



2010 - 2011 In Review
Roddons Housing Association

How has the last year



Managing Director **Christopher Smith** and resident **John Feary** (Member of our Resident Scrutiny Panel) discuss the highs and lows of the year gone by.

Interviewer: It's been a year since the first Roddons Resident Review and the commitments made within it to residents. How do you think the year has gone - what's gone well? What hasn't gone so well?

John Feary (JF): We have seen a lot of improvements this year to the estate where I live, as a result of our Neighbourhood Action Group. Residents said what they wanted improving and Roddons listened and started doing the work. For example, signage for the layout of the estate was put up which has been really helpful, even for people who have lived there a long time. That is just one improvement, there have been many others. Roddons were not aware of some of the things that needed improving until residents came forward with their suggestions but when they did, Roddons did something about it.

Christopher Smith (CS): The important thing is, when residents talk to us, we listen. We have seen a huge landmark this year in meeting the Decent Homes Standard, which we met early at the end of July 2010. To have 100% of our properties meeting the standard is a big highlight and was one of our main promises for residents as part of the transfer. Another big highlight, especially in this challenging economic environment, was our

rent arrears finishing the year at the best they have ever been, at only 1.7%. It would have been easy to reduce the arrears by taking legal action to end tenancies but instead we have provided support for around 350 residents through our Money Matters Officer who has provided advice about benefits and ways to pay rent.

So what do you feel hasn't gone so well?

(CS): John's estate has been really positive for us but I don't feel we have improved the wider estate environment as well, on as many other estates, as we could have done. This has happened because the Decent Homes work focuses on individual homes rather than looking at the wider estate environment. We need to look at getting this right on all estates. This includes ensuring that our 'People' (our Neighbourhoods Team and Customer Services for example) and 'Property' (Repairs and Maintenance) teams work as effectively as possible together in the interests of providing a high quality service to our customers. This will enable us to be better at the estate improvement work as residents will be able to deal with the business as a whole rather than two separate departments.

gone at Roddons?

(JF): Although Roddons takes resident involvement very seriously I think we need to do more. There is a core group of residents who always get involved. We are aware this does not represent all residents views. Unless residents say something needs doing, Roddons may not know about it.

And how have residents helped to shape the services?

(JF): The Scrutiny Panel has had a large part to play in shaping the services. The Panel selects a different service area every time and looks in depth at the service from a residents point of view. When looking at disabled adaptations, the Panel found that disabled and elderly residents didn't have their own, dedicated group. Their views need to be represented so it was important this was highlighted to Roddons.

(CS): Indeed John, one of the strongest areas of resident involvement at Roddons is the Scrutiny Panel. When the Panel reviewed tenancy allocations and lettings it showed how important their involvement is. The Panel found although we had one of the fastest times for re-letting within the Circle Group, and indeed amongst all housing associations within our region. On occasions we were actually re-letting to residents too quickly as people weren't given enough time to make proper preparations for moving in and make arrangements which come with a new home. This is the kind of resident input and insight that can help us improve our services, and we changed parts of our lettings process as a result of this feedback.

So what are your hopes for the year ahead?

(JF): I hope Roddons will keep listening and continue to take action as they have been doing. I hope more residents will get involved and bring new ideas to help shape the services. This will help residents by bringing improvements to their life and also help Roddons deliver the services that residents want.

(CS): I agree John, we need to increase the number of residents we have involved and encourage others to come forward to help shape the services. One of our main focuses this year will continue to be our Money Matters service. We need to continue to recognise that our residents are facing a tough time with changes to welfare benefits and help them through this. If residents cannot pay their rent it means Roddons cannot continue to deliver the services we have promised, as rent is our main source of funding. It is therefore important we provide support. I believe if residents get through this period successfully then so will Roddons.



Getting you involved

Performance 2010 - 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Roddons	Cross Keys	Freebridge	Victory	Luminus
Satisfaction with views taken into account	81.7%	70.0%	74.4%	67.2%	76.9%
Satisfaction with landlord services	85.5%	90.0%	88.2%	88.3%	88.7%
Complaints resolved at first stage	96.0%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable



“I would like to compliment Roddons and in particular Jackie Larham (Resident Involvement Assistant) on the format of the Chatting Café and how all issues are listened to, dealt with and given feedback. I get a better service from attending this than telephoning Roddons”.

Maureen Readshaw, St. Mary's House, Whittlesey.

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- appointed a Resident Scrutiny Panel to assess the quality of our services from the perspective of the customer
- provided a wide range of choices to enable residents to become involved in the running and key decisions of Roddons
- carried out our large-scale, 'STATUS' 2010 customer satisfaction survey – involving 666 of our residents
- increased the detail of the information held on our residents records, helping us to provide excellent customer services based on the needs of individuals
- improved our performance in responding to customer complaints and changed the way we respond, increasing the number of complaints resolved at the first stage of our process to 96%

Going the extra mile....

Supporting our Resident Scrutiny Panel with two key service areas – lettings and disabled adaptations – reviewed this year

Making a comprehensive, free training programme available for our involved residents to increase their knowledge, skills and experience

Plans for 11/12

We will:

- continue to invest in the training, development and role of our Resident Scrutiny Panel
- increase the numbers of residents actively involved in our various tenant involvement structures and groups by 15% during the year
- implement the Improvement Plan drafted in response to our STATUS 2010 satisfaction survey so we can use the feedback provided by residents to further improve our services

Providing a wide range of choices for our residents to become involved from our Youth Group, to rural Chatting Cafes, Tenant Advisory Groups, Mystery Shopping, Scrutiny Panel and Board membership

Getting to know our customers better – increasing to 94% the proportion of our customers for whom we hold up-to-date, accurate information on their circumstances and needs



Looking after your homes

Performance 2010 - 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Roddons	Cross Keys	Freebridge	Victory	Luminus
Repairs completed on time	96.0%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Satisfaction with repairs	96.9%	87.3%	87.3%	85.5%	89.3%
Homes meeting Decent standard	100%	100%	79.7%	100%	100%
Homes with valid gas safety certificate	99.8%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable



“Very pleased with the excellent work carried out today to window sill and step. Adrian (Adrian Lister a carpenter in our in house Roddons Repairs Service) was very polite, well mannered and cleaned up after himself. 11 out of 10!”

Mrs Finch, Octavia Close, Wisbech.

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o completed our work to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard in July 2010
- o met the enhanced 'Fenland Standard' promise to residents as part of the 2007 Housing Stock Transfer
- o received excellent feedback on the level of customer satisfaction with our property repairs and maintenance services – with satisfaction in our STATUS 2010 survey increasing to 80% from only 61% in 2008
- o continued to provide our added value, additional maintenance services to some of our most vulnerable residents as per the Housing Stock Transfer Promises
- o ensured the safety and security of our residents by maintaining strong performance on gas servicing, fire safety and installation of fencing and lighting systems

Going the extra mile....

Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o review and improve our repairs service to be more flexible to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents
- o introduce a new approach to ensure that we charge the cost of repairs to those tenants who deliberately neglect and/or damage the property
- o introduce a new dedicated estate caretaker service, working to a specification agreed with our residents to improve the appearance, cleanliness and safety of our housing schemes

A flexible and customer friendly repairs service – with 91.8% of our 16,000 repairs completed in 2010-11 via an agreed appointment

Improving individual property condition – with 294 new kitchens, 212 new bathroom, 186 new boilers and 586 electrical upgrades completed in 2010-11

Improving the wider estate environment – with 222 new fencing schemes, 167 private driveways and 300 additional security lighting schemes installed in 2010-11

Providing services for the vulnerable – with some 365 residents receiving our home decoration and assisted gardening services during the year



Providing homes

Performance 2010 - 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Roddons	Cross Keys	Freebridge	Victory	Luminus
Average re-let turnaround times (days)	16.4	24.8	33.6	28	27.7
Dwelling vacant	0.6%	0.5%	1.1%	0.6%	1.3%



“Mrs Ashton called to thank Nina Burton (Roddons Property Marketing Manager) and the rest of the Property Marketing Team for their support through the Homelink process. Mrs Ashton has moved into Sefton Avenue and is very happy with her new home and wishes to express her gratitude to all teams concerned”

Mrs Donna Ashton, Sefton Avenue, Wisbech

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o helped 16 tenants move from underoccupied homes to more suitable accommodation via our 'Easy Move' incentive scheme
- o provided an excellent service to people in need of housing through our Choice Based Lettings service 'Homelink' – 404 properties were let in 2010-11. The number of applicants seeking housing via the system increased by 608 in 2010-11 to 2873
- o further improved the speed of our lettings process to meet this increased housing need
- o continued to work closely with our lead partner Fenland District Council to provide temporary accommodation to the homeless
- o increased the supply of available social housing in Fenland by developing 65 new homes in 2010-11 at Railway Road Wisbech, Harvest House Chatteris and Smith's Chase in March

Going the extra mile....

Promote mobility options for our residents – via our House Exchange system for mutual exchanges and our 'Easy Move' scheme for residents underoccupying their home

Continue to meet the most urgent and serious housing need – 11.2% of accommodation offers in 2010-11 made to homeless applicants

Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o continue to market and promote our 'Easy Move' scheme to encourage those tenants under-occupying their homes to move to more suitable accommodation
- o improve the communication and support given to residents who are moving in to their new homes
- o raise the profile of House Exchange to encourage increased tenant mobility via mutual exchange
- o continue to work in partnership with Fenland District Council to increase the supply of affordable social housing as per the Housing Stock Transfer Promise to build 500 new units of accommodation – now in the amended timescale of eight years after transfer

Provide good quality homes and a customer friendly lettings experience – surveys of our newly arriving residents in 2010-11 showed that 83% were satisfied with the overall lettings process and 87% satisfied with the overall quality of their new home

Increase the supply of affordable accommodation within Fenland – with a new development programme of 268 units from 2011 to 2014



Building communities

Roddons has a duty to maintain and safeguard neighbourhoods and communities, working with partner organisations and agencies where necessary



“Following closure of her ASB case, the resident rang to say thank you for all the help and support and that “her dreams have now come true” as the issues have been resolved”

Resident of Hurst Avenue, who asked to remain anonymous due to the nature of the ASB involved.

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o worked effectively to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in our communities by a balanced approach including prevention and enforcement measures
- o worked together with a group of our residents to award a further £433,350 in Community Funding (as per our Housing Stock Transfer Promises) to 20 local community groups and projects involved in tackling unemployment, promoting financial inclusion and affordable warmth.
- o worked intensively with 211 existing and 154 new residents to tackle financial issues through our Money Matters advice service
- o implemented our new Ground Maintenance service in partnership with Fenland District Council with involvement from local residents

Going the extra mile....

Work in partnership with other agencies to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour – via our membership of the Safer Fenland Partnership and participation in the ECINS (Empowering Communities Inclusion and Neighbourhood Management System) information sharing pilot with Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire Police

Provide educational and employment opportunities within our communities through apprenticeships and work experience

Take tough action when required re Anti-Social Behaviour – including use of legal notices, our operation of Starter Tenancies and, when necessary, eviction

Directly funding local voluntary organisations and groups providing community services to our residents – including Age UK, the CAB and Wisbech Schools Partnership

Plans for 11/12

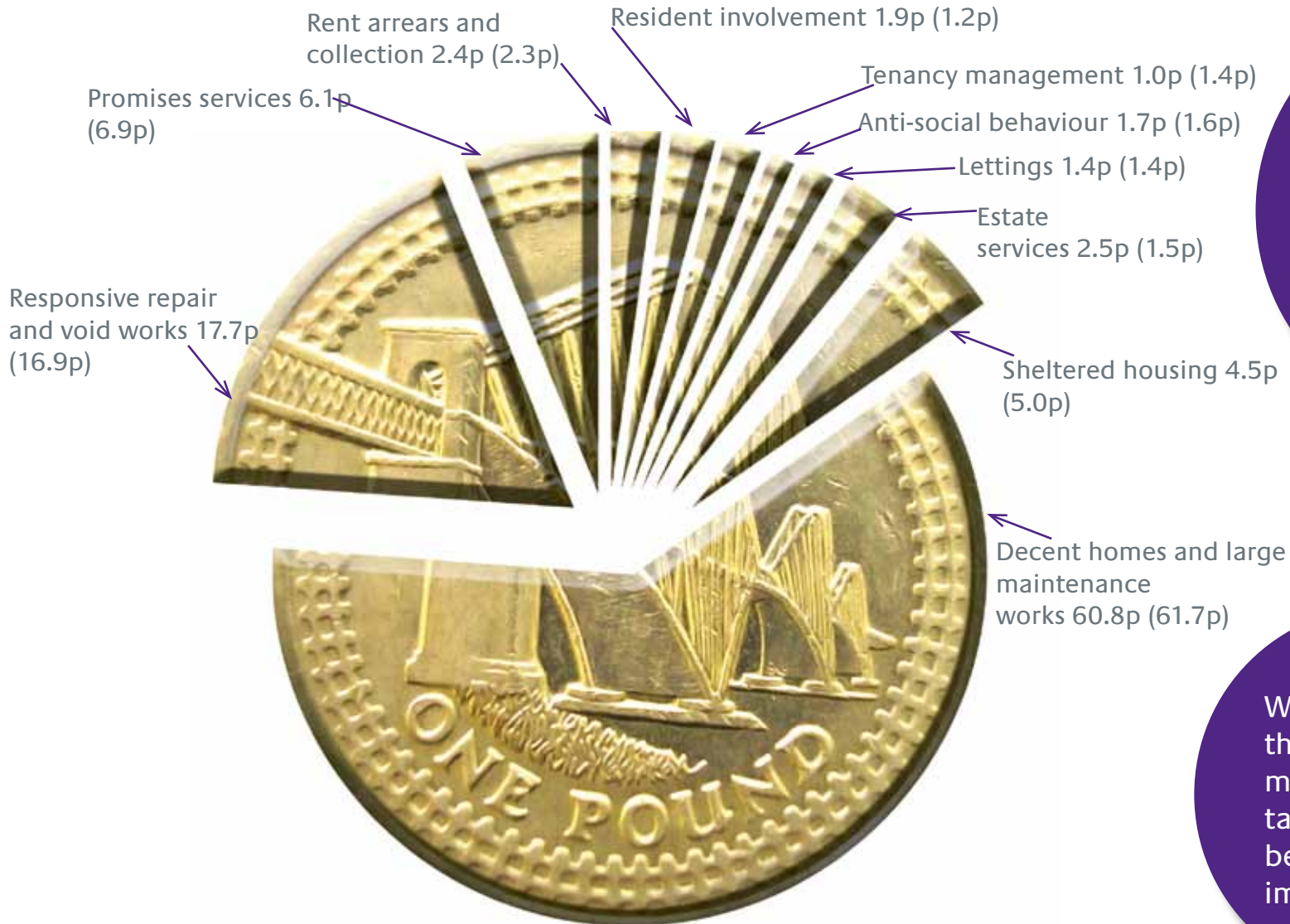
We will:

- o look at the possibility of opening a new Roddons Wisbech Area Housing Office, to improve access to our services in one of our most challenging neighbourhoods
- o maintain our strong focus on preventing and acting in response to Anti-Social Behaviour which takes place in our communities
- o work closely in partnership with Fenland District Council to provide funding support for the wider regeneration of communities across the district, via our membership of the Fenland Strategic Partnership and local Neighbourhood Management Boards



Offering value for money

Every pound of your rent money goes into the services we provide. Here is how we spend it. The figures in brackets are from 2009/10.



We have maximised the amount of money we put into maintaining properties, to meet the Decent Homes standard

We have increased the amount of money we put into resident involvement

We have increased the amount of money we put into tackling anti social behaviour and improving estates

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o achieved our best ever performance in rent collection and arrears recovery – with only 1.7% of our rent in arrears as at the end of 2010-11, whilst evicting far fewer (14 in 2010-11 reduced from 24 in 2009-10) residents for failing to make rent payments to us
- o monitored the costs of our repairs and maintenance service to bring the service within budget whilst increasing customer satisfaction
- o formed a new Roddons ‘Efficiency Panel’ which closely examines all decisions around the replacement of staff when vacancies arise and other major spending areas – within its first six months of operation the Efficiency Panel had identified and secured savings of over £200,000
- o successfully renegotiated several contracts to secure Value for Money savings, including reducing the costs of our repairs service vehicle leasing arrangements by 50%
- o introduced a new, local Procurement Manager to make savings on the amounts we spend on goods and services

Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o consult with our residents on the future of our current Rent Collectors Service
- o continue the strong start made to the work of our Roddons Efficiency Panel, as mentioned under our Highlights from 2010/11
- o look at alternative sources of funding for the Housing Stock Transfer services (assisted gardening, home decorating, home handyman)

Performance 2010 - 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Roddons	Cross Keys	Freebridge	Victory	Luminus
Rent collected as % of rent due	100.5%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Current resident arrears as % of rent due	1.7%	5.0%	3.8%	3.7%	3.8%



Making decisions

Roddons is run via a Board of 15 voluntary, unpaid members – made up of five residents (including our resident Chair of the Board Brenda Reynolds), five District Councillors and five Independents. Our Board meets every two months in order to review our progress in delivering services to residents, progress in delivering our Life Chances (Business) Plan commitments for each year and consider how we can continue to improve further.

However, our Board does not operate in isolation from our residents and the communities we serve at Roddons. It receives regular reports from our Residents Scrutiny Panel on their views of our key services, the results of satisfaction surveys of our residents which take place throughout the year and also holds some Board meetings 'out and about' at some of our housing schemes within Fenland in order to see our housing stock first hand and meet residents who live there.

Many of our resident Board members also participate in other groups and structures for involvement at Roddons, including our Tenant Advisory Groups and rural Chatting Cafes, in addition to their Board membership. All this ensures that the decisions we make are genuinely influenced by, and in the interests of, our residents as the customers of the services we provide. This approach has been reflected in the scores achieved in 2010-11 within our STATUS resident satisfaction survey – in which 68% of residents said they were satisfied that their views were taken into account at Roddons, increased from 62% in 2008 and a strong level of performance within the housing association sector as a whole.

About you

Age:

30.8% of Roddons residents are aged between 60-64

Gender:

69.2% of Roddons residents are men

Ethnicity:

The majority of Roddons residents are White British (84.6%)

Disability:

15.4% of Roddons residents said they have a disability, 69.2% said they do not have a disability and the other 15.4% did not reveal that information

How have residents have been involved in this document?

A copy of last year's residents' review was sent to every resident. Within it we included a survey asking for feedback and offering the chance to join our Communications Connectors group.

Based on what you told us we have made several changes this year. This includes simplifying the text to be more resident friendly, not using technical jargon and reducing the corporate feel of the document.

Feedback from this group means that this year we will not send this document to every resident. A summary version will be included within the Autumn 2011 edition of our resident newspaper Home Matters. Copies of the full document will be sent to any resident that requests one and a PDF version of the document will also be available on the Roddons Housing Association website.

Our Communications Connectors group now has nearly 300 residents signed up and we asked them what format they would like this document to take this year and what information it should contain.

By not sending copies to every resident we will save paper wastage and money that can be spent on the services you want to see improved.

The Roddons Resident Scrutiny Panel worked with the staff in reviewing this document and agreed that it was an honest and accurate view of how the last year has gone.

This document was taken to the readers panel for final approval.



**Roddons Housing Association, Beacon House,
23 Hostmoor Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AX.
Tel: 0800 111 6447, 0300 333 6557 www.roddons.org.uk**

Part of the Circle Housing Group

We're one of 12 partners within Circle. Being part of a larger group means we have more financial security and more influence to achieve better deals with suppliers to deliver value for money for you.

We are first and foremost a Registered Housing Provider and charity. We retain our individual and independent approach and run our services to meet your needs.

You can view our policies, publications and your tenant handbook on our website at www.roddons.org.uk

If you would like this document in large print, Braille, audio, an alternative format or in a different language please contact us.

