

## CIH Annual Conference and Exhibition 17-19 June 2008

We would be delighted to see you at **Harrogate 2008**. Why not come along and meet Andrew, Janet, Richard and Pete at **Stand 373 in Hall Q**.

Alternatively, contact Kim Keggin on **01704 835564** or **kim.keggin@consultcih.co.uk** to arrange an appointment.



*New city hall Hanover – Germany*

## Hanover – Study Tours

The Housing Corporation has asked ConsultCIH to organise a social housing study tour to Hanover, Germany for their staff and key development partners in the North of England.

The trip, planned for July, will showcase some excellent examples of how the German city and its partners have embraced the Ecohomes and modern methods of construction agendas, their programme of carbon reduction, as well as the creation of genuinely mixed communities.

The three day visit involves the Housing Corporation, English Partnerships and housing associations, as well as private developers.

The study visit is one of a number organised by ConsultCIH and its European partner, Becx & van Loon. A trip to Holland is currently being organised for Chester & District Housing Trust, and ConsultCIH is also organising the next meeting of the European Rewards Network, which is being hosted by Gentoo Housing Group in June.

## 360 Degree Feedback

ConsultCIH has been assisting Aspire Housing, the leading Newcastle-under-Lyme housing association, with their innovative approaches to leadership. Aspire Housing is piloting a 360 Degree Feedback programme for their senior management team.

360 Degree Feedback is growing in popularity as an input to performance management. In more complex organisations traditional appraisal is failing to deliver what managers want. 360 Degree Feedback is useful because it provides:

- New pertinent information about competencies, and how others see individuals
- Valuable input into many organisational development initiatives, for example coaching, training, leadership development, appraisal, etc

As organisations become less hierarchical, so managers may have multiple lines of reporting and there is much more team-based working. Consequently feedback from just one manager is no longer sufficient as there are closer working relationships with other stakeholders, clients, customers, and suppliers, who can add a different and valuable perspective.

The Aspire programme is using internet based 360 Degree Feedback surveys but is also flexible enough to use paper based systems for those who have limited internet access. Aspire will evaluate the 360 Degree Feedback programme after 6 months and may consider wider use.

## GreenSquare – Resident-led Regulation

ConsultCIH has been working with GreenSquare Housing Group to assist them set up a residents' scrutiny panel, as part of their approach to resident-led regulation.

GreenSquare Group was created in April 2008 and consists of Westlea Housing Association and Oxford Citizens Housing Association (OCHA). Both Westlea and OCHA have an excellent track record in resident involvement and in 2007 Westlea received national recognition through the NHF iNbiz Awards for its "Residents' Business Plan".

The development of a group-wide scrutiny panel will continue to ensure that the association places the views of its residents at the heart of its approach to self-regulation.

# Inspecting the Grosvenor & Regency Estate

The Management Committee of Grosvenor & Regency Management Organisation, a TMO of City West Homes, has appointed ConsultCIH to assist it in bringing about improvements to the repairs & maintenance and estate services on its historic estate in London SW1. The work incorporates a series of estate inspections over a six month period which ConsultCIH will use to put forward recommendations for a range of actions and improvements.

ConsultCIH will bring its knowledge of best practice in the sector to assist the Committee in improving the quality and effectiveness of the repairs and estate services. Naturally, the Consult team will have reference to the new CIH publication *Improving Repairs and Maintenance Services: a Good Practice Guide* which is launched in June at the CIH Annual Conference and Exhibition in Harrogate.

Jean Hardings, Vice Chair of the TMO Committee says “the Committee is delighted to have ConsultCIH supporting us on this very important project. We are confident that with their help we can bring about a real improvement to the quality of the repairs and estate management services that are provided to residents”.



## Are you wondering what to do with your non traditional housing stock?

An increasing number of organisations are starting to question whether they have the right strategy in place for their properties of non traditional construction. Therefore, Richard Medley, who directs ConsultCIH's 'Places' activities recently presented at a seminar in South Wales at which he showcased the work that ConsultCIH has undertaken with organisations such as the Gentoo Group and Bolsover District Council.

Richard spoke about real life examples of how best to undertake a robust options appraisal, how to get the best results from the research and the pitfalls to avoid.



## Out and about

**ConsultCIH interim managers have been busy assisting organisations in England and Wales**

North Wales Housing Association asked ConsultCIH to help them find someone to assist with a number of issues linked to their Maintenance service. They had some concerns about budget spend and were experiencing staffing shortages, so needed some interim management and consultancy to address service delivery issues and work to audit and analyse activity with a view to realigning some systems, procedures and staffing arrangements.

Jude Horsnell, NWA's Operations Director says: “Ian from ConsultCIH took a thorough and challenging approach, working across the Association with a range of staff to help us identify and establish a range of actions to address the issues we identified. He established a project management framework, reporting to and involving our Board of Management to consider and address financial and management systems and re-engineering some of our procurement arrangements. Ian also established a good rapport with contractors as he worked directly with them to improve value for money and clarify and codify practices relating to service delivery and Health and Safety.

“Ian's approach has been enabling to staff. He also ensured that all staff recognised the issues and the responsibility to improve extended beyond the immediate Maintenance team. His wide experience and knowledge has been extremely valuable to us, and has helped set us on the right road for the future.”

ConsultCIH interim managers are also providing several large English housing associations with interim project management services, setting up a 24 hour lifeline and CCTV monitoring centre, human resources assistance, and working with a local authority in Wales to provide strategic support.

**The ConsultCIH interim management service is managed by Suzannah Dykes, Practice Manager who can be contacted on 01704 835561.**

# focus on... talent management

If housing organisations are to deliver excellent and continuously improving services, they need to attract, recruit, retain, reward and develop the right people.

In our “People” activities we work with a wide range of organisations which are focusing on one element of this talent management continuum, whether it is executive search and selection to attract and recruit senior team members, or salary and benefits (remuneration) reviews to help them retain their market position and (hopefully) to help them retain staff members.

## **However, money isn't everything**

We know that different people are motivated in different ways. For example, we know that opportunities to broaden experience, to gain professional or academic qualifications or to gain a satisfactory work-life balance are also major drivers. In other words, people make career choices based on things other than salary. The Chartered Institute of Housing's Good Practice Guide on Staff Recruitment and Retention makes this point well.

We all know that many housing organisations across the UK are experiencing difficulty in recruiting high quality candidates. Part of this is demographics - increasing numbers leaving the profession to retire, down-shift or change careers, whilst decreasing numbers of younger people are seeing housing as a fulfilling career. The CIH, Asset Skills and other bodies are working hard to change the perception and promote housing as a career, but this takes time. We also know that it isn't just housing organisations which are experiencing difficulty. The Chartered Institute of Professional Development's labour market outlook regularly reports that the majority of employers expect to have problems recruiting to forthcoming vacancies.

## **So how can talent management help?**

Talent Management is about taking a whole organisation approach, joining up the employment experience from pre-entry to post-exit and bringing a strategic approach to the management of human resources. It isn't a quick-fix solution and it can't be left to the “personnel team” to sort out. A comprehensive and effective talent management system needs buy-in across the piece and it is for the long term. But what it does it to identify and develop the talent you already have in your staff team, mapping their skills and abilities and giving them the opportunity to work outside their usual discipline or range of activities, in a structured way designed to enhance their experience of the organisation and to broaden and deepen their work experience.

## **It's a big ask**

But the outcomes include

- an improved reputation and the ability to attract talented people from within and outside the sector,
- motivated team members who are able to develop their skills and abilities within the organisation instead of having to move to another employer to do so, and
- improved services to your customers, provided by people who feel valued in their work.

**If you'd like to talk to us about talent management and be a leader within the housing profession on this issue please contact Janet Hale 01704 831444.**

## **Blackpool Private Sector Housing Review – Meeting the Challenge**

ConsultCIH has recently embarked on a review of the private sector housing service of Blackpool Council. The work will include an examination of the Council's use of tools and powers and will assess whether the management structure of the department is 'fit for purpose'.

Blackpool faces a set of particular challenges with the continuing contraction in the holiday accommodation stock with much of it being converted into HMOs to house workers in the low wage economy. ConsultCIH will be working with the Council to ensure that it has the right structures, systems and strategies in place to meet the challenges it faces.

The activities of ConsultCIH in Blackpool tie in with the work of the CIH in facilitating a number of practitioner workshops to inform the Government's independent review of private sector housing which is being undertaken by Julie Rugg and David Rhodes of York University.

## **Neighbourhood Renewal in Deeside**

Flintshire County Council has appointed ConsultCIH to undertake a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment of an area of older terraced properties in Shotton. This 'housing led' study will involve a range of research disciplines and will be undertaken in partnership with local residents. The research work will look at housing conditions, the thermal efficiency of the housing stock, environmental conditions and will include the obtaining of resident and property owner views on their priorities for future investment in the area. Following an appropriate financial appraisal and cost benefit analysis process the final report will be used by the Council to support the declaration of a Renewal Area which should see a multi-million pound programme of investment in the area over the next 10 years.



## NUREC 2008

### The Northern Urban Regeneration Conference and Exhibition 27th/28th July 2008

ConsultCIH is exhibiting at NUREC 2008, the key event for regeneration practitioners to listen, learn, discuss and debate the challenges facing our Northern towns and cities as they seek to narrow the gap with London and the South East.

We would be delighted if you came to visit the ConsultCIH Places team on stand 51 of the exhibition. This annual 2 day event, is taking place at the brand new Liverpool Arena and Convention centre, located on the waterfront.

**Attendance at the exhibition is free; to register and find out more about NUREC 2008 visit [www.nurec2008.com](http://www.nurec2008.com).**

### It's good to talk

Bristol Community Housing Foundation is a not-for-profit housing association, based in Upper Horfield, North Bristol. The Foundation was created in 1997 to redevelop a Bristol City Council estate of more than 600 houses. The Foundation spent a lot of effort communicating with residents to ensure that the transition period was as smooth as possible, establishing an office on the estate, meeting residents face-to-face on a daily basis and setting up a newsletter and resident involvement for and projects.

The Foundation was a runner-up in the CIH's 2004 national 'Best UK Regeneration Project' award, and won silver in the Daily Telegraph's 'What House' awards 2005. It was also overall winner for The Guardian 2006 Public Service Award.

More recently the Foundation has set up a range of community events to involve not only its own tenants but also those living in the privately owned properties on its estates. It has also established consultative groups and in an effort to gain a different perspective on its activities, employed ConsultCIH to undertake a review of resident involvement which included individual interviews, a door to door survey and group discussion with residents.

Rachel Cobb, the Foundation's Housing Services Manager said of the report "I felt it got to the heart of the matter and raised a number of issues which we are discussing."

## Victory Housing Trust

Janet Hale is working with Victory Housing Trust to recruit a new Finance Director. The Trust, based in Norfolk, is a relatively young association which already has several successes under its belt. Within its first two years it has developed over 100 new properties across three local authority areas in Norfolk and implemented an innovative joint partnering arrangement for its improvements programme with a neighbouring independent transfer organisation.

Victory Housing Trust changed its name from North Norfolk Housing Trust earlier this year to reflect its expansion beyond the political boundaries of 'North Norfolk'. The new name – which has links with Norfolk's most famous son, Lord Nelson – has provided a fresh, positive and independent image for the Trust.

In 2005 Janet Hale worked with the (then) Shadow Board to recruit the original Executive Team. Carl Gosbee, the Trust's FD, is the first member of the team to move on. John Archibald, Chief Executive said: "Given ConsultCIH has consistently delivered a first class consultancy service, we did not hesitate to work with them on this recruitment."

## Customer Insight

Following the publication of the CIH Good Practice Briefing on Customer Insight, ConsultCIH has been working with a number of organisations to implement the ideas and principles which it contains. Examples include a review of Income Management, which has involved understanding how and why residents have fallen into arrears, and discovered various insights which will result in a new approach to rent collection and arrears management.

ConsultCIH is also reviewing operational processes for a housing association involving the concept of Customer Journey Mapping. This is a process of tracking and describing all the experiences that customers have as they encounter a service or set of services, taking into account not only what happens to them, but also their responses to their experiences. Used well, it can reveal opportunities for improvement and innovation in that experience, acting as a strategic tool to ensure every interaction with the customer is as positive as it can be.