

Welcome to our Update

keeping partners
in touch

www.dchgroup.com

Inside this issue:

More new homes
than ever before

Keeping
rents lower

Independent
Futures

Our new Group
Chief Executive





> New homes being built in St Ives

More new homes than ever before

Effective partnerships with local councils and the Homes & Communities Agency mean that in the three years to 2011, DCHA, PHA and Tor Homes are going to achieve 1,500 new homes across Cornwall and Devon.

And, as the lead developer in Partnership South West, we are together achieving a staggering current programme of over 4,000 homes.

dchgroup.com/newhomes



Dawn French celebrates 10 years at the foyer

In January 2000, Dawn opened DCHA's ground-breaking foyer in Plymouth.

Ten years later, she came back to help residents celebrate our birthday. We were able to tell her about the 600 young people Plymouth Foyer has helped, the 91 young people who achieved accredited qualifications last year alone, and our network of six other foyers in Torbay, Launceston, Bodmin, Padstow, Truro and Redruth.

dcha.co.uk/dawnfrench



> Dawn French at our Plymouth foyer

Keeping rents low

Tor Homes, PHA and DCHA have been collaborating on how to make rents even more affordable for residents, working within government guidelines and keeping our strong financial viability.

Average rent changes across the group will be between a rise of 1.2% and a reduction of 1.6%. Great news for residents feeling the economic pinch, and a big boost to our financial inclusion work.

dchgroup.com/lessrent

Customer contact

The Tor Homes customer contact centre is opening for longer hours.

Staff volunteers ran an extended hours pilot project throughout January and February. Exploring ways of making it easier for customers to get in contact, the project is now being extended by three months at peak times.

torhomes.com/extraopen

Tenants conference held by Tor Homes

Tenants were invited to give instant feedback and help shape the future of Tor Homes.

By using interactive handsets to cast their vote on our spending priorities, tenants of Tor Homes were able to have a direct involvement in how their money is spent.

torhomes.com/tenantconference



> Tor Homes tenant conference



Improved service

Improved service says watchdog.

The Audit Commission has praised Tor Homes' high levels of tenant satisfaction, its maintenance services and says it has "promising prospects for improvement" in last year's inspection.

torhomes.com/inspectionreport



We are now delivering our supported housing services and care & repair agencies through our new company Independent Futures.

An innovative not-for-profit community interest company, we'll be working with clients and commissioners to deliver cost-effective support services that really make a difference to people's lives.

dchgroup.com/if

Paul Crawford

Group Chief Executive



"It's a great time to be leading a great organisation"

When I joined Devon & Cornwall Housing group, I was tremendously impressed with the effective way we have responded to the new economic climate.

As well as raising our game on financial inclusion and support for customers, we've continued to deliver our biggest-ever housing investment programme across affordable rent, intermediate rent and low-cost home ownership. 1,500 homes for DCHA, PHA and Tor Homes; 4,000 for Partnership South West as a whole.

Change is a constant, and we are well placed to respond to the new Tenant Services Authority framework, increased strategic working by the Homes & Communities Agency, and wider political changes.

We are currently reviewing our strategic direction, working with our board members, customers and staff to strengthen our group. We are also carrying out an externally validated survey of many of the key organisations we work with, assessing how we engage with our stakeholders. We'll report back on what we've found out, how we are changing, and how our strategy is being shaped by stakeholder priorities.

And, in all of this, our vision remains clear; better homes, better places, better lives.

Retrofit for the future

PHA, already a leader in the field of retrofitting homes, has been awarded £150,000 by the government's Technology Strategy Board to create one of the UK's first super-low-carbon existing social housing homes.

penwithha.org.uk/heatpod

Partnering in action

Our partnership with contractors has been cited by the Homes & Communities Agency nationally as a leading example of best practice.

Working together on a build costs package with Rok, Trewin Design and Taylor Lewis, we've saved over £4million on a 200 home rural programme in Cornwall. Streamlined team working enabled a flexible response to tight targets for getting schemes on site, providing high-quality affordable homes for local people.

dcha.co.uk/partnership

A natural work of art

Nationally renowned artist, Peter Martin was appointed by PHA to create some art.

The sculpture by local artist Peter Martin has already attracted a large fan base. He was commissioned to turn a giant oak, past its prime and potentially hazardous to passers-by into a local landmark with a 'green man' theme.

penwithha.org.uk/art



> Detail of the sculpture created by Peter Martin

Equality and fairness

We've just published new equality schemes for age, race, religion and sexual orientation.

These stand together with our equality schemes for disability and gender, as part of embedding diversity and inclusion in all areas of our work. Later this year we are developing a single, over-arching equality scheme that brings all these strands together.

dchgroup.com/equality



Tens of thousands of pounds saved

DCHA is responsible for the energy supply to over four hundred communal areas.

Our commitment to saving our tenants money prompted us to move 90% of our utility accounts into one account with Scottish & Southern saving a whopping £25,000, with even more savings to come!

dcha.co.uk/elecsavings



New Plymouth office

Due to be complete by December, the new office in Devonport is part of a prestigious mixed use scheme which already includes homes now occupied.

Constructed to the environmental BREEAM standard "excellent" the office adopts many energy saving features.

dcha.co.uk/office



> New Plymouth office



DCH group fast facts

Managing 18,000 homes across Cornwall and Devon, through 700 staff in our subsidiaries Tor Homes, Penwith Housing Association and Devon & Cornwall Housing Association, we are a social business that makes things happen across our region.

- > we hold the Customer Services Excellence award for all our work across the group
- > as Partnership South West we lead a consortium of housing organisations delivering a three-year programme of 4,000 homes for rent and low cost home ownership
- > we play a key role in regeneration, bringing together public and private sector partners to work in partnership with local communities
- > as Advantage South West we work in partnership with other providers, developing award-winning programmes for off-site manufacturing and maintenance procurement
- > with a turnover of £78m, access to borrowing of £425m, and a culture of value for money and effective delivery, our financial strength is key to achieving our vision of better homes, better places, better lives.



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Would you like to know more about our work? We will be happy to supply other information such as annual accounts and the business plan. Please contact:

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www.dchgroup.com

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