

## Hounslow Homes lays the foundation for a better future

Hounslow Homes, in partnership with London Borough of Hounslow and Lovell, marked the start of the first new Hounslow Homes owned properties to be built at Convent Way on 15 December 2009

Special guest, local boy and England cricket player, Owais Shah, was on hand to cut the ribbon and officially begin the build. Hounslow Homes Chief Executive Bernadette O'Shea said, "This is an exciting chapter for Hounslow Homes. We are building new homes that are environmentally viable and will make for a brighter and better future for residents."

Peter Thompson, Leader of the Council, added: "As a Council, we are delighted to have been able to give the green light to this project as part of our quest to provide sufficient affordable housing for the residents of Hounslow."

There is huge demand for affordable housing throughout



Cllr Peter Thompson, Bernadette O'Shea, Steve Coombs, Owais Shah and Cllr Jon Hardy launch the New Build

the borough and these homes go some way to helping to meet this demand. We made a promise to the people of Hounslow to build more family sized homes and here they are. This project also demonstrates how councils and ALMOs can work together to deliver affordable homes for local families."

Convent Way is the first

development to get under way through a major framework agreement between the Council, Hounslow Homes, Lovell and United House to create up to 1,000 new affordable homes in the Borough.

Convent Way will have 49 new properties, 11 three-bedroom houses and four, four-bedroom houses for rent. A local lettings policy means that first priority for the rented homes will be given to Council tenants on the estate who are in housing need. There will also be four two-bedroom flats for sale through the Lovell Choice low-cost home ownership scheme and 20 two-bedroom flats for sale on the open market.

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## Satisfaction survey reveals further rise

The recent tenant satisfaction survey results show that Hounslow Homes' tenants believe housing services provided by Hounslow Homes on behalf of the Council are improving

The final results of this year's independent survey show that overall tenant satisfaction has increased to 80%. This is the third successive year satisfaction has increased and is our best ever result.

Chief Executive Bernadette

O'Shea said: "This is fantastic news for the organisation, a real sign that tenants feel we are delivering good services. Everyone in the organisation should be proud of their hard work; the results are really beginning to show".

The result endorses the very effective working relationships Hounslow Homes has forged with its key partners the London Borough of Hounslow and Hounslow Federation of Tenant and Resident Associations (HFTRA).



Josh Brown from T Brown Group presents awards to Christine Burgess and Julie Brooker

## Tenant Awards

The first ever Hounslow Homes Housing Heroes Awards was held on 24 September 2009

The awards were our opportunity to recognise the fantastic contribution our tenants and leaseholders make to their communities. Over 200 guests from across the borough attended the event, which was generously sponsored by Hounslow Homes' partners and contractors.

Hounslow Homes Chief Executive Bernadette O'Shea said, "It was a fantastic event, which the tenants really enjoyed. Hounslow Homes is proud to recognise the good work tenants and leaseholders do in their local community and we hope they now know how special they are."

### And the winners were....

- ★ **Young Tenant of the Year, sponsored by Fernox and Vaillant**  
Taylor Thorne, Charlotte Carter, and sisters, Lesley, Courtney and Shannon Jones
- ★ **HFTRA Representative of the Year, sponsored by T Brown Group**  
Julie Brooker and Christine Burgess
- ★ **Resident Association Committee Member of the Year, sponsored by United House**  
Rene Wooton
- ★ **Action Against Anti-Social Behaviour, sponsored by Proteus Switchgear**  
Michael Barry
- ★ **Best Scheme of the Year, sponsored by Jewson**  
Meadowcroft Sheltered Housing Scheme - Roger Cannakamma
- ★ **Good Neighbour of the Year, sponsored by Apollo Housing**  
Sylvia Panton-Chapman
- ★ **Outstanding Achiever of the Year, sponsored by Hounslow Homes**  
Doris Stone

### One Team : One Vision

Held in November at the Holiday Inn Brentford, over 470 staff attended our annual corporate event and staff awards ceremony

Staff were treated to an inspirational talk from ex-Birmingham City Football Club Managing Director, and the new star of BBCs Apprentice, Karren Brady, about her struggle to be accepted in 'a man's world' and how she came out on top.

Hounslow Homes Chair Mohammad Chaudhry and Lead Member for Housing, Councillor Jon Hardy, joined the celebrations and presented two of the awards – the Leadership Award and Outstanding Contribution to the Company Awards respectively.



Guest speaker Karren Brady

## Fire safety

Like many other organisations responsible for the management of people's homes, Hounslow Homes has been proactive in its approach to fire safety

Following the tragic fire in Camberwell last summer and a BBC London News report which, we believe, exaggerated the fire safety risks at one of our tower blocks in Brentford, we have been taking a number of steps to ensure the fire safety of our housing stock. For example we had already:

- ensured our health and safety team and building surveyors carried out urgent surveys to identify any obvious imminent risks and commissioned remedial works
- worked with the Fire Brigade to organise fire safety training sessions for our residents

- initiated a regime of regular detailed estate inspections by caretakers and wardens with fire safety as their top priority

We delivered a letter and fire safety advice to all residents who live in flats and sent our own technical team out to investigate the concerns highlighted in the BBC London News report to reassure everyone that any real risks were dealt with immediately.

Work to carry out full fire risk assessments in all our housing stock over three storeys high, by independent inspectors, is well underway and we expect the final reports to be completed by the deadline in March 2010.

## Renewable Energy Projects

Renewable energy projects are high on our agenda for the year ahead

One of the projects we are currently considering, and which we will be presenting to the Board early in the New Year, involves working with potential partners 'Eaga plc' who would purchase and install solar photovoltaic systems for 1,000+ homes a year and maintain them free of charge for tenants and Hounslow Homes.



Our tenants could benefit from a percentage of free electricity and Hounslow Homes could benefit from reduced carbon emissions and not having to contribute towards the cost of these works. It could also reduce the number of tenants in fuel poverty and would greatly improve the sustainability of the housing stock we manage.

## New Chair



Following the Hounslow Homes Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 8 October 2009, we welcomed Mohammad Chaudhry as our newly elected Chair of Hounslow Homes.

Mohammad's election marks a fresh start and a new direction for Hounslow Homes, with three Vice Chairs Andy Lee, Paula Lewis and Cllr Gillian Hutchinson also being elected

Mohammad is a financial analyst with in-depth experience of management, cost accounting, capital accounting and project management. He has been an active member of the Board and serves on a number of committees and working groups including being the Chair of the Finance Sub Committee and Chair of the Complaints Panel.

Mohammad said: "I will be working for the future of Hounslow Homes a three star ALMO with excellent prospects, in consultation with our tenants, staff and LBH so that we can secure a better future for all."

# Complaints - how are we doing?

Resolving complaints quickly and effectively is a top priority for Hounslow Homes

As you may know, complaints numbers rose last year (2008). The two main reasons for the increase were a change in recording and administration mechanisms and the introduction of service charges.

The first, in recording and administration mechanisms, has made us more efficient and has saved us money but we have found that some enquiries which could be viewed as service requests have been categorised as complaints.

The second very significant change from 2007/2008 is the introduction of service charges. This has meant we have some complaints about service charges themselves and

whether the right services are been charged for. In addition it is probable that more people are now inclined to complain about services now they know how much they are paying for them, especially in the current economic climate.

Whilst the number of complaints has gone up, customer satisfaction has increased over the same period of time so we have two conflicting pieces of information to reconcile.

The number of complaints during 2009 is telling though. On average we are getting 78 complaints per month, compared to 84 the previous year (2008).

## Secrets of Success - a Daily Telegraph Business Club film about Hounslow Homes

Social housing is a topic rarely out of the news. Whether it is privatisation, maintenance or rising costs, council housing raises issues that spark debate.

This film looks at some of the challenges faced by Hounslow Homes and showcases the solutions we have developed in order to provide council tenants with high quality, affordable homes in sustainable communities.

The film will be available at [www.hounslowhomes.org.uk](http://www.hounslowhomes.org.uk) and from 21-28 January from [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk)

## Looking ahead

### Board meeting

7.00pm  
Wednesday 20 January  
St Catherine's House

### Board meeting

7.00pm  
Monday 7 June  
St Catherine's House

### Board meeting

6.30pm (TBC)  
Thursday 7 October (AGM)  
Venue TBC

### Board meeting

7.00pm  
Tuesday 23 March  
St Catherine's House

### Board meeting

7.00pm  
Thursday 29 July  
St Catherine's House

### Board meeting

7.00pm (TBC)  
Tuesday 14 December  
St Catherine's House

## Key contacts

### Bernadette O'Shea

Chief Executive  
020 8583 3666

### Tim Keogh

Director of Property Services  
020 8583 4301

### Caroline Shaw

Head of Communications  
020 8583 6419

### David Allum

Director of Corporate Services  
020 8583 3938

### Jill Gale

Director of Housing  
020 8583 4001