, "I'm really pleased that Signpost Services has been recognised for the caring attitude that they show towards their work. I recently had my house rewired and they kept me completely informed, the electricians were polite and friendly and they made sure that everything was left clean and tidy. It was excellent!"



Signpost Services and Poole Housing Partnerships at the CCS Awards Ceremony in London.

PM Visits Plymouth Scheme

Gordon Brown paid an unexpected visit to Signpost Housing Association's Extra Care scheme in Plymouth. The visit coincided with the launch of a consultation document looking at the future of social care for older people. He stressed the importance of services being more reactive to personal needs, with more people being cared for in their own homes.

In his speech Gordon Brown paid tribute to Astor Court saying, "I saw myself how much difference this makes when I met elderly residents of a special housing complex in the East End Community Village in Plymouth... What I found to be truly impressive was the help and support that gave each of them the freedom of living in their own self-contained apartments".



This is yet another accolade to be bestowed on Astor Court - so far it has been recognised at the Local Government Awards winning the Sustainable Community Award in Regeneration and it has recently been named as the best accessible building in the South West by the Local Authority Building Control Built in Quality Awards. The awards recognise and reward projects and organisations that achieve the highest standards in construction across a wide range of building categories. It aims to encourage ever-higher standards in the building industry. The East End Community Village has also been short-listed for two categories in the National Regeneration and Renewal Awards in the 'best designed regeneration development' category and the 'mixed use project of the year' award.



Student Homes Get Underway

Two important new student schemes have started on site in Exeter and Bournemouth.

In Exeter, work commenced on a new-build scheme for 219 student units at the Rowancroft site in Heavitree. The scheme is one of a number of initiatives which Spectrum is taking forward with the University of Exeter. The launch was attended by Wayne Morris and Martyn Dunleavy and is being fully funded by Western Challenge to the tune of around £11M.

David Allen, Registrar at Exeter University pointed out that the new accommodation would free up traditional housing for families which is currently occupied by students. He said, "By working in partnership with organisations like Spectrum we can provide high quality student accommodation which provides an

alternative to the private rented sector". The Rowancroft scheme is one of four schemes totalling around 550 student units which are being developed in association with the University of Exeter.

In Bournemouth, a steel frame 'topping out' ceremony at Holdenhurst Road was held to mark the work on site for 400 student lets (pictured). The scheme is part of a larger commitment for up to 1,000 units following Signpost Homes' success in winning a PFI bid some 2 years ago. The University in Bournemouth is growing rapidly and is experiencing a real shortage of accommodation for first year students. The Holdenhurst Road scheme will be completed in September 2009 in time for the 2009/10 academic year and will cost a total of £14.2M to build. The scheme is funded through Signpost Homes' £85M facility with the Bank of Scotland.



Left to right: Wayne Morris, Group Chief Executive, Spectrum Housing Group - Bob Rendell, Group Chief Executive, Leadbitter - Martyn Dunleavy, Managing Director, Signpost Homes - Dave Cook, Regional Director, Leadbitter - Steve Burton, Site Manager, Leadbitter - Peter Tierney, Director of Estates, Bournemouth University

Introduction to Spectrum Housing Group's Executive Team

Spectrum Housing Group, as part of its merger commitments, has restructured its senior management team. For information the Directors are as follows:



Wayne Morris
Group Chief Executive



Paul Bryan
Managing Director - Signpost Services



Martyn Dunleavy
Managing Director - Signpost Homes



Martin Lucas
Group Director of Finance & IT



Martyn Pearl
Managing Director - Medina Housing Association



Jitinder Takhar
Group Director of Business Development



Rob Webber
Group Director of Operations



John Wright
Managing Director - Signpost Housing Association
and Signpost Care Partnerships



Anne Wildeman
Group Director of Human Resources

Three Thousand Pounds raised for Charity

Over three thousand pounds has been raised for the Youth Cancer Trust thanks to this year's charity golf event hosted by Spectrum Housing Group.

The event took place at Canford Magna Golf Club with twenty teams taking part including many consultants and contractors that currently work with Spectrum.

Julie Dugan, Fundraising Director at the Youth Cancer Trust accepted a presentation cheque and added, "Thank you very much to Spectrum Housing Group and all who took part in the golf day raising such a fantastic amount of money for the Youth Cancer Trust. The Trust truly values this sort of fundraising effort, which enables it to continue providing therapeutic breaks for teenagers and adolescents with cancer from all over the UK and Irish Republic".

Since the event started in 2005 around £9,000 has been raised for a variety of charities.

Head/Area offices and contact telephone numbers

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