

# Viewpoint



## Welcome to Issue two of Circle Anglia Viewpoint.

It has been a busy few months for the housing sector and we have been encouraged by the progress made by the Tenants Services Authority and the Homes and Communities Agency so far.

We were pleased to announce that Circle Anglia has secured £180 million from the Homes and Communities Agency to fund 2,200 new homes in the next three years. This funding means that the total number of homes we will be developing across London, the South East and the East will be 4,500. This will provide much needed housing for around 16,000 people.

The regional splits on the grant are £116m for the London region, £48.5m for the Eastern region and £15.5m in the South East. The houses will be a mix of



Mark Rogers, CEO

general needs, intermediate rental, rent-to-buy and shared ownership properties.

As a developing association, committed to providing more homes for more people, the level of this grant is good news. I believe that it demonstrates the success of the group in being able to deliver high quality homes in communities that people want to live in; whilst keeping a close eye on ensuring that we are financially robust.

Finally it was great to see more than 200 people at our first group stakeholder reception held at the House of Lords. Read more about this event below.

## In this edition

- Update on our Homes and Communities Agency funding
- Green Initiatives
- How we are working to tackle overcrowding in London
- About our views on changes to Care and Support funding
- Partners news in brief

We hope that you find this edition interesting. If you'd like to discuss any opportunities for working together, please get in touch.

With best wishes,

Mark Rogers  
Group Chief Executive

## House of Lords 'celebrating life chances'

On 28 April we held a stakeholder reception at the House of Lords to highlight and celebrate the work of Circle Anglia partners in improving residents' life chances.

The highlights of the event were presentations from some of our residents, who have benefited from our training and employment programmes in Old Ford, Bow and members of our Youth Committee that are part of our youth programmes in Holly Street, Hackney (pictured).

The event provided an opportunity to launch the

Old Ford Community Cohesion good practice guide which was developed as a result of our Housing Corporation Gold Award last year. We also celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Circle 33 Housing Trust. Carol Carter, Managing Director for Circle 33 gave an overview of its achievements; which include growing to 15,603 homes, a significant investment in the Decent Homes programme and a resident involvement programme that includes some 600 residents in key decision making.

Mark Rogers, Chief Executive



Holly Street Residents at The House of Lords

gave a call to action for existing partners to continue to support us with financial support, time and other resources and for new people to get in touch with opportunities. For copies of the Old Ford good practice guide email

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# Innovative in rural housing retrofit

## Sustainable homes pilot: Greening the Box

More than a quarter of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions come from housing and the majority (80%) of people will be living in the same house in 40 years time; the UK's existing housing stock needs to be modified to hit Government emission targets. With around 1.7 million homes in management nationally, housing associations face a huge challenge to improve homes, particularly as many of our residents will be classified as living in fuel poverty\*. Whilst we welcome the latest budget announcement, which allocated additional funds for energy efficient measures, we believe that more needs to be done.

### What we are currently doing

Circle Anglia partners are working on solutions to help. These include working with energy companies to access matched funding for improving homes and provide residents with energy saving devices, providing training for frontline staff to give advice to tenants, and working with the Energy Saving Trust to access national best practice. Some partners are currently trialling more extreme measures such as ground source heat pumps and other more permanent adaptations to homes.

### Investing in innovation

An innovative group project that is also being developed by Wherry Housing Association in partnership with Broadland District Council is Greening the Box (GTB).

As with many rural housing providers, Wherry has a number

The screenshot shows the website for 'Greening the Box' (www.greeningthebox.co.uk). The header includes the logo and navigation links: Home, About the Project, Before & After, Gallery, Testimonials, Press, Partners, News, Links, Contact. The main content area features a 'Welcome to Greening The Box' section with a description of the initiative, a large image of a house with solar panels, and a section titled 'Adapting an existing Wherry Housing Association dwelling in an environmentally responsible manner... Use less energy. Our vision is a cleaner, quieter, healthier world.' Below this are sections for 'News' (with dates like Friday 1st May 2009), 'Before & After' (with a 'Click here' link), 'Performance Data' (with a bar chart), and 'Environmental Facts' (with a 'Why is energy so important?' section). The URL 'www.greeningthebox.co.uk' is displayed at the bottom right of the screenshot.

of homes that are not covered by the gas network. Tenants therefore are more likely to rely on more expensive electric or oil heating options, which can exacerbate fuel poverty. The project will not only measure total life cycle costs and occupancy heating costs it will also measure the embodied energy cost (i.e. the total energy required to construct/retrofit a building) of the retrofit and compare this to a new build property.

This pilot project involves the retrofit of an existing social housing unit in rural Norfolk to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs for occupants. Learning from the pilot will then be rolled out to Wherry's wider housing stock.

The property was chosen as it is typical of Wherry's 'hard to heat, hard to treat' properties being solid walled, 1920's construction and off the gas network. Work will include super insulating the walls, ground floor and roof and reducing the size of north

facing windows all in order to reduce the requirement for space heating (only the ground floor of the house will have space heating). A solar panel will be installed to provide a percentage of free hot water and Wherry intends to install the ducting and associated work required to retro-fit a photovoltaic panel in the future (to generate free electricity). The project will be finished in June 2009.

### Predicted results

GTB will achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 as predicted to consume less than half the energy of similar properties.

To track the progress of the project or for further information visit [www.greeningthebox.co.uk](http://www.greeningthebox.co.uk)

- *The definition of fuel poverty is when a household needs to spend more than 10% of their household income on all domestic fuel use including appliances to heat their home to an adequate level of warmth.*

# Help to tackle overcrowding

With a shortage of family sized homes, particularly in London, overcrowding is an issue that concerns many of our tenants and stakeholders. In response to this and building on the Government's Overcrowding Action Plan and good practice, one of our partners in London, Circle 33 has developed a two year Housing Options and Advice Strategy.

disability transfer applicants to assess their circumstances and have one to one conversations about the options available.

- **Making adaptations to existing properties** – The vast majority of Circle 33 London properties are flats. Currently moving home isn't likely to be a quick fix option for most people. So to help with this Circle 33 have developed a fund which has been topped up with £200,000 from the Greater London Authority. This fund will assist tenants with practical improvements to properties, which may include extensions or partitioning to create additional bedrooms, aids and adaptations and other assistance such as space saving (e.g. sofa beds, fold away tables, storage). If these solutions don't help they may provide private sector rent deposits for overcrowded families or adult dependents of under occupiers, and

under occupation incentives – including practical help for those who want to move to a smaller property (e.g. complete removals services).

In addition, at a group level, Circle Anglia has also developed a new web based mutual exchange service called **House Exchange Direct**. For a small fee, all social housing tenants, not just those housed by Circle Anglia are able to search for potential exchanges from across the UK even if their landlord isn't signed up House Exchange.

Whether residents want to move locally, regionally or nationally, [www.HouseExchangeDirect.org.uk](http://www.HouseExchangeDirect.org.uk) can help them to find a property. It is possible to search for properties by location, bedroom size, property type and features so that people can find the ideal home to suit their needs. If a direct swap is not possible then it can also be possible to arrange a three way swap.

**Call to action: visit [www.HouseExchangeDirect.org.uk](http://www.HouseExchangeDirect.org.uk) to find out more.**

## This strategy involves:

- **Launching a dedicated Housing Options and Advice Team** – This team will visit all urgent overcrowding /under occupation /health and

## Circle Anglia joins in the Tenants Services Authority (TSA) 'National conversation'

Circle Anglia tenants took part in the TSA's national conversation all over the country and this was supported and encouraged by our partners in all areas. Tenant satisfaction is a key business driver for Circle Anglia and we have a host of different channels with which we consult with our residents. Conversations took place through many of our

existing resident communication channels with hundreds of residents being part of the process. A highlight of these conversations was our group wide Residents and Services Users panel feeding back directly to Peter Marsh, Chief Executive of the TSA on a visit to our Head Office.



Wherry staff and residents at a local event

# Partners news in brief:

## Invicta Telecare

- Invicta Telecare has been shortlisted from more than 300 entries to the Chartered Institute of Housing Housing Heroes Awards. This is a new awards scheme launched this year that aims to shine the spotlight on the people and teams that are doing great work in the social/affordable housing sector.

## Old Ford

- Old Ford community programmes have made the shortlist again. This year for the Homes and Communities Agency Youth Award, results are being announced at the end of June.
- Old Ford has recently secured £30,000 for a project to help prevent violent extremism in Bow as part of the governments preventing violent extremism agenda. The project focuses on diverting young people who might otherwise be targeted by extremists recruiters into more positive activities and teach them about the commonalities between the major religions, citizenship, democracy and how to use different democratic tools to air any anger and frustrations. The project will also work with parents to teach them about the signs and behaviour changes to look out for in their children and what they can do to prevent their children falling prey to extremists.
- In addition to this funding, Old Ford has also received £200,000 from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) this project will be used to provide advice, training and support to get people back into employment.

## Russet Homes

- Russet Homes has recently awarded some £10,000 in community grants to support a variety of health and wellbeing projects in local schools aimed at supporting young residents. These include a two day dance project, Dancing Strong, held at Trottiscliffe Primary School in West Malling and offered free of charge to children living in the area.



*Pupils at Trottiscliffe School*

## Mole Valley

- Mole Valley Housing Association are sponsoring a great local initiative which encourages residents to get fit by funding free swimming for the under 16's and the over 60's in their area.

## South Anglia

- South Anglia welcomes the launch of its new Doorstep challenge vehicle. The Resident Involvement Vehicle will be taking the housing and support offered by South Anglia into local communities. It is being supported by other agencies including the Primary Care Trust, local police forces and other agencies. It will improve the life chances of their residents by offering services to those who could not previously access services due to a diverse geographical spread



*The new resident involvement vehicle.*

## Roddons

- Roddons has recently awarded a community fund grant of £80,000 to pay for a new Astro Turf Pitch in one the most deprived areas in Cambridge. The facilities were launched at part of Roddons celebrations of European Neighbours Day

## Commercial & Leasehold (CSCA)

- CSCA had recent success in an Official Journal of the European Communities (OJUE) tender to join the London Management Order and Leasing Framework. The Framework seeks to establish a group of managing agents selected through EU compliant competitive procurement to work with a consortium of London wide local authorities. Through this framework Commercial and Leasehold will support these authorities in the exercise of their enforcement duties placed on them by the Housing Act 2004, in respect of private sector housing
- CSCA recently launched the Circle Anglia Leaseholder Forum (CALF). It is open to all leaseholders from across the group who wish to input their ideas and feedback into how the service is run

# Viewpoint

Anne Anketell, Managing Director of EPIC Trust, Circle Anglia's Care and Support division

## What are the challenges for organisations like EPIC of the changes in funding structures?

The Care and Support sector is used to adapting to change but in recent years, funding has been decreasing in real terms. For EPIC which relies on SP funding for around 50 percent of our income, this has an impact.

Changes to this funding stream give us the potential to move into new areas of activity. Activities that address both core concerns of Supporting People and wider policy agendas such as tackling worklessness, provision of education, employment and training services to socially excluded groups. The challenge is that there may be limited funds for these activities now that they can be allocated more freely.

There is also a challenge that in the longer term, when SP cash is fully subsumed into the area-based grant from 2010/11 onwards, it may be susceptible to budget pressures from elsewhere. Particularly in the current economic climate. In fact, I was interested to read in an Inside Housing survey that almost all commissioners plan to make changes next year in funding. In the long-term all of this means that the quality and number of providers in the market will decrease giving commissioners and individuals less choice.

In terms of the personalisation agenda, the implications are also significant. When the change happens we will no longer be dealing with commissioners but individuals in terms of contracts. It will also mean that people in our care could be using a variety of

providers - this will be challenging for our business model.

Quality is of importance to us. We acknowledge that informal care providers such as family, neighbours and friends can provide first class care. However, we are concerned about the exploitation of vulnerable people or a system of support that throws out all the background checks and health and safety legislation that has been so carefully built up over the years in favour of informal arrangements between older people and relatives, neighbours and individuals recruited through the corner shop.

### How is EPIC preparing for the changes?

We are looking at the changes as an opportunity to be innovative and increase our offer of services.

We're undertaking risk assessments to check that we meet statutory needs or that we are a core part of local authority strategy. Finally its about raising our profile and focusing on being competitive with our costs. Our services are first class, it is up to us to demonstrate the value and impact we have on people's lives to those in charge! Having just retained our 'Excellent' status from the Care Quality Commission Assessment, we are pleased that at the moment externally people believe we are doing this.

**Anne is speaking at the CIH Older People's Housing & Support Conference & Exhibition**



Anne Anketell, MD

For further information and to register visit [www.cih.org/events/conferences/olderpeople/](http://www.cih.org/events/conferences/olderpeople/)

## You need to know!



### All change in Care and Support funding streams

- Launch in April 2003, Supporting People (SP) provides vulnerable people with housing-related support that allows them to live independently
- From 1 April 2009, the annual £1.66 billion earmarked by Government for supported housing services in England was 'unring-fenced'
- From 2010, the plan is to pool it with other funding in a pot known as 'area-based grant', for councils to spend as they wish
- The SP budget has decreased over the last few years. By next April it will total £1.64 billion, nearly a third of the £5 billion worth of grants that the Government plans to merge into area-based grant by then
- At the same time there is a move towards 'individual budgets' or the 'personalisation' agenda
- This means in the medium term the Government plans to merge several funding streams into 'individual budgets' that can be spent by individuals on their own care package as they choose. The funding streams will include disabled facilities grant, Access to Work, Independent Living Fund, Integrated Community Equipment Service and Social Care budgets

# Campaign to raise awareness of *shared ownership*



Circle Anglia has found that the level of enquiries regarding shared ownership remains high despite the current economic crisis. We believe that the general public awareness of shared ownership is low despite it often being an affordable and less risky solution for many people. To highlight this we have recently undertaken some fun research into the pros and cons of house sharing.

Our survey found that the top five bad habits that housemates say are most likely to shatter household bliss are:

- Leaving dirty dishes piled up – 65%
- Not cleaning or doing fair share of chores – 57%
- Not replacing finished toilet roll – 47%
- Stray hairs in the bathroom – 43%
- Stealing food from the fridge – 41%

The average first-time buyer is frequently in his/her early 30s by the time they finally get a foot on the property ladder, meaning people have to share homes for longer than ever before, in addition the research showed that a third of Brits think they will never be able to own their own home partly due to lack of awareness of shared ownership.

We went on air with this research, launching a radio campaign to highlight Brits passion to get onto the property ladder, linked into the house price debate. This campaign reached over 3.3 million through 19 regional radio interviews including Radio Norwich, Essex FM and Kerrang Radio. For further information visit [www.hometruths.org](http://www.hometruths.org) or [www.circleanglia-yourhome.org](http://www.circleanglia-yourhome.org)

## Speaker opportunities



Circle Anglia is one of the UK's leading providers of affordable housing and our management team has a wealth of experience in all aspects of social housing. We are keen to take up speaking opportunities at

conferences and other events to share our experience and help drive up standards within the sector. If you have a suitable opportunity please contact Hannah Long, Events Officer on 0207 288 4079.

### Contacts for further information, comment or support

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