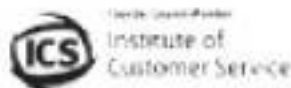




Gloucester City Homes

Strategic Business Plan 2010 - 2015



5 A Standards Supporting People
Inspection May 2010

Customer Service Excellence
Reaccreditation April 2010

IIP Gold Standard March 2010

Housing Excellence Awards Shortlist March 2010

Housing Heroes Awards Shortlist February 2010

Special recognition award for Customer Service Excellence
September 2009

Achieving Level of Equalities Standard April 2009

Customer Service Excellence Award March 2009

Housing Corporation Investment Partner status June 2008

Housing Corporation Manage for others October 2007

2 star rated good service, with promising prospects for improvement June 2007

ISO accreditation December 2006

Investors in People November 2006

Supporting People Gold Award September 2006

GCH goes live December 2005

0 star rated service with promising prospects for improvement November 2005

Contacting Us and Access to Services

Our **Customer Services Team** is your **first** point of contact for all enquiries to Gloucester City Homes. Whether you contact us by phone, email or in person, fully trained and experienced customer services staff will be available to deal with your enquiry.

We aim to resolve over 90% of your enquiries without having to refer you to other specialist teams. In few cases where we are unable to help you, we will refer you on to the right specialist team within Gloucester City Homes or to one of our partner organisations.

To contact any of our specialist teams, please contact our Customer Service Team on:

Telephone: Freephone (for land line calls) 0800 408 2000 and 01452 530 626 (for cheaper mobile calls)

Fax: 01452 396599

Text: 0778 148 2656

Minicom: 01452 396161

Email: customer.services@gloscityhomes.co.uk

Website: www.gloscityhomes.co.uk

Digital TV GCHTV on the Looking Local Service

Our website is regularly updated. It will always give you the latest information and help you report your concerns or ask for a service 24 hours a day.

Or write to us or visit us in person at:

Gloucester City Homes Limited
Atlantic Suite
Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester. GL1 1UB

Opening Times:

Monday, to Friday: 8.30am to 5.30pm

Or visit us in person at:

Matson One Stop Plus

79a Matson Avenue,
Matson
Gloucester, GL4 6LL

Opening Times:

Monday to Friday 9 am to 12.30 pm

Getting our information in other formats

If you would like any part of this document explained, translated or provided in another format such as large print, audio or Braille, please contact our Customer Services Team on 0800 408 2000.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Chinese

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજ બીજી ભાષા અથવા રચનામાં જોઈતો હોય, અથવા જો તમને ઈ-ન્ટરપ્રિટરની સેવાઓ જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક સાધો.

Polish

Aby uzyskać ten dokument w innym języku lub formacie, albo jeżeli potrzebujesz usług tłumacza, skontaktuj się z nami.

Urdu

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

[Translation reads: If you would like this document in another language or format or require the services of a translator, please contact us.]

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1 Foreword to the Strategic Business Plan

Gloucester City Homes (GCH) manages and provides housing services on behalf of over 4,800 resident's homes in the City. We have continually improved services and achieved high performance by working with our residents through active involvement, feedback and scrutiny.

We have delivered significant investment into our resident's homes, making excellent progress to meet the Government's Decent Homes Target. As at the end of March 2010, 83% of our stock is now decent and we will be working hard to approach over 90% decency in 2010. At the same time, we have achieved consistently high levels of resident satisfaction in carrying out those improvements, often exceeding 98% through the excellent work of Lovell, our improvement partner.

Our aim is to achieve a 3* rating excellent service from the Audit Commission inspection in October 2010. The inspection will provide a comprehensive independent assessment and validation of the quality of our services on behalf of our Residents. Our continued commitment is to work with our residents to improve their homes and services and make our communities better places to live.

Another key commitment is to develop an effective relationship with the new regulator for all housing providers. Whilst the position remains unclear who the regulator will be, we will, in partnership with our lead residents, provide our first annual residents report in October 2010 setting out how we will deliver the 6 new standards and our proposals for local offers where our residents want us to exceed those standards.

GCH is on the crest of a wave and we have delivered and achieved some excellent services and results for our residents. There are many challenges ahead. We face major spending cuts from 2011 and this will need to be managed carefully. Our vision however is to take the company forward by expanding our management services; play a major role in the future regeneration of the housing stock and seek to develop new affordable housing in partnership with the Council. Some important decisions will need to be taken in 2010 with the Council as there may be new opportunities created as a result of the current review of the Housing Revenue Account. We will need to consider the implications of these proposals with our residents to meet their future expectations as a result of GCH completely transforming services together with their long term aspirations for the quality of their homes both now and in the future as the decent homes funding comes to an end.

Our Business Plan identifies the longer-term strategic ambitions for the Company to ensure our residents receive excellent services. Our Board, managers and our teams look forward to working with you to improve your homes and services on your behalf and make your communities better places to live.



Tim Dare, Chair of the Board

2 Gloucester City Homes Key Milestones to date

January 2005	Submit Formal Decent Homes Bid - £39.6 million
June 2005	Government approve £39.6 million bid to achieve Decent Homes Standard
August 2005	Gloucester City Council seeks approval from Government to delegate and transfer services to GCH Ltd
December 2005	Government confirms delegation and transfer of Housing Management services to GCH Ltd
December 2005	GCH Ltd goes live on the 12 th December 2005 and locates to Southgate House, Gloucester
December 2005	Chartered Institute of Services Founder Council Member
October 2006	Supporting People Gold Award
November 2006	Investors in People Accredited
December 2006	ISO 9001 Accredited
June 2007	Audit Commission Inspection 2*(Good) Service with promising prospects for improvement releasing £39.6 million to deliver Decent Homes and Community Improvements
October 2007	Housing Corporation Accreditation to Manage for others
June 2008	Housing Corporation Accreditation as Investment Partner
March 2009	Customer Service Excellence Award and the first company to achieve all 57 compliances to the standard; and achieve 9 compliance plus achievements
March 2009	The first company to be accredited against the achieving level of the new Equality Framework
September 2009	Secured a special recognition award for Customer Services Excellence as a result of 9 compliance plus achievements
March 2010	The Times Top 100 companies – “one to watch” recognition
March 2010	Investors in People Accredited with Gold Award Status placing GCH as an employer of choice and in the top 1% of companies in the Country in terms of our status for performance, investing in our employees and securing service outcomes for our Residents
April 2010	Customer Service Excellence Re-accreditation and a further 6 compliance plus achievements
May 2010	Achieve 5 A Grades for the delivery of Sheltered Housing Services under the Quality Assessment Framework

3 Gloucester City Homes Services

We manage and maintain the whole of Gloucester City Council's housing, currently 4,521 rented homes (as shown in the following two tables), 257 leasehold flats, 56 shared ownership properties, 590 garages and 75 parking spaces. There are 14 sheltered or semi-sheltered schemes.

In addition, we also manage and maintain: Caridas House and 27 Park Road - 23 short term flats for the homeless, 10 Community Scheme Manager's offices, 3 offices for Residents groups, The Matson "One Stop Plus" Office; and all the land identified as "Housing Land" by the City Council.

We deliver a range of services for Residents including:

- Customer services contact centre, website and interactive TV channel accessible through Nintendo and mobile phones;
- Promoting resident participation and empowerment, ensuring resident involvement in monitoring and reviewing service standards, and training Residents to improve their confidence;
- Tenancy & Estate management services including cleaning and estates services;
- Supported Housing Services providing Sheltered housing schemes for older people, community life link and other housing related support services under the Supporting People programme;
- Rent accounting, collection and debt counselling;
- Leasehold management and shared ownership;
- Enforcement of tenancy conditions including the management of anti-social behaviour policy;
- Managing lettings, empty homes and under-occupation, and managing properties on behalf of others;
- Response repairs; and repairs to empty homes in order to re-let them;
- Home safety Inspections and implementing a range of health and safety actions to keep our residents safe
- Managing and delivering an annual investment programme for our stock, which meets Decent Homes, other capital programmes (including adapting properties to meet the special needs of vulnerable Residents), repairs and sustainability issues;
- Procuring services and partners, which effectively meet our investment programmes;
- Building effective partnerships with other agencies to create opportunities for our residents, such as apprenticeships and training, and creating vibrant, safe neighbourhoods.

4 Gloucester City Homes Strategic Aims and Targets 2010 to 2015

Over the last four years, GCH has successfully improved and expanded our services in a rapidly changing environment. At the heart of this success lies a highly-motivated team that works closely with our residents together with our partners in a forward-looking and innovative manner to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery. We respond positively and proactively to the changing demands and expectations of our Residents, local communities, the City Council and national government's legislative, social and economic agenda. For example, the objectives or targets may change in the event if future budgetary changes after the comprehensive spending review announcement on the 20th October 2010

GCH continually reviews our strategic objectives and key priorities. We have eight strategic aims, providing a clear focus and direction over a 5 year period. Within each of these is the understanding that GCH's culture, based upon our core values of Pride, Quality, Integrity and Innovation, will shape the way in which these aims will be delivered.

1. To be a customer driven provider of excellent services

We will achieve excellence in customer services by putting our Residents first. By listening and involving our Residents, we will deliver excellent services and provide high quality homes that will ensure our Residents are among the most satisfied in our sector.

Objectives	Target Date
Maintain ISO 9001 accreditation through 6 monthly inspection	31-03-2010 and every 6 months
Continually improve access to our services and improve our assessment to the Government's Customer Service excellence award known as "The Standard"	31-03-2010 and annual review
Implement and embed the new regulatory framework of the Tenant Services Authority, Annual Report and local offers	01-10-2010 and annual update each July
Retain the Gold award for the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework	31-05-2010
Achieve a 3* rating from the Audit Commission	31-10-2010
Achieve the TPAS Resident Involvement Quality Standard and continue to enhance our resident involvement strategy in consultation with our residents	31-10-2011
Achieve the HouseMark and Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Accreditation.	31-03-2012
Ensure that 80% of front line service staff achieve the Institute of Customer Services Award	31-03-2012
Deliver our Asset Management Strategy both in the short term and long term so that we fulfil our statutory obligations and also meet the needs and aspirations of our tenants and leaseholders	31-03-2012 and onwards
Achieve continuous top quartile performance and customer satisfaction levels	31-03-2010 and onwards

2. To build strong partnerships that help us to make a real difference to the local communities in which we work.

We will make a positive difference to peoples' lives by enabling them to be proud of, and feel safe, where they live and that they are able to afford a lifestyle with which they are comfortable. In this way we will contribute to building strong supportive and cohesive communities supported by a range of agencies and partners.

Objectives	Target Date
Deliver and continually review the action plan in our "All of us Together Strategy" in terms of Community Cohesion; Financial Inclusion and Worklessness Targets	31-03-2011
Contribute as a key strategic partner of the Gloucester Partnership to support and contribute to the key aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Community Safety Partnership Strategy.	31-10-2010 and onwards
Contribute as a key strategic partner of Gloucester City Council to meeting their "Building a better Gloucester" - Corporate Plan 2008-2011	31-03-2011
Maintain and develop our partnerships at local community level with existing and new partners to serve the interests of local residents	31-03-2011 and onwards

3. To deliver value for money and maximise the use of all our resources.

We will seek continuous improvement in the delivery of high quality cost effective services and to be a top performing company in all of our services.

Objectives	Target Date
Review resources and service delivery in the light of the Comprehensive Spending review announcement in October 2010	31-03-2011
Deliver VFM and efficiency savings for GCH services through effective procurement of services and continuous improvement, benchmarking and challenge through best value reviews.	31-03-2011 and onwards
Implement the ICT Strategy of the company to continually improve access to services for our Residents and secure VFM outcomes in terms of efficient services	31-03-2011 and onwards
Maintain a viable Housing Revenue Account and work with the Council on the options for delivering long-term social housing in the City	31-03-2011 and onwards
Achieve annual efficiency targets in line with Government requirements on efficiency and cash savings; and in line with our value for money and efficiency strategy	31-03-2015

4. To deliver excellence in our governance and management arrangements.

We will provide excellent leadership and will be a well-run, accountable organisation that balances risk with innovation to continuously improve and develop our business.

Objectives	Target Date
Maintain effective Governance Arrangements, Risk Management and Business Continuity Planning	31-03-2009 and onwards
Secure ISO 18001 & 18002 Occupational Health and Safety Management System	31-12-2011
Ensure that the board is representative of the community we serve and maintains the skills and capacity to lead effectively and meet the changing needs of the organisation	06-10-2010 and Continuous Review

5. To be a first class employer nurturing top performing people.

We aim to be an employer of first choice providing our staff with a stimulating and rewarding work environment in which they can help to achieve the company's objectives by providing them with the right tools for the job. By working and learning with others we will be a learning organisation that will be demonstrated by the company's continuous improvement.

Objectives	Target Date
Become an liP Champion and maintain the Gold standard for the Investors in People Profile Award	30-09-2010 and ongoing
Secure ROSPA Gold Award for Health and Safety	30-09-2012
Deliver the company's Human Resources Strategy	31-03-2013
Secure a place in the top 100 Best Companies Framework	31-01-2013

6. To be responsible towards our environment to protect it for future generations.

We will use sustainable materials, work towards being carbon neutral and achieve high levels of energy efficiency within all our homes.

Objectives	Target Date
Achieve ISO 14001 as an Environmental Management Standard	31-12-2012
Deliver the action plan in our Environmental Strategy	31-03-2013

7. To be a champion of diversity.

We will work with our Residents and partners to ensure diversity is valued and respected in such a way that builds strength and unity in our communities.

Objectives	Target Date
Implement Orchards customer information knowledge module	30-09-2010
Attain excellence level of the new Equalities Framework	31-03-2012
Deliver the Equalities Strategy	31-03-2013
Increase our diversity profile to cover 90 % of our tenants and leaseholders	31-03-2011

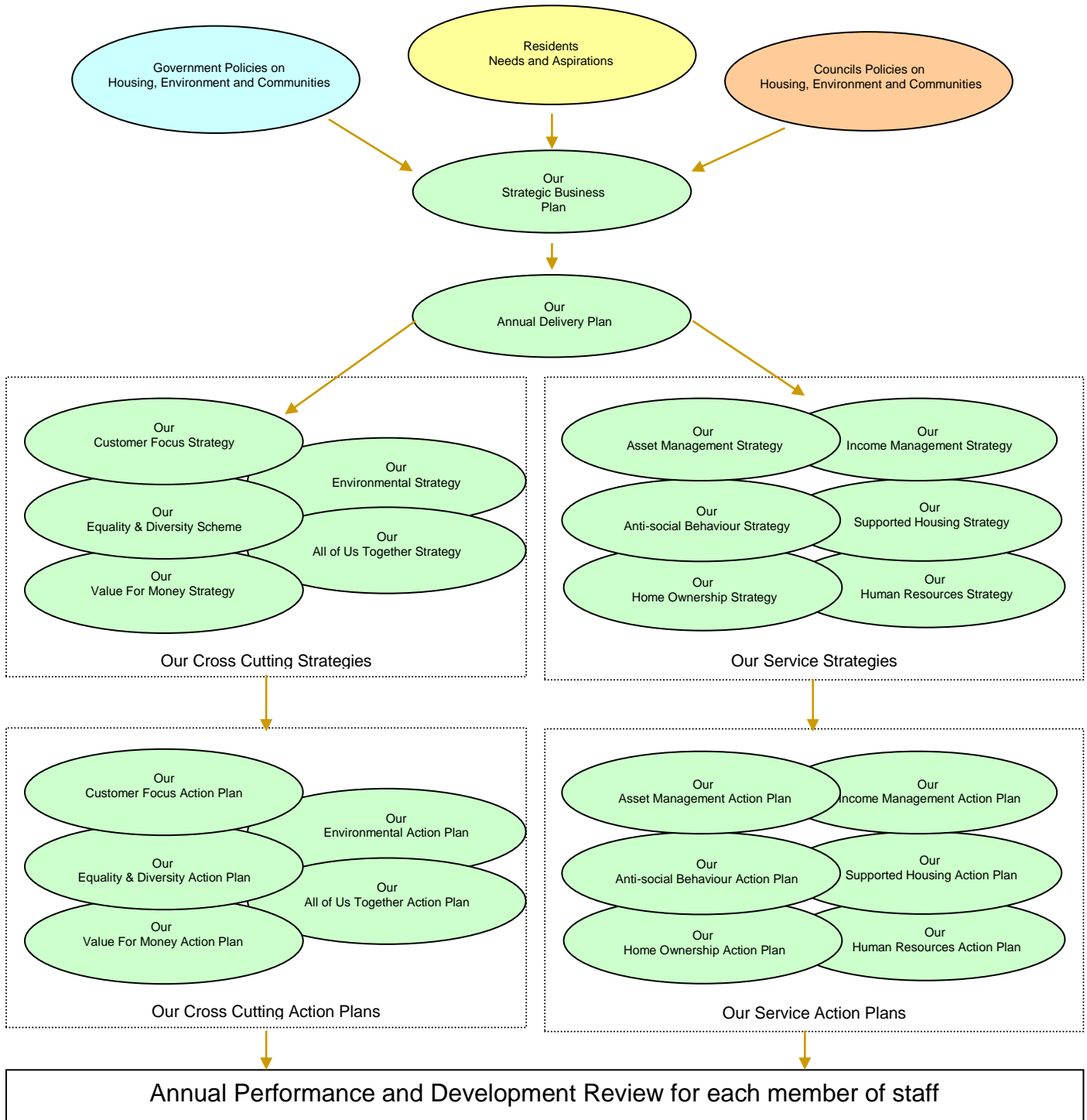
8. To achieve the long-term sustainability of the company through business growth.

We will seek to increase the turnover of the company and to develop a company asset base by building new homes, managing more homes and expanding services provided to other companies and individuals, and in this way become a partner of first choice for the City Council and other organisations, in regenerating communities and meeting housing need.

Objectives	Target Date
Implement the extension of the Management Agreement for a further 5 years from 2011 with the City Council.	31-03-2011
Develop independent financial streams into the company through managing for others and expanding services within our market.	31-03-2010 and onwards
Unlock opportunities for potential development on Council land and develop regeneration opportunities to support the local housing strategy; create networks and engage partners to develop new affordable housing; and bid for social housing investment funding for new affordable homes in the City.	Continuous Review
Continue to build brand loyalty and integrity of services in the eyes of our Residents and stakeholders	Continuous Review
Implement our Supported Housing Strategy and Sheltered Housing Strategy as a result of reductions in Supporting People funding over the next 5 years	31-03-2011 and continuous review

5 The Golden Thread

Our aims and objectives within our Business Plan reflect the needs and aspirations of our stakeholders. The Business Plan is supported with a range of strategies and these are communicated down to our staff through our annual delivery plan, which turns the strategic into the operational service delivery. Each target through the Delivery Plan is managed as a project which fits into each member of staff's own personal performance and development plan. What we call the Golden Thread.



6 Management Arrangements

GCH Management Ethos:



Board of Directors

The Board of Directors (**Appendix A**) of GCH is made up of 15 Directors: 5 Tenant Members (including 1 leaseholder), 5 Council Members and 5 Independent members. They have clearly defined constitutional and legal duties under the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company and the Companies Act 1985 and 2006.

There are three committees working to the main Board including:

- **Services and Operations Committee:**
Providing strategic leadership, reviewing and sanctioning recommendations for the delivery of front line services; ensuring effective internal and external communications and marketing of the company and; lead and monitor the company's performance management framework, the company's financial planning and budgetary control systems and the provision of our Human Resources framework and associated policy. Members of the Customer Forum and Leasehold Forum also sit and vote on this Committee.
- **Audit Committee:**
Reviews and Monitors all decisions of the company, its policies and procedures relating to internal control, corporate governance and risk analysis.
- **Partnering Board:**
Procures and manages partners at a strategic level, reviewing performance and delivery of services on behalf of our Residents to deliver effective property management services.

The Board has recently established a Business Development Working Group to review proposals for new build development and acquisition.

Organisational Management

Executive Management Team (EMT)

EMT is responsible for translating the mission and vision of the company into specific customer based operations. They are responsible to the Board of Directors and provide professional advice, the strategic direction and overall management of the organisation. The EMT responsibilities are to ensure that the company is fit for purpose, providing resources to ensure the company's legal and service delivery commitments are achieved in accordance with the 5-year management agreement of the City Council.

The EMT comprises of the Chief Executive, Director of Services and Business Development and Executive Manager for Organisational Development and Diversity and details of the team are shown in **Appendix A**

Tactical Management Team (TMT)

TMT comprises 6 experienced managers who report through the Executive Management Team. They are responsible for ensuring the resources of the company deliver tenant services through effective performance management. The team ensures that the business operation achieves tenant needs and aspirations.

Operational Management Team (OMT)

OMT ensure the delivery of all front-line and support services to agreed service standards and performance targets through their specialist technical teams

Specialist Technical Teams

The teams are directly responsible for the front-line delivery of services in accordance with our statutory requirements and GCH Policy and Procedures. GCH technical teams comprise of:

- Asset Management Service
- Anti-Social Behaviour Service in association with the Council's Crime and Disorder Partnership
- Customer Service
- Income Management Service
- Neighbourhood Services
- Resident Involvement Service
- Supported Housing and Life Link Service
- Leasehold Management, Home Ownership and Right to Buy Services
- Financial Service
- Human Resources Service
- Business Support and IT Services

7 Gloucester City Homes - Mission Vision and Values

Our Ethos

Tenants are at the heart of what we do - Residents drive our services

Our Values

- **PRIDE**

We will act responsibly and will enable our tenants & leaseholders to take pride in their homes and communities through effective service delivery. Equally, we are proud of our staff and will recognise their achievement and success. We will work in partnership with the Council, our residents, staff and partners to build strong and successful communities.

- **QUALITY**

Our aim is to be the best social housing agency in the country, delivering outstanding customer service and looking to improve continuously. We will listen; responding quickly and fairly to our tenants & leaseholders and employees needs to ensure we achieve our targets and standards.

- **INTEGRITY**

We will say what we do and do what we say, publishing clear standards, monitoring performance and providing efficient, value for money services. We will be a caring and responsible agency, respecting every tenant & leaseholder and every employee by being honest and fair in all our decisions.

- **INNOVATION**

We will be creative and dynamic in delivering our services, anticipating tenant & leaseholder needs and planning accordingly. We will strive to be a national leader of excellence through challenging existing practices, working together as a team and never accepting mediocrity.

Our Vision

"To be a first class social housing agency, delivering modern, efficient, high quality customer-focused services so that we can provide an excellent quality of life for our tenants & leaseholders in their homes and their community"

8 Understanding our Communities

Understanding the Gloucester City Community

Population:

Gloucester covers an area of approximately 5 square miles and is the administrative centre for the prosperous county of Gloucestershire. Gloucester has a relatively high population density - there are 117,100 people (consisting of 47,900 households) living in the City giving a population density of over 27.6 persons per hectare. It is anticipated that there will be a 19.3 % increase in the number of households within Gloucester by 2026 requiring homes for an estimated 126,100 people.

Gloucester is expected to see a 6.2 % fall in the number of children and young people within its population, a 6.2% growth in the working age population and a 43% growth in the number of people 65+ over the next 20 years. Current figures show that 30.6 % of Gloucester's population is over 50 and 17.6% is at retirement age. Despite this increase, Gloucester will continue to be the youngest district in the County with the number of older people accounting for only 18.8% of its population in 2026. 20% of households in the city are headed by 25-34 years olds. Heads of households in Gloucester are younger than the national average. Single person households have grown over the past decade and now constitute over 29% of all households countywide. This trend is expected to continue. 51% of single-person households are lone pensioners and this, together with the increasing lifespan of pensioners, is projected to continue. The percentage of households with dependent children stands at 31.4%, which is higher than the average for England and Wales (29.5%). Gloucester city has the highest proportion of lone parents in the county at almost 7% and over 26% of lone parents countywide live in the social rented sector.¹

Current population statistics (2009) estimate that 88% of the city's population is White/British with the Asian community being the largest minority group at 3.2% following by white/other (which includes Eastern Europeans at 2 %). These statistics will be updated for changes during 2010.

Approximately 6% of Gloucester's households are overcrowded (2001 Census) but this varies considerably between wards, with 21.6% of Westgate's households being overcrowded. 40% of households in Gloucester have someone with limiting long-term illnesses.

Deprivation:

There are around 44,000 Gloucestershire residents who live in neighbourhoods that experience significant deprivation, the majority being within GCH neighbourhoods. Statistics show that on average residents of these deprived areas are much more likely to be classified as a low-birthweight baby, to become a victim of a crime or a young offender, to be admitted to hospital in an emergency, to suffer from coronary, pulmonary and mental health conditions, to do less well academically and to become long term unemployed.

¹ *Figures quoted from Housing Market Assessment 2008*

The Department for Communities and Local Government produce indices of Multiple Deprivation, the last one being in 2007. These are based on a number of indicators, to cover seven areas of deprivation: Income; Employment; Health deprivation and disability; Education, skills and training deprivation; Barriers to Housing and Services; Crime; and Living Environment. A single deprivation score has been created for each small area in England and each area is ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation. The indices pinpoint small pockets of deprivation using Super Output Areas (SOAs) rather than wards. These are small geographical units covering between 1,000 and 3,000 people and provide a more in-depth appreciation of variations in deprivation at a local level. There are over 32,000 SOAs in comparison to 8,500 wards, and they are more consistent in size. In Gloucestershire there are 367 SOAs compared to 142 wards.

The Indices of Deprivation 2007 has identified seven super output areas in Gloucestershire that appear in the national top 10% of those most deprived across all areas of deprivation, five of these are in Gloucester and in areas of the city where our Residents live: - Podsmead, Matson and Robinswood, Westgate (2), Kingsholm and Wotton. An area of Podsmead ranks the highest of those in Gloucestershire. Barton and Tredworth also ranks in the top 10 most deprived in Gloucestershire. In addition, Gloucester has the following deprivation statistics:

- National top 10% for Income deprivation includes areas of: - Podsmead, Matson and Robinswood, Barton and Tredworth and Tuffley
- National top 10% for Employment deprivation includes areas of: Podsmead, Westgate, Matson and Robinswood, Kingsholm and Wotton and Westgate
- National top 10% for Education and skills deprivation includes areas of: Podsmead, Tuffley, Barnwood/ Coney Hill and Matson & Robinswood
- National top 10% for Living environment deprivation includes: areas of - Barton and Tredworth, Moreland, Westgate, Matson and Robinswood, Kingsholm and Wotton
- National top 10% for high levels of crime and disorder includes areas of: Westgate, Matson and Robinswood, Podsmead, Barton and Tredworth, and Moreland.

There is a high demand for social housing within the City, with over 5,500 applicants on the waiting list and around 800 social housing Residents on the transfer list. The housing of families remains a high priority for the Council and the shortage of family housing is now acute. In 2007/08 two bed houses averaged one per month, with three bedroom houses averaging less than four a month and four bedroom voids averaging one per quarter within the Council's own stock.

Employment Market

The picture of unemployment in the County has changed over the last 12 months. Between July 2008 and August 2009 we saw a rise of 137% in Unemployment benefit claimants in the County, averaging an increase of almost 1,000 per month the first part of 2009 with an average of 12,200 county residents registered for unemployment benefit. During this period long-term trends of robust growth, low unemployment and high quality employment in Gloucestershire were being obscured by the continuing national recession. It was expected that this trend would continue and that unemployment would peak, at as many as 18,000 claimants during 2011. This projection was partly based on what happening during the recession of the early 1990's where unemployment peaked at 23,000, and took 5 years to recover to its pre-recession levels. However since August 2009 the claimant rate for Gloucestershire has steadily reduced from 3.6 to 3.1 and in Gloucester from 4.6 to 4.3%. The County Council's research team are currently reviewing their estimations but anticipate that there will be see an increase in unemployment over the coming months, although not to the levels seen during the previous recession.

Despite this reduction Gloucester's employment market has been particularly challenged over the last 12 months, with higher levels of unemployment concentrated in the urban areas of Gloucester and Cheltenham. Unemployment across Gloucester is currently at 4.3 % (0.2% higher than the UK average) with six of the most deprived areas of the City lying above this average:

	2010		2009	
• Kingsholm and Wotton	4.9	%	4.7	%
• Moreland	5.5	%	5.8	%
• Barton and Tredworth	6.1	%	6.6	%
• Matson and Robinswood	6.5	%	6.6	%
• Podsmead	7.0	%	7.5	%
• Westgate	8.8	%	8.9	%

These wards also show high levels of limiting long-term illness and low rates of educational attainment with 11% of the Gloucester population being identified as having no skills at NVQ level 1 and above. A study was undertaken in Westgate in order to assess training and employment needs and demands. The Westgate Ward is the most deprived ward in Gloucestershire, it has super-output areas (Gloucester Park and Lower Westgate) that rank as the most deprived in terms of employment, health and crime and disorder. In addition, the Westgate ward has the highest unemployment rates, proportion of local people with health problems and no educational qualifications and learning needs in Gloucestershire, for instance, young adults (16 to 19) are twice as likely as their county peers to be 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET), and to be identified as having 'Outstanding Social, Economic or Emotional Issues'. The following training needs were identified during the survey:

Craft/Technical skills	Numeracy
Computer literacy skills	Specific manual skills
Customer handling skills	Care skills
Literacy skills	Commercial driving skills
Communication skills	Management skills
Technical	Computer skills
Administration	

At the end of April 2010 there were 589 (4%) young people aged 16 – 18 **Not in Employment, Education or Training** a reduction on the 4.5% figure in April 2009.

Understanding the Gloucester City Homes Community

We manage and maintain the whole of Gloucester City Council's housing, currently 4,521 rented homes (as shown in the following two tables), 257 leasehold flats, 56 shared ownership properties, 590 garages and 75 parking spaces. There are 14 sheltered or semi-sheltered schemes.

In addition, we also manage and maintain: Caridas House and 27 Park Road - 23 short term flats for the homeless, 10 Community Scheme Manager's offices, 3 offices for Residents groups, The Matson "One Stop Plus" Office; and all the land identified as "Housing Land" by the City Council.

We currently hold diversity data on 89% of our Residents and we are working to ensure that we use the information gathered to develop, improve and drive service delivery. The data covers age, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation and faith. GCH maintains monitoring Data on the composition of our workforce, Board members, partners and applicants in a broad range of categories as recommended by the CRE (now E&HRC), by gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, age and sexuality. This information is also compared to the 2001 census data for the Gloucester district to identify how GCH and our partner / contractor profiles compare and what impact current and projected profiles may have on our future customer base. Statistical information on the diversity of our customer base and how it compares with the Gloucester District is provided to both the Management Team and the Board via annual reports and Members Information Sheets. All managers and staff have access to customer diversity information through the Orchard system and are provided with regularly briefings and information on how this is changing and compares with the community as a whole. In June 2010 we will be implementing the new 'Customer knowledge' module from Orchard which will make this information more accessible for staff and greatly improve our reporting capabilities and quality.

Our customer profile informs us that 78.29 % of our Residents are White British, with 9.55% from other ethnic groups. The predominant religion is Christian with 43.63% of Residents identifying themselves as Christian compared with 1% as Muslim. 31.70% of our Residents are over 65 and 5 % are under 25. 29% of our Residents have some form of disability, with 21% having specific mobility difficulties. Comparatively 16.9% of the City population suffers from long term limiting illness with 7% of the economically active population having long-term illness.

A number of Residents have tended to refuse to answer the question on sexuality (20%), of those who responded, 45.61% have identified themselves as heterosexual, 1.38% as non-heterosexual. The information is being used to develop and implement action plans to improve service delivery by focusing on identified Residents needs such as communication and access to services and to ensure we do not discriminate.

Housing Benefit Claims

In terms of claiming Housing Benefit, the following table shows a comparison for the last two years showing the impact of the economy on the increase in claimants:

Housing Benefit Statistics	2009-2010		2010-2011	
Caseload	4585	%	4535	%
Tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit	3144	68.6	3246	71.6
Pensioners in receipt of Housing Benefit	1455	31.7	1465	32.3
Claiming 100% benefit as Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance claimants (Working Age)	976	21.3	1312	28.9
Claiming 100% benefit as Pension Credit claimants (Pension Age)	1045	22.8	1072	23.6
Claiming incapacity benefit (known as Employment and Support Allowance from 1st October 2008)	210	4.6	252	5.6

9 GCH Resources and Capacity

Our top priority is to deliver excellent services for our Residents and in itself this presents a range of challenges on our resources at all times. We also recognise that, there are many challenges and opportunities ahead for the company as we seek to pursue the expansion of services for others and also secure development and regeneration opportunities as a partner of choice. Equally, the implications of the recession and future budget constraints will test our skills as we seek to deliver our core business with fewer resources. To achieve these aims, we need to have very clear strategic leadership which plans, uses and utilises our resources efficiently and effectively to ensure we are successful in all areas of our business.

Leadership

GCH has strong and effective leadership within the organisation, with excellent systems and resources installed throughout the organisation to meet the needs and aspirations of our Residents. Integrity and responsibility aligns with managing responsibly and acting appropriately in the right environments.

Human Resources and Capacity to improve

GCH has been a success story for the City's tenants and leaseholders since 2005. The journey has been both exciting and challenging as virtually every area of our business has been subject to major transformational change to improve services and drive up standards for our Residents, whilst delivering major investment into our stock through the Decent Homes Programme. We have secured some spectacular results which have been subject to independent scrutiny resulting in major achievements. The pace of change has been immense because it has required this level of impetus.

We also recognise that our approaches to change management need to be measured and that we balance change with sound project and risk management plans backed up with the right level of experience and resource.

GCH is well aware of the key challenges and opportunities we face in future years and consider the following as our priorities in terms of capacity to continue our journey to excellence:

- The implications of the budget announcement in terms of a public sector pay freeze and a 25% reduction in Government departmental spending in October 2010
- Continually reviewing resources in the light of future management fee settlements as a result of the economic situation
- Supporting the City Council to maximise resources and seek to deliver more services on their behalf to ease pressure on budgets and create greater efficiencies
- Create opportunities to expand GCH services both within and outside the City Boundary
- Strengthening capacity and resources should GCH start to regenerate existing stock or develop new homes
- Review the level of resources as the Decent Homes Programme comes to an end

- Operate within a different financial model if the proposed national HRA review is adopted and create opportunities within that model which meet the needs of our Residents both in the short term and longer term aspirations, the Council and the Company

Our operational structure and capacity requirements are reviewed at least annually to meet both current and future business requirements. Our current structure looks very different to the 2005 operation and reflects our business decision to deliver excellent services which has been endorsed by our Residents. We have increased capacity in our workforce as we have developed our services to meet customer needs and priorities. Additional resources are agreed through our Board and subject to a clear business case approach. The following table shows the growth and where resources have been allocated in recent years:

Year	Number of Employees
January 2006	78
January 2007	89
January 2008	101
January 2009	103
January 2010	106

General profile of where the resources have grown within the organisation:

- Asset Management to deliver the c£40m Decent Homes programme
- The creation of an IT team to deliver out ICT Strategy. Capacity in this area will continually be reviewed as we modernise and extend our IT solutions. The use of hand-held technology and our vision to move to an electronic, paperless environment will mean that our resource requirements and skills will change.
- Additional Estate Service Workers, Neighbourhood Management, Witness Support officer and Resident Involvement Resources and to deliver tenant priorities

Operationally, the structure was reviewed and agreed by the Board in November 2008 alongside a comprehensive strategic review of terms and conditions, job descriptions and person specifications being undertaken by the HAY Group. As a result, since April 2009, new employees to GCH are paid a spot salary based on current market conditions (which will be externally reviewed and challenged every two years) with no incremental structure and salary increases linked to performance.

In April 2010, we implemented an incentive scheme linked to employee's individual performance targets and by the 31st March 2012, increments for TUPE transferred staff will end and replaced by a spot salary. The salaries of EMT are reviewed annually by the board linked to individual performance assessed against the strategic aims of the company.

In developing our Business Plan, we have also undertaken a pragmatic review with the management team of our 8 key aims. As a result, we have adjusted some of our original objectives within our strategic aims to ensure our targets are more realistic. At the same time, we have set a limit of no more than 6 improvement projects under each service area to ensure we have sufficient capacity and resource to achieve a successful outcome.

Other Resources

Resources have a broad spectrum within any organisation and are reviewed in depth throughout the current business plan. Some of the key areas we see as opportunities over the coming years include:

- The management and procurement of information and communications technology within our a 5 year strategic plan to implement new systems which can drive service improvements for our residents.
- The provision of suitable accommodation which will allow GCH to expand services and allow co-location of resources with our key strategic partners
- The management of Health and safety with the correct resources / equipment and level of protection provided to our employees and partners

Training and Development

Gloucester City Homes has Investor in People Gold Award Status which places the company in the top 1% of employers nationwide. We are extremely proud of this achievement which demonstrates our passion for delivering excellent services through the very best employees and teams.

In March 2010, the Board agreed the Learning and Development Strategy which formalises the training and development of all staff to fulfil our ambitions. This applies to individual service unit training needs and corporate requirements like for example, Customer Care training, IT training and Diversity training.

From 2010 onwards, e-learning packages will be developed in all key service areas and these will be embedded by 2012 as a key element of our learning tools, whilst creating greater efficiency.

We want to ensure that our services respond to local needs and excel in performance. We will do this by involving our staff and valuing them through personal appraisal and development. In 2009, our board set out clear standards for performance management linked to a set of competency framework values, a clear job description and person specification.

Working with our Residents

We work closely with our Residents and they provide extensive resources to support the delivery of their services through GCH. This ranges from scrutinising performance, to developing strategy and policy, to inspecting empty homes. As local tenant panels take greater focus, the experience of our leading residents in shaping and influencing their organisation will come to the forefront of what sort of type of housing provider GCH will be in the future.

Working with Partners

Whilst we work with a range of local partners and agencies, GCH employs a range of strategic partners to provide specialist and support and expertise to further enhance our capacity. From April 2010, we are delighted to extend our delivery operations with Lovell who will become our repairs and maintenance partner, having successfully bid under an OJEU tender for a 5 year arrangement. This will supplement their work on the Decent Homes Programme where they are our first choice partner. In 2009, we extended our Landlord health and Safety service for Gas Maintenance to provide a full home safety service through Connaught and introduced a new city wide painting and prior to painting repairs agreement with MITIE.

Working with local agencies

At a neighbourhood level, we work closely with our 9 Neighbourhood Partnerships and through GL communities who work as local community neighbourhood projects to support our work and tackle issues of local concern. GCH recognises the importance of supporting and working with local Neighbourhood Projects and Community Agencies as they are the lifeblood of support to local residents in the heart of the community, providing much needed community resource. It is a reciprocal and mutually beneficial arrangement where we both need and partner with each other to meet the needs of our residents.

10 Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

In June 2010 the GCH Management Teams undertook a SWOT analysis of our current operations. The SWOT analysis is a technique for identifying the Strengths and Weaknesses of an organisation and for examining the Opportunities and Threats it faces. In looking at our strengths, the team considered our position in line with our competitors. When reviewing weaknesses, the team evaluated these both internally and externally. In identifying our opportunities, consideration was given to changes in technology, Government spending cuts and future policy and legislation, together with potential markets to maximise income streams. Finally, in determining the threats to the company, we identified what obstacles the company faced, potential implications on the strategic direction for the company, external factors including council strategy and challenges to Government policy or a shift in direction.

Strengths

1. We care about the outcomes for our residents
2. We monitor our service delivery to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved
3. Supported by our residents who shape and scrutinise our services
4. We listen and seek to improve as a result
5. We have an active and expanding portfolio of resident representatives
6. Our stakeholders tell us that we are easy to do business with
7. Proactively develop and empower our residents to enable them to become actively involved within the organisation and the community
8. Have a comprehensive track record of delivery and achievement supported by external accreditation
9. We take our social responsibility seriously by creating real opportunities for our residents and young people and encouraging a sense of community
10. We are an employer of first choice
11. We have effective communications with all stakeholders, but we know that we can always improve.
12. Deliver tenant home Improvements to the standard set by our Residents
13. A committed team who care and are dynamic, ambitious and want to continually improve
14. A team with an open management style who are approachable, responsive and friendly.
15. We continually review and evaluate our outcomes for residents
16. An empowering and supportive management team with clear strategic leadership
17. A flexible and dynamic organisation which challenges the way we do things and secures improvements as a result
18. An organisation which is curious, forward thinking, outward looking and builds on what we learn

19. An organisation which does not standstill, regress or become complacent by not improving services or performance An organisation which has a “can- do” approach and is quick to identify business opportunities.
20. An ability to address issues, improve services and learn from our mistakes
21. An organisation which has built on our 2* rated good service with promising prospects for improvement , with a clear action plan to achieve a 3* excellent rated service
22. We have developed a rigorous quality assurance regime which is continually monitored and improved to ensure that our partners deliver excellent services
23. A lead strategic partner in implementing the Sustainable Community Strategy of the Gloucester Partnership
24. An innovative organisation with strong partnerships and networks
25. A strong reputation within the ALMO community, the wider social housing sector, our partners and the local community for delivering and achieving results
26. A lead organisation and often best in class with many organisations learning from us or seeking to partner with us
27. Generates opportunity through effective learning & development for both residents and staff
28. Provides services which enhances the reputation of the Council and supports the overall delivery of their services in relevant areas
29. We take difficult decisions and implement change effectively on behalf of our residents
30. We effectively review our priorities for delivery in a continually changing environment
31. Capacity and resources are carefully managed in continually challenging and changing environment

Weaknesses

1. Individual capability could be improved by further developing core skills and by working smarter to make ourselves more self sufficient
2. Workloads in some areas can be demanding and need periodic review
3. Sometimes we try to do too much in our pursuit of excellence
4. Sometimes mistakes are made but we learn from them
5. Accountability needs to be further embedded in some areas of the organisation
6. There are occasions where the organisation operates reactively rather than proactively
7. Whilst the budgetary process is strong, some managers require advanced training in budget management
8. We could improve on the methods of data sharing with key partners
9. Our Board is not fully representative of the community we serve

Opportunities

1. Achieve 3* status through the provision of excellent services
2. Enhance our reputation as a result of 3* status and become a partner of first choice in the eyes of our residents and partners
3. Secure a long term future as a result of the Council's options review
4. Engage with other ALMO's, local housing providers and other organisations to share services and create efficiencies in delivery
5. A potential for different model(s) for the delivery of social housing in Gloucester which we could shape and lead on in partnership with our residents
6. Embrace the regulatory standard of the Tenant Services Authority and further develop our reputation for excellence
7. The review of the HRA may create future regeneration and development opportunities
8. An opportunity for new contracts as a result of localism and decentralisation
9. Become a place shaper and contribute to the environment, social and economic well being in our local communities
10. The potential to regenerate our stock and build new affordable housing
11. The potential to develop new business opportunities and generate income through providing expertise to others
12. Use the media to create good news stories to promote the company and enhance our reputation
13. Create brand loyalty and integrity through ever increasing resident satisfaction
14. Secure external funding and income streams to develop existing and new services for our residents

Threats

1. Public Sector Spending Cuts and the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010 in terms of future financial resources and our ability to maintain services to the standards expected by our residents.
2. An organisation constrained by the current Housing Subsidy System
3. An inability to maintain an investment programme to meet the long term aspirations of our Residents and future tenant demand
4. A reduction in Supporting People funding from April 2011 and for the next 4 years
5. The affordability to meet new Government standards in respect of service delivery and property standards
6. A diminishing stock through changes in Government Policy
7. Not getting 3* and the impact on our reputation and integrity
8. Threat from competitors to manage services
9. The loss of the management team or key personnel to competitors
10. An organisation which does not possess the right skills to fulfil the company's obligations
11. Failing to recruit, retain or develop staff or board members to meet our business objectives

12. A reliance on key partners who may not share our values for success.
13. How we are perceived in the eyes of our stakeholders and how we could lose their support if we do not deliver or provide consistently good services or listen to their changing needs
14. Poor publicity which can undermine the integrity of the organisation in the eyes of our Residents and stakeholders and damage our reputation
15. Failure to deliver the regulatory standard of the Tenant Services Authority
16. Changes in legislation could create funding difficulties, which may impact on the future sustainability of the company. For example, increased environmental standards, energy efficiency standards, secure by design and lifetime homes
17. Changing Government Policy, especially in respect of increasing tenant ownership models within the Social Housing sector
18. The Council going out to tender for the future management and ownership of the existing housing stock
19. Not becoming a lead partner of Gloucester City Council in estate regeneration
20. A requirement to receive Council services under the terms of the management agreement which could impede progress in some areas of our work
21. Service implications as a result of possible future funding cuts on local agencies or community organisations
22. We need to be wary of complacency

Outcomes and Actions from the SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis has enabled the Board and Management Team to identify specific priorities and then target these through the action plans and project plans within this Business Plan. We have used this exercise successfully as a basis for planning our future strategies and developing our resources and capabilities, and have, over time, turned our weaknesses into strengths. Weaknesses are reviewed through the Company's Risk Strategy.

11 National context in which Gloucester City Homes currently operates

Affordable Housing continues to be at the forefront of the new Government's agenda with significant changes in funding arrangements as a result of economic pressures and question marks continuing over the future of the new Tenant Services Authority and the Homes and Communities Agency. It is hard to make sense of the current economic and political landscape; however there are going to be severe cuts to public expenditure both now and in the future. Here are some key areas influencing our strategy:

The new coalition Government

In May 2010, we saw the formation of a new coalition Government with Grant Shapps becoming the new Minister for Housing, after holding the position as shadow minister for the previous 3 years. Eric Pickles takes over as Communities Secretary.

Alongside the economy, the Queens Speech announced a new **Decentralisation and Localism Bill** where localism will be a key feature of Government policy with devolution and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups.

The main elements of the Bill which are relevant to housing include:

- A review Housing Revenue Account.
- Abolish Regional Spatial Strategies
- Return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils.
- Abolish the Infrastructure Planning Commission and replace it with an efficient and democratically accountable system that provides a fast-track process for major infrastructure projects.
- New powers to help save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and give communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services.
- Abolish the Standards Board regime.
- Give councils a general power of competence.
- Require public bodies to publish online the job titles of every member of staff and the salaries and expenses of senior officials.
- Give residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue and the power to veto excessive council tax increases.
- Greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups.
- Create Local Enterprise Partnerships (to replace Regional Development Agencies) – joint local authority-business bodies brought forward by local authorities to promote local economic development.
- Outright abolition of Home Improvement Packs.
- Create new trusts that would make it simpler for communities to provide homes for local people.

The purpose of the Bill is to devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities control over housing and planning decisions. The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Empowering local people.
- Freeing local government from central and regional control.
- Giving local communities a real share in local growth.
- A more efficient and more local planning system.

In June 2010, there has been greater clarification of what localism will mean where Regional Government is to be virtually disbanded in favour of local decision making where individuals and neighbourhoods will have more control. Regional planning targets, regional planning boards are to go with local planning freedoms strengthened.

The Government has signalled the introduction of Local Enterprise Partnerships over Regional Development Agencies involving both the Council and local businesses to provide strategic local leadership.

Whilst the Tenant Services Authority is to be disbanded, the Government are in favour of giving tenants greater local powers with elected tenant panels empowering tenants at local levels.

Public Sector Finances, June 2010 Budget and the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010

The coalition Government's announcement to **cut £6.2 billion in public expenditure** in May 2010 will have a major impact on future delivery and development opportunities for affordable housing. The implications of this announcement are summarised below:

- The National Affordable Housing Programme is being cut by £100m in 2010/11; no new schemes will be approved until after the Budget.
- 'Kickstart' is the previous government's programme for helping private builders restart operations on sites where work stopped because of the 'credit crunch'. Round 2 of the programme is being reduced by £50m, and more than 100 schemes that were not contractually agreed are on hold. (The Home Builders Federation, in defending this programme, argues that every £1 cut costs a further £3 in private investment.)
- The HCA's Local Authority New Build (LANB) programme is also on hold until after the Budget. This is affecting almost £59m worth of schemes covering more than 900 new build units in more than 40 areas.
- The Treasury promised to direct £170m of savings from other government departments to social rented housing, but the HCA is still short of up to £610m to fund the previous government's 'Housing Pledge'.
- Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders face budget cuts of £50m, or approximately 20%; their funding will also in future no longer be ring-fenced.

- The Gypsy and Traveller Programme is being suspended this year. No further approvals will be issued and £30m will be saved as a result.
- Government Quangos must reduce running costs by 10%. In addition, of course, the housing minister Grant Shapps has announced the intended closure of the Tenant Services Authority.
- £30m will be cut from Supporting People administration grant, almost £50m from the Working Neighbourhood Fund and £146m from Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.
- Supporting People overall is expected to suffer considerable cuts as councils adapt their budgets to deal with reductions in revenue grant. (SP funding is of course no longer ring-fenced.)

The **Budget announcement** on the 22nd June 2010 will mean:

- Reducing the fiscal budget deficit by £114 billion by 2014-2015
- A pledge to cut budgets in non-protected Government departments by a very significant 25% in real terms over five years as a result of the cuts.
- No further overall cuts in capital spending beyond those planned by the previous government. There is therefore no further news of cuts to housing investment, beyond those already announced in May 2010
- A two-year pay freeze in the public sector, except for those earning less than £21,000 p.a, who will receive flat-rate increases.
- No reductions as of yet in public sector pensions, as they will be subject to a separate review led by John Hutton.

On the 20th October 2010, the Government will announce the **3 year Comprehensive Spending Review** which will cut the Department of Communities and Local Government Budget by 25% in real terms. This will inevitably have a significant impact on GCH resources to manage within tight budgetary controls and meet residents high expectations in terms of service delivery.

Future delivery is going to be linked to what is becoming known as the Osborne Test:

- Is it essential?
- Must the Government be involved?
- Does it make economic sense?
- Will the needy gain?
- Could it be cheaper?
- Could it be more effective?
- Could the private sector do better?
- Can the private sector be paid according to performance?
- Can it be done locally?

Whilst there will be significant cost reductions, the Government has also stated that:

- They want to protect the most vulnerable , particularly the homeless and rough sleepers
- They want to increase affordable housing (provided the finances permit it)
- There is Government support for the Supporting People Agenda (as budgets are agreed at local level)

Housing Benefit

The Government are considering radical changes to the way housing benefit is calculated to cut the £17billion cost. In the budget, the Government announced a package of measures to be introduced from April 2011 onwards. These 'will remove payments that trap benefit claimants in poverty instead of providing incentives to work as well as being unfair to the millions of families on low income who do not depend on welfare'. The package of reforms are intended to save £1,765m by 2014/15. A further proposal may see long term unemployed seeing a % reduction in benefit with greater emphasis being placed on the housing provider to find employment for their tenants.

Social Exclusion

The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 requires registered providers to contribute to environmental, social & economic well being of areas. The economic down turn has meant that it is more important than ever that housing providers focus on our local communities, our Residents and their families, especially in affordable housing communities where the links between tenure and social exclusion have been exposed by John Hills report "**Ends and Means: The future roles of social housing in England**", Hills defined social exclusion as follows:

"Social exclusion is more than about income poverty. It is a short - hand term for what can happen or areas have a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually re-enforcing. Social exclusion is an extreme consequence of what happens when people don't get a fair deal throughout their lives, often because of disadvantage they face at birth, and this disadvantaged can be transmitted from one generation to the next"

Please see **Aim 7, Appendix A** for a more comprehensive profile of how GCH is tackling Social Exclusion

Tenant Services Authority (TSA) ²



On the 18th June 2010, it was announced that housing minister, Grant Shapps is to abolish the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), with responsibility for regulating the financial governance of social landlords to be passed to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The position with regards to the 6 new national standards remains

²

Announcement by Grant Shapps (Minister for Housing / Inside Housing 19th June 2010

unclear at this stage however Mr Shapps said he felt the regulatory framework that the TSA had produced was "great work". At this moment in time, we have left in our narrative about the TSA as it may still be relevant with the new standards being transferred to the HCA The role of all CLG quangos is being examined closely, but no final decisions have been made about the future of the TSA and the HCA

The TSA is the new regulator for affordable housing, established in December 2008. From April 2010, they now regulate the whole affordable housing sector including Local Authorities and Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMO's) such as ours.

The TSA mandate is to:

1. Champion the needs and aspirations of tenants
2. Challenge providers of affordable housing services
3. Promote choice for tenants and providers of affordable housing

TSA Standards

The TSA has published 6 standards outlined below against which housing services will be assessed through future Audit Commission inspections. They are designed to reflect the experience of and outcomes for tenants; and seek to safeguard customer choice, support resident engagement and protect tenants in relation to their housing and housing related services. Equality and diversity together with those tenants with additional support needs are cross-cutting themes. The 6 Standards are:

Proposed Standard:	Areas Covered:	Applies to local authority providers?
1. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment	Customer service, choice and Complaints Involvement and empowerment Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of tenants	Yes Yes Yes
2. Home	Quality of accommodation Repairs and maintenance	Yes Yes
3. Tenancy	Allocations Rents Tenure	Yes No (to follow) Yes
4. Neighbourhood and Community	Neighbourhood management Local area co-operation Anti-social behaviour	Yes Yes Yes
5. Value for Money	Value for money	Yes
6. Governance and financial viability	Governance Financial viability	Not applicable to LA providers

Annual Report to tenants, monitoring and enforcement

All housing providers with more than 1,000 properties are required to publish an annual report to tenants on how they will comply with standards, including local offers. GCH will provide our first report in October 2010 and each October thereafter showing:

- Our plans for meeting 6 standards
- Providing local offers over and above the 6 standards
- Identify any gaps in service and improvement plans
- Show how compliance against standards will be monitored
- Set out intentions for developing local offers with tenants.

Performance and compliance of the standards will be monitored through the local Government Performance Framework. Tenants will also be responsible for monitoring performance through co-regulation and the TSA / HCA will assess compliance through the annual report. The TSA/ HCA will be able use formal powers should a housing providers consistently provide poor performance. Guidance on these powers and how they will operate will come into effect later in 2010. The TSA/ HCA powers will include an enforcement notice, penalty fine, compensation, tender or transfer of management, appointment of a manager, transfer of land, through which it can require the provider to take action to resolve an identified failure or problem.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)



On the 18th June 2010, it was announced that housing minister, Grant Shapps is to abolish the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), with responsibility for regulating the financial governance of social landlords to be passed to the Homes and Communities Agency. The HCA was formed in December 2008 and is responsible for all affordable housing funding responsibilities including development and decent homes funding.

The HCA operates on a regional basis and their objectives are to:

- Improve the supply and quality of housing in England
- Secure the regeneration or development of land or infrastructure in England
- Support in other ways the creation, regeneration or development of communities in England or their continued well-being
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and good design in England, with a view to meeting the needs of people living

In late December 2008, the HCA launched “**The Single Conversation**”(SC) with the broad aim of securing local authorities future investment needs in housing and regeneration priorities including growth, renewal, affordability and sustainability, with a strong focus on the interconnectedness of these at the local level.

The HCA manages the south west regional housing investment pot which is in its final year and will be subject to major spending cuts. The current figures however are shown below:

Areas of Funding / Financial Year	2008/09 £ Million	2009/10 £ Million*	2010/11 £ Million*	Total £ Million*
Affordable Housing	213	245	254	712
Decent Homes	9	9	9	27
Private Sector Renewal	19	27	27	73
Gypsy & Traveller Site Grant	5	4.5	4.5	14
Total	246	285.5	294.5	826

* Provisional allocation

As part of the £6.2 billion public sector savings cuts, the HCA has been required to make £380 million savings in this year in the following areas:

- £230 million from existing programmes and frozen spending on key schemes including Kickstart and the national affordable housing programme.
- £100 million from the national affordable housing programme, £50 million from Kickstart round two, £30 million from its Gypsy and Traveller programme, and £50 million from housing market renewal.
- Suspension of other commitments until after the new government's emergency budget on 22 June. These include £83 million allocated to councils through the local authority new build programme, uncommitted funds from the National Affordable Housing Programme, and the Kickstart round two regeneration scheme. Around £550 million of bids were received for Kickstart two, and £214 million worth were due for approval.
- Streamlining the Agency's top structure and office accommodation savings of around £2m per year.

Future Inspection Regime and Short Notice Inspections



The Audit Commission undertakes housing inspections behalf of the Tenant Services Authority under the new national framework outlined above. In early 2010, the Commission commenced consultation on their future inspection framework linked to the new TSA/ HCA standards and these changes, including changes to the Key Lines of Enquiry are expected to be announced in the autumn 2010. GCH will however be inspected under the existing Key Line of Enquiry assessment for Decent Homes funding in October 2010.

Short Notice Inspections (SNI's) were piloted in 2008 and the approach has now been rolled out to all registered providers to provide quick, sharp, value for money inspections. The approach requires 5 key documents and an inspection within 5 days. The inspections are based on a risk approach and one which focuses on the weaker service or performance areas of the provider.

Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

Audit Commission website June 2010: The coalition has stated that it plans to abolish Comprehensive Area Assessment. All work on updating the area assessment and organisational assessment will cease with immediate effect.

Local Area Agreements (LAA's) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's)

The LAA is an agreement between Government and the key statutory agencies in Gloucestershire to deliver actions, many by single agencies, to improve life across Gloucestershire. Gloucestershire County Council's LAA was first launched in 2007 and has recently been refreshed and updated from April 2009.

District Councils are responsible, through their Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) for planning and delivering the LAAs although there is no statutory requirement to establish an LSP. The City Council's LSP - The Gloucester Partnership launched the Sustainable Community Strategy for 2008 - 2018 in January 2008. The Strategy is aligned with the Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy and feeds into the Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA).

National Performance Indicators

The Government introduced a set of national performance indicators in 2007. These include the following housing-related national indicators:

- Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living (NI141)
- Number of vulnerable people / supported to maintain independent living (NI142)
- Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence (NI143)
- Adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation (NI145)
- Care leavers in suitable accommodation (NI147)
- Adults in contact with mental health services in settled accommodation (NI149)
- Net additional housing provided (NI 155)
- Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
- Number of households in temporary accommodation (NI156)
- Processing of planning applications (NI157)
- % Of decent council homes (NI158)
- Supply of ready to develop housing sites (NI159)
- Local authority tenants satisfied with landlord services (NI160)
- Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income-based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating (NI187)
- Working age people on out of work benefits (NI152)
- Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods (NI153)

The Audit Commission has identified some of the key areas in which housing providers contribute to the national performance indicators including:

- Social Cohesion; Anti-Social Behaviour; Supporting disability and vulnerable people to live independently ; Maximising housing benefits

The review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and future management and development options for the social housing stock within the city

In March 2008, the Department for Communities and Local Government announced a review of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system. On the 25th March 2010, the Government announced the findings of the review through a consultation document.

The commitment to reviewing the HRA has continued with the new Government and in their Decentralisation and Localisation Bill, they have announced a review of the Housing Revenue Account and in *The Coalition: our programme for government*, published May, the Government states: "We will...review the unfair Housing Revenue Account. At the moment, the key headlines from the DCLG announcement in March 2010 include:

- A 10% increase in funding for Management and Maintenance Allowance and Major Repairs Allowance. Nationally, this works out at about 5.2% on M&M and 9.5% on MRA and implies an extra £500m a year.
- National housing debt distribution in the region of £24bn (£25.13bn if based on the rent figures for next year)
- Opening debt figures assume a discount rate of 7% and the Government expects this to deliver capacity for an increase in new build council homes
- The opening debt settlement includes a limit on borrowing, which is additional to limits set under the Prudential Borrowing Code
- Details of the deal are subject to changes in the Comprehensive Spending Review
- Consultation closes on 6th July 2010.
- A funding capacity to allow the building of 10,000 new council homes per annum
- The Government has identified that there is an outstanding requirement of £3.2bn for spend on decent homes works; funding for these works would be part of the future spending review process
- Councils to keep all their rents that they collect and all receipts generated from the sale of land and houses
- Still provision for stock transfers but different arrangements where government funding is needed and the continuation of transfer levy to be reviewed

GCH is working in partnership with the City Council to provide a response on the proposal by the 6th July 2010.

We have engaged the expertise of Housing Quality Network to provide independent quality assurance of our proposals and; Savills to provide advice and guidance on the future stock investment requirements over the next 30 years. This will enable informed decisions to be taken about the Government's HRA proposal and also about future strategic planning for the long term management of the housing stock.

12 Regional context in which Gloucester City Homes currently operates

Government Office for the South West (GOSW)



GOSW works to achieve sustainable growth and to develop safe and prosperous communities that meet the diverse needs of everyone who lives and works in the South West. GOSW puts Government policy into practice at local level, implementing key programmes and initiatives in partnership with regional and local organisations and provides feedback to central Government to help inform future policy.

South West Councils

On the 21st June 2010, Communities and Local Government Secretary, Eric Pickles is to dismantle the funding and powers of regional local authority leaders' boards. The detail has been left in at this stage until a further announcement is made

The Strategic Leaders' Board (SLB) is the executive arm of South West Councils. The 20-strong SLB brings together local authority Leaders from the county and unitary councils and includes district Leader representation. Formed in late 2008, the SLB undertake the functions previously carried out by the Regional Assembly are now the responsibility of the SLB.

The SLB in partnership with the South West Regional Development Agency (RDA)* will, in the longer term, be jointly responsible for producing a Single Regional Strategy (SRS).

**The new Government has announced its intentions to abolish the existing RDAs as part of cost-saving plans outlined in the June 2010 emergency UK Budget. The new administration will encourage the formation of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to carry out some of the functions currently carried out by RDAs. In Greater London, these responsibilities may be assumed by the Mayor of London*

South West Councils bring the region's 41 local authorities together to ensure the best deal for local government, strengthen the local voice at regional and national levels and encourage continuous local authority improvement. All local authorities, police, fire & rescue services, parish and town councils and national parks are Members. Working together, the Strategic Leaders' Board & SW Councils can:

- Provide a strong voice on major issues affecting the South West.
- Influence Government policy as it affects the region.
- Encourage partnership working between local authorities and other organisations and agencies in the South West on policy issues where a broader regional or cross-boundary approach is necessary.
- Promote the sharing of good practice.
- Support councils through delivery of the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP) agenda.

South West Regional Spatial Strategy

This section will no longer be relevant in terms of the Government's announcement in the Queens Speech to abolish regional spatial strategies.

The DRAFT Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West was published in July 2008. The DRAFT covers the period 2006 to 2026 and outlines for the years, 2006 - 2026 the net increase number of dwellings required within Gloucester Administrative Area will be 11,500 properties and as shown below building development on the Gloucester borders of 9,500 dwellings. The emerging RSS includes a policy states that at least 35% of all housing developments should be affordable housing.

- 1.** 11,500 dwellings within Gloucester City administrative boundary.
- 2.** 2,000 dwellings as an urban extension to the south of Gloucester, within Stroud District.
- 3.** 1,500 dwellings within an area of search to the south of Gloucester, within Stroud District.
- 4.** 2,000 dwellings as an urban extension to the east of Gloucester, within Tewkesbury District (already committed at Brockworth).
- 5.** 1,500 dwellings within an area of search to the east of Gloucester, within Tewkesbury District.
- 6.** 2,500 dwellings within an area of search to the north of Gloucester, within Tewkesbury District.

13 Working with Gloucester City Council



Gloucester City Council as GCH's parent organisation

GCH was established in 2005 by the City Council to improve services and deliver the decent homes programme. Our existing 5 year management has recently been extended for a further 5 years to March 2016

We are proud that GCH has maintained and developed our excellent relationships with the Council at all levels, and one of our key roles is to support their 4 key strategic aims (shown below) within their Corporate Plan - **“Building a better Gloucester”**.

1. Put Gloucester on the map

Make Gloucester a locally, nationally and internationally respected and recognised city.

2. A thriving 21st century city

Progress key regeneration schemes with relevant partners.

3. A city with strong and cohesive communities

Involve local people and encourage ownership and pride in the locality.

4. The city council is a top performing organisation

Make efficient and effective use of our resources, deliver our promises, and provide quality and value for money.

Our role is to work and support the Council in partnership to deliver strong, safe and successful communities with excellent service delivery and performance. We are contributing to this aim through our work in delivering the decent homes programme and also through our strong work in resident involvement, community pride and local employment opportunities. We are determined to maintain high levels of performance and continue to strive for excellence in everything we do.

Delivering Excellent Services

GCH key focus is to achieve a 3* excellent rating from the Audit Commission in October 2010. We achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award – The Government Standard in March 2009, and have extended our compliance plus achievements to 15 (more than any other organisation) - and we are also the first organisation in the Country to secure the “Achieving level “of the Equalities framework. We secured the Investors in People Gold Award in March 2010 which places GCH in the top 1% of companies accredited in the UK and in May, we secured 5 level A standards for our Sheltered Housing Service

Housing and Health – Making our homes Decent

Having a safe, decent place to live is a powerful contributor to mental and physical health. An investment in affordable housing is an investment in health promotion and illness prevention. It can help prevent unnecessary hospital admission due to accidents or illness. People have fewer health problems when they have decent affordable housing. They are able to devote more of their income to adequately feed and clothe themselves and their family and heat their homes. There is less exposure to harmful environmental conditions such as damp, inadequate ventilation or mould. GCH has achieved the two star rating and accessed funding to ensure that all the Council's stock is brought up to the Decent Homes Standard by March 2012. GCH has made 81% of the Council's stock decent as at the 31st March 2010.

Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

GCH will work with the Council to reduce the energy costs. In the last 2 years to March 2010, GCH has secured additional grant funding of £125,000 for cavity and loft insulation programmes in their homes.

Supporting the City Council's Housing Strategy

In September 2009, the Audit Commission issued a guide on "Building better lives-getting the best from strategic housing" and identified that a good strategic housing function can contribute to the wider well being of an area by helping make a place where people want to live with good quality housing from which they can select a type and tenure appropriate to their needs, aspirations and means. Within the guidance the Commission's model for a good strategic housing functions for councils:

- Is based on a vision for housing in the area that is consistent with broader place shaping ambitions
- Is well informed and understands local housing needs and markets
- Has effective housing partnerships and relationships
- Uses regulatory powers as well as influence; and
- Has skilled and competent staff

Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Peter Smith Research & Consulting Technical Report (January 2009) and Fordham Housing Need Assessment (2009);

In 2007, Fordham Research were commissioned by the Districts in Gloucestershire to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs) of the County to develop a good understanding of how housing markets operate; and assess housing need and demand in the future This was supplemented with a report by Peter Smith Research & Consulting in January 2009, with a further Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) carried out by Fordham Research. These pieces of work form the foundations upon which Gloucester City Council policy relating to the delivery of future Affordable Housing will rest.

Appendix D of our Business Plan includes further detail of the Assessment but a brief summary provided by the Peter Smith assessment outlines the key statistics based on current housing need broken down by each district in the County:

Households on the Housing Register

	Cheltenham	Cotswold	Forest of Dean	Gloucester	Stroud	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire
Total number of households	3,082	2,145	2,100	5,016	2,252	1,325	15,920
- resident outside district	242	606	242	649	275	285	2,299
- current social renters	562	0	167	998	729	439	2,895
- single younger than 26 years	405	169	218	585	181	79	1,637
Remaining households	1,873	1,368	1,473	2,784	1,067	522	9,087

Supply and Demand in Gloucester for Affordable Housing

Accommodation	Need	Available Supply
1 bedroom flat or house	171	130
2 bedroom flat or house	188	71
2 bedroom house	230	33
3 bedroom house	393	27
4 bedroom house	49	1

- 2,772 households (5.6%) in the City are currently living in unsuitable housing - the main reasons for this being mobility / support needs, overcrowding, and expense of accommodation. It was estimated that 1,893 of the 2,772 households would need to move home to find a solution to the unsuitability of their housing
- Population growth within the County which is expected to increase by 8.2% between 2006 and 2026 from 578,000 in 2006 people to 625,000 people in 2026. Fordham HNA identifies that The population of Gloucester is projected to increase by 15.5% over the period 2009-2029
- Household growth (21.7%) is predicted to increase at a faster rate than population growth due to the trend of decreasing household size. Fordham HNA identifies that household growth expected in the City from the household projections is considerably higher, at 12,661 over the 2009-2029 period. This equates to 633 new households per annum

There is currently a DRAFT County wide Housing Strategy which at which will be subject to consultation in the spring/ early summer of 2010. The DRAFT strategy has 5 key aims:

1. To improve the quality / condition of the whole housing stock in Gloucestershire
2. To assist the most vulnerable sectors of the community to access decent and affordable housing
3. To regenerate the communities within Gloucestershire so that the market is better able to play its part in maintaining the housing stock of the area
4. To reduce health risks associated with poor housing
5. To reduce crime and the fear of crime

Future Options for Housing in Gloucester - November 2008

In August 2008, the Council commissioned consultants Sector Weedon Grant to undertake a review of the future options for housing in the City. The purpose of the review was to determine the best options for the future ownership and management of the Council's stock and the best options for the delivery of new build affordable housing in Gloucester to help achieve the GCC strategic objectives to 'Build a Better Gloucester.'

The review focused on 3 key issues:

- What is the best way forward for Council housing in the city?
- What is the best way forward for Gloucester City Homes?
- What is the best way to maximise affordable housing supply?

The key conclusions were that:

- Council housing in Gloucester is on a successful path at present, with improvement money in place and management in the hands of a committed organisation. The Decent Homes programme is now half way through and there is room for service improvement to achieve the three stars 'excellent' standard.
- Gloucester City Homes should continue to focus on its core aims of improving homes and services to tenants but should be encouraged to explore new opportunities that fit well with its mainstream expertise.
- There is a good supply of land for housing development in Gloucester. The Council should focus on its s106 agreements, continue to work with Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company on regeneration of the central and docks area, and develop ad-hoc sites using a range of delivery agents, such as RSLs.
- The study noted that GCH's ambition to become a housing provider is unlikely to be fulfilled. However, subject to the right economic conditions, both the Council and GCH will ensure that they are in a position to explore future options should new opportunities occur.

In summary, the major recommendations of the report are:

- Extend the Management Agreement beyond 2011, for a period of five years (with a break clause to allow for further consideration of options post 2012).
- GCH should concentrate on the achievement of the Decent Homes Standard by 2012 and focus on achieving an excellent, three star rating when re-inspected in 2010.
- The Council, in about two years' time, reconsiders all realistic options that may be available at that time, including the merits of stock transfer, to ensure there are sufficient resources available to keep homes at a decent standard and deliver affordable housing into the future.
- GCH be encouraged to look for new business opportunities in line with its expertise as a service organisation.
- The Council maximises the supply of affordable housing through effective use of s106 agreements.

In conclusion, the report provides a clear steer for future improvements that will support the overarching aim of the City Council to improve the city for its residents. The report was issued in November 2008, approved by Council on 19th February 2009 and presented to the GCH Board in March 2009. GCC and GCH will work together on the recommendations that relate to immediate action, including working together to achieve an excellent, three star service. The Council is keen that GCH explores new business opportunities that fit well with its expertise. In order to do this, the Management Agreement and the Memorandum of Association will be reviewed and amended accordingly.

Adapting the Social Housing Stock to Match Changing Needs – “The Changing Demand Project”

The Council and GCH have jointly undertaken a review of the existing housing stock and is currently drafting a strategy to meet future needs and demand based on existing investment needs linked to development and regeneration opportunities. The strategy has been informed by in depth analysis of data based on future investment needs, community needs, future demand and socio-economic indicators.

The report is expected to be published by the Council in the spring of 2010 and GCH will be working with the City Council to establish a partnership for any future development and regeneration work arising from the outcomes.

We are currently conducting a joint survey with other housing providers to assess the level of under occupation and willingness for the resident to move with the results expected in October 2010.

Homelessness and rehousing service

In a combined partnership involving the 6 Districts, GCH implemented in October 2009, “Gloucestershire Homeseeker,” - the Countywide Choice Based Lettings scheme. We are now jointly working with the Council and within the partnership to ensure the smooth implementation is further embedded and improved in 2010.

GCH also manage a small number of self-contained temporary housing units for homeless families and now manages a hostel providing temporary housing for homeless families. GCH are exploring similar options when they arise in future.

Single Conversation

The HCA’s approach to the Single Conversation is to use the County Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as the body to draw all housing issues together and this means that, ultimately, the Accountable Bodies Group (ABG), of which the Council Leader is a member, will be the final arbiter on the content of the County-wide “Local Investment Plan” and for priority setting for HCA funding.

The County LSP which is currently under review (as at February 2010), is considering the setting up of a new “thematic partnership” on Housing headed by a Sub-Regional Housing Board (SRHB). This Board would not only be the focus for the Single Conversation it would also be responsible for the Housing Strategy for the County which is also being produced on a County-wide “sub-regional” basis.

GCH will wish to support the Council and the new Sub-Regional Regeneration and Housing Board in terms of providing capacity, expertise, evidence, understanding communities and supporting community engagement linked to the single conversation in terms of the developing local investment plans in Gloucester and secure investment funding through the HCA.

Vulnerable/Special Needs/Supported Housing

GCH is undertaking significant work in the community with key partners in terms of developing opportunities for tenants and supporting them, particularly during the current economic downturn. GOSW have issued the latest figures for Gloucester at February 2010:

Labour market							
Employment	April2008/ June 08	Jan 2009 /Mar 09	% Change	Claimant Unemploy't	Apr 2008	Apr 2009	% Change
Gloucester	58,795	50,474	-14.2	Gloucester	1,472	3,441	+133.8
South West	2,416,679	2,352,808	-2.6	South West	40,723	97,376	+139.1
England	23,645,356	23,160,646	-1.1	England	695,260	1,304,456	+87.6
Youth Unemploy't	Apr 2008	Apr 2009	% Change	Long-term Unemploy't	Apr 2008	Apr 2009	% Change
Gloucester	40	165	+312.5	Gloucester	170	220	+29.4
South West	1,435	3,715	+158.9	South West	3,635	4,695	+29.2
England	33,125	57,140	+72.5	England	89,270	100,425	+12.5

Source: Government Office South West

Tackling Social Exclusion

GCH has a range of strategies to work with Residents and partners to support employment opportunities, create successful and strong communities and reduce the impacts of social exclusion. These include Community Cohesion, Worklessness and Financial Inclusion as examples.

Supporting People

The Council will work with GCH leading up to 2011 to secure services when the ring-fence of Supporting People funding is removed, which could have significant implication on GCH in terms of funding vulnerable adult services. As part of the Changing Demand project consideration will be given to Special Needs/Supported Housing requirements and when opportunities arise elsewhere GCH will consider undertaking the development and/or management of stock provided for specific groups within the community.

Housing and Health – Making our homes Decent

Having a safe, decent place to live is a powerful contributor to mental and physical health. An investment in affordable housing is an investment in health promotion and illness prevention. It can help prevent unnecessary hospital admission due to accidents or illness. People have fewer health problems when they have decent affordable housing. They are able to devote more of their income to adequately feed

and clothe themselves and their family and heat their homes. There is less exposure to harmful environmental conditions such as damp, inadequate ventilation or mould. GCH has achieved the two star rating and accessed funding to ensure that all the Council's stock is brought up to the Decent Homes Standard by March 2012. Programmes are currently underway to achieve this and 81% of the stock has been made decent as at the 31st March 2010.

Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

The Council will work with GCH to ensure that their Asset Management Strategy reflects the organisation's ability to reduce the costs to Residents of running their homes by putting in place home improvement packages to save energy costs. In the last 2 years to March 2010, GCH has secured additional grant funding of £125,000 for cavity and loft insulation programmes in their homes. In August 2010, GCH will go live with a new combined heat and power system which will provide a state of the art environmentally friendly district heating system to the residents of Westgate. As a result, we will be selling electricity back to the National Grid as a result of the new systems efficiency, which will generate an income of £c£25,000 per annum.

Delivering excellent Services

GCH key focus is to achieve a 3* excellent rating from the Audit Commission in late summer 2009. GCH will ensure that it meets its key objectives with regard to service improvements and will measure this through customer satisfaction and through objective indicators. It will ensure that increasing numbers of Residents are involved in strategic decision-making and scrutiny of performance.

Gloucester City Council – Client Services, April 2010.

APPENDIX A: Our Journey to Excellence - Delivering the Gloucester City Homes Business Plan

We have also identified below in more detail how we intend to meet our objectives under each strategic aim.

Aim 1: To be a customer driven provider of excellent services

In March 2009, GCH received the prestigious **Customer Services Excellence Award** (previously The Charter Mark) for delivering excellent services on behalf of our Residents. The company achieved full compliance in all 57 elements of the inspection along with nine compliance plus awards, described by the inspectors as 'an unprecedented achievement.' The compliance plus awards demonstrate that services in those nine areas exceed the standards set and are examples of national best practice. In announcing the result CSE Assessment Services Inspector stated:

'We are particularly delighted to highlight that you are the first organisation to go through the assessment process with CSE Assessment Services who are fully compliant with the standard. This means your service is meeting, or in the areas of compliance plus, exceeding all the requirements of the Customer Services Excellence criteria. This is an indication of great commitment and an excellent service from the members of staff involved in your service, many congratulations'

1 Working with our Residents to provide excellent services

We are absolutely committed to **Resident Involvement** in the delivery and monitoring of our services. Our ethos is that **"Tenants are at the heart of what we do"** and we take into account our residents views every step of the way through listening and monitoring our services and performance with them.

We a dedicated **Resident Involvement Team** which supports and empowers our residents, through the provision of training and development, to influence the way in which services are provided and improved to meet their needs, and to develop their capacity to engage at a local and community level to shape the quality of their homes and environment. We currently have 336 active Residents supporting our work and all Residents have created their own local service standards.

We have developed various involvement mechanisms through our **getinvolved@gch** resident involvement processes and focuses on all strands of resident involvement by ensuring that the diverse needs of GCH residents are met and properly represented in all consultation and participation mechanisms. This ranges from formal tenant engagement like the Customer Forum through to our Youth Wardens and work with young people, as examples.

Working together – our Customer Forum ensures every resident can provide feedback, identify service improvements and review our performance. Our forum also feed its views into the joint Housing & Planning Forum of the Council, which develops the Council's housing Strategy. A separate Repairs & Maintenance Customer Panel has been established to monitor the performance and service quality of our strategic

partners and the panel feeds directly into the GCH Partnering Board with direct representation.

Working with our 9 Residents Groups, who support, develop and run many operational service improvements at a local level. Over the last few years we have seen some great successes in our communities. We have supported The Lampreys to form a residents group and together have resolved anti-social behaviour issues and involved the community in a series of community activities. The Matson & Robinswood Residents Group is truly leading the way in their work in the community. Some of their key achievements involve developing a 5-year community improvement plan, an environmental strategy, community planting and a number of successful community events.

Working together- Our residents feeding into the Business Plan

In November 2009, our residents met with the Head of Customer Services and Community Investment of Gloucester City Homes to tell her what their priorities are for 2010-2011. The daylong event reviewed each service in detail. GCH also took into account the views of customers from a variety of focus groups, which put forward views from younger customers, families, older customers, disabled customers and ethnic minority customers, to name a few of the groups.

As a result, we now have our first ever Resident Business Plan which is shown on our web site and is the main feature of our Delivery Plan and feeds into our Business Plan.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Involvement and Empowerment of our Residents

- Embed the 6 HCA? standards, develop our Residents annual report, local offers and performance monitoring
- Further empower our Residents to support and scrutinise GCH service delivery and performance as part of the HCA's ? co-regulation requirements
- Develop tenant capability and capacity by improving their skills, knowledge and confidence, increasing capacity within local communities to support local management opportunities
- Continually improve our Tenant Participation Charter to support access to our services ensuring everyone in our communities can have their say particularly those from under represented Residents and minority groups.
- Focus in 2011 to achieve the TPAS Resident Involvement Quality Standard
- Develop the Residents Business Plan to ensure tenant's priorities for future development of GCH services are delivered.

2 Customer Services and Call Centre arrangements

Our Customer Services Team provides easy access for all Residents visiting the main office at Southgate House or contacting the company by telephone. We provide a specialist customer reception service, interview room with DDA access, audio loop,

and customer parking, in a city centre location accessible by bus. The team provides a call centre which provides an immediate response to all repairs and housing management enquiries. In addition this team provides support at the Matson One Stop Plus centre and carries out spot telephone customer satisfaction surveys to support our external customer satisfaction monitoring.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Delivering Excellent Customer Services

- Continually improve access to our services to meet the needs and aspirations of all Residents and leaseholders
- Achieve continuous top quartile performance and customer satisfaction levels
- Ensure that 80% of front line service staff achieve the Institute of Customer Services Award

3 Communications and Marketing

Our Communications and Media Strategy supports our equalities and diversity objectives. The strategy seeks to promote integrity and brand loyalty amongst our residents and key stakeholders by keeping everyone up to date about GCH activities.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Delivering excellent communications to our Residents and other stakeholders:

- Continually improve existing communications
- Provide impartial and independent stakeholder consultation to provide Residents with informed choices about future services and management in terms of meeting their needs and aspirations for maintaining their homes and communities, regeneration and affordability
- Provide effective stakeholder communication in terms of future changes in national, regional and local policy which impact on GCH services.
- Continue to build brand loyalty in the eyes of our Residents and stakeholders

4 Performance Management and Quality Assurance

GCH is independently accredited **BS EN ISO 9001:2008** for our quality management systems. Our performance management framework identifies responsibility and accountability at all levels in the organisation for the delivery of services and achieving performance targets. Our Residents set local priorities and GCH allocates resources to deliver outcomes.

A key area of our performance management framework is to receive feedback from our Residents on the quality of our service delivery. Independent systems are in place to monitor service standards and benchmark delivery with top performing ALMO's. GCH has two partners, VMS Limited and MRUK Limited who undertake independent surveys and evaluate the results to enable us to tailor services to residents needs and correct under performance.

All of the company's strategic aims feed through the performance management framework and include a number of models for turning strategic intent into operational delivery including:

Monitoring of Performance Indicators

Performance monitoring is a key element of our work and fundamental to our success in terms of improving services to our Residents:

- Our Customer Forum, Board and GCC Client services monitor our key national, local and house mark performance indicators every quarter.
- EMT monitors key performance indicators at one management meeting every month
- There is a performance clinic held every Tuesday where there are concerns about performance chaired by the Chief executive and supported by the Director of Services and Business Development
- Exception reports and action plans address under performance and these are monitored through the Services & Operations Committee.

Delivery Plan 2010-2011

The Board and Council agreed the 2010-2011 Delivery Plan in April 2010 following final consultation with Customer Forum in March 2010. The annual plan identifies service improvements and operational targets to meet our tenant's priorities and the company's 8 strategic aims. Progress to the Delivery Plan targets is monitored by Customer Forum, Services and Operations Committee and the Council's client services on a quarterly basis.

Individual Service Strategies

GCH has developed a comprehensive range of strategies to support and deliver the Business Plan. These have all been developed in consultation, input and agreement of our residents. Some of the GCH Strategies will have separate targets for 2010-2011 and are monitored through EMT and the Services and Operations Committee.

2010-2011 Service and Project Improvement Plans

Our management team has agreed actions and targets for their service improvement plans and project plans for 2009-2010, which feed directly into the Delivery Plan targets. GCH has an excellent track record of improving services based on the platform of sound project management. When developing our plans, a desktop review of excellent 3* ALMO's and current best practice is also taken into account. Progress to the improvement plan targets is monitored by Services and Operations Committee every month

5 By challenging our Services to continually improve

We seek continuous improvement in every aspect of our services through:

- Ensuring effective consultation and involvement with our Residents in all aspects of our delivery and performance
- Challenging our services with best in class.
- Learning from others who deliver services better than we do
- Driving excellence together with our Residents
- Driving excellence by using KLOE guidance
- Benchmarking services to evaluate cost against quality

We embed learning into all our services by testing customer's experience through a regular cycle built into our performance management framework where a customer feedback loop system has been developed and implemented

6 External Inspections

GCH is subject to regular external validation of our work through Audit Commission Inspection Process and through other inspection regimes like ISO, Customer Service Excellence and Equality Standard Inspections. These external challenges provide an invaluable insight into the delivery of our services and support our learning and development.

Date	Service	Inspection	Outcome
August 2001	Review of Maximising Income	Internal	Several recommendations, which have been implemented
September 2001	Choices Debate	Housing Inspectorate	Good two-star service and promising prospects for improvement
September 2001	Property Services Review	Housing Inspectorate	One-star, fair service and promising prospects for improvement
November 2001	Review of Services to Older and Disabled Persons	Internal review	Several recommendations, which have been implemented
November 2001	Homelessness Review	Housing Inspectorate	One-star, fair service and promising prospects for improvement
November 2005	Landlord Services	Audit Commission	Poor', no-star service that has promising prospects for improvement
September 2006	GCH Limited Supporting People Services	Audit Commission	Gold Award
October 2006	GCH Limited All Services	Peer Review Kirklees NHP	Peer Review
December 2006	GCH Limited All Services	Investors in People	IIP Accreditation
December 2006	GCH Limited All Services	BSI Management Systems	ISO 9001: 2008 Accreditation
June 2007	GCH Limited All Services	Audit Commission	Good 2* Services that has promising prospects for improvement

Date	Service	Inspection	Outcome
March 2009	GCH Limited All Services	CSE Assessment services	Customer Service Excellence Accreditation with full 57 compliances and 9 compliances plus awards
April 2009	GCH Limited All Services	Equalities Standard	Achieving level of the new Equality Framework
October 2009	GCH Limited All Services	Peer Review Kirklees NHP	Peer Review
February 2010	GCH Limited All Services	Investors in People	Full accreditation securing a Gold Standard
March 2010	GCH Limited All Services	CSE Assessment services	Customer Service Excellence Re- Inspection Accreditation with full 57 compliances and 15 compliances plus awards
May 2010	GCH Limited Supporting People	Quality Assurance – Supporting People Services	5 Level A awards for our Sheltered Housing Services

7 Best Value Reviews

Best Value Reviews ensure continuous improvement of our services. It places Residents at the heart of the process by ensuring that they are consulted about the services they receive and the way in which they receive them. Reviewing our services on a regular basis ensures that Residents receive good quality services, which provide value for money. GCH uses the Winchester City Council best practice model when it reviews services. The aims of the Best Value process are to:

- Increase the influence of residents over the design and delivery of the services they receive;

- Ensure our services are fair and accessible to everyone; and
- Ensure our services are delivered efficiently and provide both value for money and quality for our Residents.
- Enable us to think about other ways we could deliver the service to improve it (Challenge)
- Help us find out what our Residents think about our service and what they want (Consult);
- Help us find out how other organisations deliver similar, high quality services (Compare);
- Help us to work out which options are the best in terms of cost and quality (Compete)
- Allow us to come up with a Plan to deliver improvements. (Service Improvement Plan).

A number of Best Value reviews have been undertaken to date with significant outcomes in terms of efficiencies and delivery include Housing Management Services; Leasehold Management Services; Repairs and Voids Management; Delivery of Internal and External Support Services.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Providing excellent services through our Performance Management Framework

- Improve our assessment to the Government's Customer Service Excellence Award
- Maintain ISO 9001 accreditation through the 6 monthly inspection
- Build on our performance achievements with the intention of consistently achieving top quartile performance in all areas by 2013
- Continually benchmark performance and satisfaction levels across a range of public and private sector service providers
- Continue our programme of best value reviews to secure value for money and service quality on behalf of our Residents

8 Providing excellent Asset Management Services

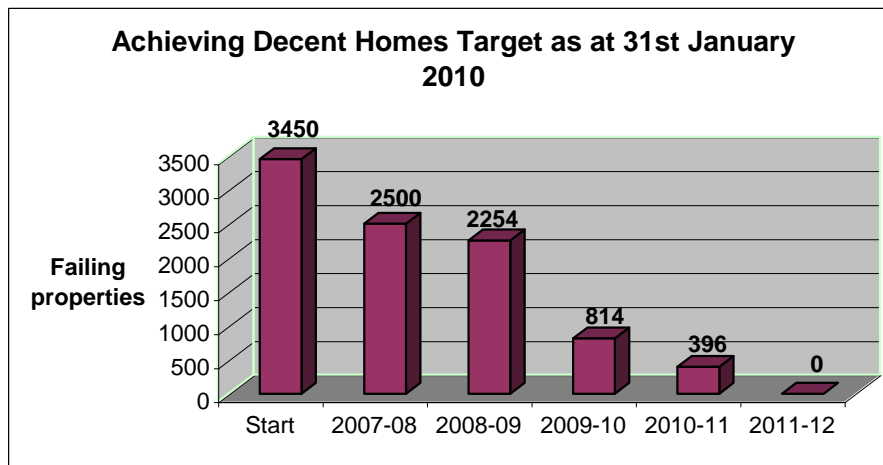
Our Asset Management Strategy identifies how investment decisions are taken and what are longer term aspirations are for the delivery of our capital investment programmes, day to day repairs and cyclical maintenance programmes.

Stock investment is based on a number of factors including the financial resources available, our tenant priorities, the age/condition of the stock and achieving value for money in accordance with our procurement strategy. The strategy is supported by separate asset management projects which show our programmes of work for the year ahead.

Our **Asset Management Strategy 2007-2012** is primarily based on delivering the Decent Homes Programme. We have engaged strategic partners to deliver the Decent Homes Investment programme by 2012 and improve the environment of local

communities through investing to meet tenant priorities. It is also about delivering an effective repairs and cyclical maintenance programme, which provides a high quality service for our Residents; as well as

Delivery of Decent Homes: GCH has made over 12,000 major improvements to the stock since October 2007 and has made 83% of the stock decent as at June 2010. However there is a question mark as to whether GCH will receive the final tranche of our Decent Homes funding in 2011-2012 totalling around £3 million as a result of the Government’s public expenditure spending review. We estimate that by the end of this financial year we will have made 92% of our homes decent. Should we not receive the funding, we believe that the only way we can deliver the programme will be through our major repairs allowance budget and spread the remaining programme over a further 5 years



The next phase of our Investment Strategy is to look beyond the Decent Homes Programme to review and identify future property investment decisions balanced with the resources we will have available to GCH.

Whilst the Decent Homes programme has been successful and led to major improvements in the health and well being of our Residents, there is a requirement to continue to invest heavily in the stock due to the age and quality of the homes we manage. Over 25% of the stock is non-traditional and the issues of maintaining this stock will need to be addressed in the near future and a clear strategy agreed.

In response to the current consultation proposals on the future funding of the Housing Revenue Account, Savills were commissioned in April 2010 to establish and validate the existing data and a 30 year position, and then apply a variety of investment scenarios to these costs for GCH to select and understand the impact in adopting any of these scenarios. As a result of their work and allowing for a range of options from aspirational to basic investment provision, the average cost of spend on the whole stock (4,526 properties) would be as follows:

Spend Profile	Total spend over	Average investment	Average annual
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	30 years	cost per property over 30 years	investment cost per property
Aspirational	£310,218,447	£68, 541.42	£2,285
Medium	£260,513,604	£57,559.35	£1,918
Basic	£200,106,403	£44,212.64	£1,473

Caution is needed because there will be peaks and troughs in investment needs and so the average annual investment cost per property is for illustrative purposes only.

The costs shown above reflect 2010 valuations and take no account of any fees associated with the management of investment programmes or any building cost inflation over the period. In addition the costs are based on some regeneration opportunities at the aspirational level, but mainly maintaining the status quo which is a concern for the longer term sustainability issues and also meeting demand.

It is clear that the Council will need to make some important strategic decisions on which level of investment it will require and more importantly, what it can afford. It may be that the resources will not be available to meet any of the levels of investment identified.

GCH recognise the strategic importance of this decision in terms of future management, regeneration and development opportunities. We also understand the implications of possible stock transfer if tenant aspirations are to be met and the longer term sustainability of successful communities, where people want to live are realised.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Asset Management Services

- Achieve Decent Homes Target in accordance with the target profile by 2012
- Review Phase 2 of the Asset Management Strategy to ensure informed decisions are taken about future investment into the Council’s housing stock and community improvements to meet the long term needs and aspirations of our residents
- Continually review the use of our stock and ensure properties meet the changing demands of our existing and future Residents through adaptation, remodelling or area regeneration in consultation with our Residents and key strategic partners
- Make sound investment decisions based on knowledgeable and up to date information

9 Providing excellent Tenancy Services

Our work is not just about the regeneration of homes and buildings through delivering decent homes. It is also about the regeneration of people and communities, where individuals count and matter; where communities thrive and have pride; where people live in harmony embracing and valuing difference and; where people have aspirations and equal access to opportunities in the future

The following services support our people and communities:



Repairs and Maintenance Services

The aim of the team is provide effective client management services to support our response repairs, Health and Safety and cyclical maintenance programmes. We have entered into an exciting new 5 year partnership with Lovell Respond, our new repairs partner from April 2010 and a key challenge will be to deliver excellent repairs services and maintain continuous improved performance.

Income Management Services

The team's role is to make sure that paying rent is made easy, to minimise rent arrears and provide easy access / signposting to a range of services and monetary advice. For example, financial inclusion, benefit support, and counselling support to sustain tenancies.

Neighbourhood Services

The team work within neighbourhood areas at grass roots level to identify individual tenant and community needs. This support focuses on good tenancy and estate management. The focus of the team is to provide home visits allowing easy access to our range of housing management services.

Estate Services

The Team provides invaluable front line maintenance service on our estates. The team clears bulky items that have been dumped on our estates, removes rubbish and graffiti, cuts back hedges, and clears housing footpaths and assists elderly and disabled Residents with garden works.

Anti Social Behaviour Services

The role of the team is to tackle all anti-social in the Gloucester community. The team take a multi-agency approach to resolving cases of serious anti-social behaviour through both non-legal and legal remedies. They work in partnership with the Neighbourhood Services Team to look at long-term solutions to improve the quality of life for our Residents.

GCH's anti-social behaviour team work in partnership with Gloucestershire Police, the Council's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and many other agencies to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour as we recognise that failure to tackle anti-social behaviour effectively could substantially blight the quality of life for those people living with it, and can also damage our ability to develop sustainable communities.

Home Ownership Services

Our Leasehold and Right to Buy Team providing technical advice and services to meet the needs of our leaseholders and support and advise residents about how and what is the best way to purchase their homes. We support and advise our Leasehold Forum and provide regular newsletters on our services and performance.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Tenancy Services

- Embed our 5 year partnership with Lovell Respond from April 2010 so that we deliver an excellent repairs services and improved performance and value for money
- Continually review our delivery of Landlord Health and Safety services on behalf of our Residents to Housing Health and Safety Standards (HHSR)
- Deliver better outcomes for our Residents linked to our "All of us Together" Strategy
- Work with our strategic partner Enterprise to ensure all housing land is incorporated into the delivery of Ground Maintenance in 2010 and secure greater efficiencies between Enterprise and GCH estate workers in terms of output and value for money.
- Embed the city wide Anti-Social Behaviour service managed by GCH from April 2010
- Improve and extend services on behalf of our leaseholders

10 Providing excellent Supported Housing Services

GCH recognises that we have a key role to play in ensuring that our older residents have access to support and services that will enable them to have a good quality of life and to maintain their independence. We deliver excellent services to our older residents within our 10 sheltered housing schemes and 4 semi sheltered schemes. Our service was awarded five level A standards in a recent inspection by Supporting People Partnership in May 2010.

There are many challenges ahead for our services to older people, primarily as a result of the reduction in Supporting People Funding which will fall incrementally over the next 5 years commencing from April 2011. As a result of the funding reduction, GCH has established a strategy in June 2010 which will seek a review of both our services and also our sheltered scheme provision linked to an assessment of each scheme we manage. The detailed proposals are not decided and any changes will rightly need to be worked through in full consultation with our residents and stakeholders. We continue to work closely with Supporting People services at Gloucestershire County Council to protect future funding.

We work closely with Supporting People, the Primary Care Trust, Social Services and local voluntary organisations to ensure that the appropriate support is available to our most vulnerable Residents. In particular we work with Knightstone Housing Association and Guidepost to provide floating support to our Residents both young and old.

A specialist team provides advice, guidance and installs life link alarms for vulnerable and elderly residents citywide. The team repair alarms and manage a 24-hour call out service, in partnership with the Hereford Housing control centre. In March 2009 GCH opened its first hostel for homeless families at Caridas House, providing short stay accommodation for 14 homeless families as an alternative to bed and breakfast.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Supported Housing Services

- Implement our Supported Housing Strategy, approved by the Board in September 2009 and Sheltered Housing Strategy approved by the Board in June 2010 which aims to minimise the impact upon our services when Supporting People funding is reduced from April 2011 and incrementally thereafter
- Maintain the relationship and work closely with Supporting People services at Gloucestershire County Council to protect future funding over the next 5 years.
- Support national targets linked to independent living
- Continue to work closely with the Council to support homeless families and improve the range of housing options open to them
- Expand and promote our life link services as a separate business unit
- Support the Council's Homelessness Strategy

Aim 2: To build strong partnerships that help us to make a real difference to the local communities in which we work

We will make a positive difference to peoples' lives by enabling them to be proud of, and feel safe, where they live and that they are able to afford a lifestyle with which they are comfortable. In this way we will contribute to building strong supportive and cohesive communities supported by a range of agencies and partners.

Partnering with Gloucester City Council



GCH is a strategic partner of the Council and we want to support their aspirations in building a better Gloucester. We have an excellent relationship at all levels with our colleagues and we want to continue to build on our successes as we face the challenges and opportunities ahead. These are identified in Section 12 above and we will work on new initiatives including "Total Place" which proposes creating efficiencies and improvements in local services by first understanding the totality of public expenditure in a given area.

We will want to work with the City Council on the localism agenda and as a key strategic partner, and will seek to have an influence in a future Local Enterprise Partnership.

Partnering with Gloucester Partnership



Gloucester City Homes is represented on the Executive Board of the Local Strategic Partnership – the Gloucester Partnership. In January 2008, the Gloucester Partnership launched the **Sustainable Community Strategy** for 2008- 2018. The strategy takes into account the changed context for partnership working; to recognise and celebrate all the improvements that have been achieved; and to make the most of the future opportunities available to the city by working with key strategic partners in the city.

The Strategy supports the **Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy** and its delivery mechanism, the **Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA)**.

The strategy has a short term 3-year Action Plan to deliver its 4 key aims:

- Aim 1** A place where the future matters
- Aim 2** A place where all communities matter and where people want to live
- Aim 3** A place where all people matter and we 'narrow the gap' in health, poverty and social exclusion
- Aim 4** A places that thrives

In December 2007, GCH signed up to working to the 4 aims with specific emphasis to achieve the following outcomes:

- Outcome: 2.1 Communities Live, work and play in peace and harmony.
- Outcome: 2.2 our diverse communities have a strong influence on the services they receive.
- Outcome: 2.3 Communities are safe and feel safe.
- Outcome: 2.4 there are high quality open spaces and built facilities, for culture, recreation and leisure.
- Outcome: 3.1 Measurable improvements are made in Gloucester's deprived communities
- Outcome 3.2 Everyone has improved access to Decent, Warm, and affordable homes
- Outcome 3.5 Older people and those with special needs have access to the services, support and information they need
- Outcome 4.4 Physical regeneration of the City delivers social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits for local people and their communities.

Partnering within the Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership

GCH are on the part of the Gloucester partnership, we are able to contribute to the targets and key themes of the 5 other Local Authorities within the **Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership** – the countywide Local Strategic Partnership (County LSP). The partnership then contributes to the Gloucestershire LAA. The **Gloucestershire LAA** is an agreement between the Government and the Gloucestershire County Council for the delivery of agreed local services and targets. GCH directly contribute to the 4 aims of the LSP, which then feed upwards into the LAAs five 'blocks' or targets. The five blocks, and the partnerships leading their development are:

1. Safer and Stronger Communities - Gloucestershire Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership
2. Healthier Communities and Older People - Gloucestershire Health & Community Well being Partnership
3. Children and Young People - Gloucestershire Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership
4. Economic Development and Enterprise - Gloucestershire First
5. Natural & Built Environment - Environment Partnership

Partnering within the Gloucestershire Community Safety Partnership

The **Gloucestershire Community Safety Partnership (GCSP)** manages the Safer and Stronger Communities Agreement on behalf of the Countywide Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership (GSP). The GSP's Community Strategy seeks 'to make a positive difference for people who live in, work in and visit Gloucestershire'. GCH has a major strategic influence in the partnership. We work with key agencies and have a very strong ASB unit under our management which manages all ASB in the City (both private and Council sectors).

Our Chief Executive sits on the **Youth Justice Partnership Board** which oversees the three Family Intervention Projects being managed by the County Council. The Anti-Social behaviour FIP has just been transferred to the County from the City, and

we take an active role in terms of case support and referral to meet Home Office targets within the Governments RESPECT Agenda.

Our Director of Services and Business Development, chairs the **Neighbourhood Management Group** which is a multi-agency task group charged with delivering one of the key strategic aims of the Crime Reduction Partnership strategy to make Gloucester City communities safer places to live.

Partnering within the Gloucestershire Conference

The Gloucestershire Conference sets out the arrangements for strategic partnership working in Gloucestershire and the structures by which we work together and what we aim to achieve together. The Gloucestershire Conference comprises:

- Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership
- Community Strategy Executive Board
- Accountable Bodies Group
- 5 Thematic Partnerships
- 6 District Local Strategic Partnerships
- Sectoral Partnerships (including the Voluntary & Community sector Assembly and Local Government Association)
- Individual organisations and businesses

Working together, these bodies are collectively responsible for:

- Agreeing a long-term vision for Gloucestershire (set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy for Gloucestershire)
- Translating that vision into medium-term targets and delivery plans through the Local Area Agreement and other delivery plans
- Delivering improvements which make a real difference for the people of Gloucestershire
- Monitoring and evaluating the work of the partnership

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Strategic Partnership Working

- Deliver the strategic and corporate objectives of the Council within our remit
- Support the delivery of Council's "Building a better Gloucester" - Corporate Plan 2009-2011
- Seek to have an influence in a future local enterprise partnership.
- Support the Council in terms of the recommendations provided in any future housing options appraisal
- Support the Council in terms of resources to ease pressure on budgets and create greater efficiencies
- Influence and support our partners by contributing at strategic and operational level in the key issues locally and regionally.
- Support and contribute to the key aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Community Safety Partnership and; Deliver those aims through operational delivery via the Priority Action Groups
- Contribute to the Local Area Agreement Targets through the Gloucester Partnership.
- Continue to be a major partner and place shaper in contributing to end social exclusion for across all tenures in the City.

Partnering with Local Community Agencies and Voluntary Groups

We recognise the importance that local agencies bring to improving support and advice to our Residents. At a neighbourhood level, we work with 9 Neighbourhood Partnerships and have a formal service agreement with GL Communities, where we provide extensive funding to support the local community.

GCH also works with a range of agencies to support the delivery of our financial inclusion and community cohesion services on behalf of our residents linked to our strategies aligned to tackling social exclusion. These include but not limited to GL communities; CAB Money Advice Service; Gloucester Law Centre; Supporting People Services, the Council's Corporate Debt Team and Housing Benefit and Welfare Benefits Service; the DWP Financial Inclusion service and the Gloucester Credit Union

The City Employment & Skills Plan (CESP)

GCH works closely with the Learning and Skills Council, who have developed the City Employment & Skills Plan (CESP) The Plan is a major strategic framework developed to connect local people and businesses to the new employment and investment opportunities emerging within Gloucester as a result of significant regeneration taking place across the City. It is the primary delivery vehicle for jobs, skills development and aftercare support in the City and has an important role in ensuring that activity at the local level is effectively planned, funded and co-ordinated and maximises the benefits to Gloucester's residents.

The CESP strategic objectives are:

- To improve economic activity rates by increasing engagement with workless residents and improving access to training and employability support, vacancies and work
- To improve the basic employability and occupational skills of those not in work and those in low skilled occupations to improve their employment prospects, ensuring that employment and training programmes are appropriately coordinated
- To engage with employers to encourage them to recruit workless residents and to train and retain people in work
- To provide more effective and integrated support for existing and new employers in order to support workforce development to address key skills shortages and gaps and develop the higher level skills essential for growth and competitiveness

GCH is a member of the CESP Neighbourhood Working Group and will work with partners in co-ordinating its work on community engagement to support local Residents access support to improve their skills and progress into sustainable employment.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Community partnership working

- Maintain and develop strong partnerships at community level with existing and new partners to serve the interests of local residents.
- Work with local partners and community groups to deliver strong and successful communities
- Deliver and improve our existing strategies with our community partners linked to Community Cohesion,/ Financial Inclusion,/ Worklessness,/ Environment and Asset Management with a view of sustaining tenancies.

Partnering with Government Agencies

Our aim is to maintain and develop our positive relationships with the Government agencies we work with. We support and share the values of the Tenant Services Authority. Our aim is to develop an effective working relationship with them in 2010 and build upon the support we provided during 2009 through our work with Residents at local and regional TSA events which fed into the National Conversation which identified tenant priorities for services and the TSA / HCA Standards.

GCH has an excellent record of working with the Audit Commission to improve our services. The Commission has worked closely with us and given an independent critical appraisal of our services with clear recommendations about where we need to improve. Their last inspection was in March 2007 and GCH is due to be re-inspected in October 2010

There are meetings with both the GOSW and now HCA to discuss our progress on the Decent Homes programme. GCH continues to secure the necessary budgets to finalise our Decent Homes programme as a result.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Partnering with Government Agencies

- Support the TSA/ HCA and embrace the new regulatory framework to meet the aspirations of our Residents through the new standards and local offers
- Maintain our work with the Audit Commission throughout 2010 as we prepare for their full inspection in October 2010.
- Working with the Homes and Communities Agency to secure continued funding to deliver our Decent Homes Programme by 2012
- Introduce and implement any policy or service changes as a result of recommendations and directives from any Government agency
- Provide reports and advice on future Government consultation affecting any housing related topics which influence the delivery of our services

Aim 3: To deliver value for money and maximise the use of all our resources

Demonstrating Value for Money and efficiency

We seek continuous improvement in the delivery of high quality cost effective services and to be a top performing company in all of our services. GCH is a member of HouseMark, which compares GCH Performance indicators on a quarterly basis with all other Arms Length Management Organisations. We use the House Mark service as an opportunity to support strategic service reviews, resource planning and to track improvements in service delivery.

The company constantly strives to deliver efficient, value for money services and we are required to contribute to the Councils annual efficiency savings following the efficiency review of public services through the Gershon report in 2004. To date GCH has achieved efficiency savings of £5.5 million which have been passed on to the Council

In December 2009, the Board agreed the company's Value for Money Strategy which sets clear and ambitious targets for the next 5 years. This will be continually reviewed in light of impending public sector cost reductions.

Management of the Housing Revenue Account

The funding arrangements for the Company are provided through the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) whose financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March. GCH manages the HRA on behalf of the City Council on a year-by-year funding arrangement through the Management Agreement with the City Council. The key driver of this funding arrangement is affordability of the Council's HRA.

Proposals for the Housing Revenue Account and future funding arrangements

The commitment to reviewing the HRA has continued with the new Government and in their Decentralisation and Localisation Bill, they have announced a review of the Housing Revenue Account and in *The Coalition: our programme for government*, published May, the Government states: "We will...review the unfair Housing Revenue Account

In March 2008, the Department for Communities and Local Government announced a review of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system. On the 25th March 2010, the Government announced the findings of the review through a consultation document.

On face value, the proposed offer in terms of Gloucester is favourable and will mean that our debt will remain broadly neutral at c £ 58 million, however our annual contribution to the Government's Housing subsidy pooling system will cease, meaning an annual saving of £3 million per annum.

GCH has commissioned both the Housing Quality Network and Savills to provide an external validation of the financial implications of the proposal together with an informed investment programme over the next 30 years.

In September 2010, the Board will receive the 30-year projection of the HRA coupled with the investment requirements over the same period. This will be included within

the Strategic Business Plan when agreed in September. The outcome of this plan will drive the Council's decisions on the future management and investment of the stock and could mean:

- The Council would be able to meet the Investment requirements within the proposal
- The Council may seek other ways to deliver the Investment requirements if it does not have the necessary resources

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Delivering Value for Money and efficient resources

- Provide efficient resources to provide quality services within future budgetary constraints
- Ensure our resources Maintain a viable Housing Revenue Account which meets the long term aspirations of our Residents in terms of maintaining their homes and communities
- Continue to deliver value for money and efficiency savings in accordance with the Value for Money and Efficiency Strategy
- Achieve annual targets in line with Government requirements on efficiency and cash savings

Delivering effective ICT

The Board agreed the original ICT Strategy in April 2007 as a result of procuring NCC Services Limited to develop the strategy for the company. It was updated in July 2009 to create more resources to meet our business objectives. A full strategic review of our ICT strategy will be commissioned in 2012. The strategy seeks to strengthen IT resources within GCH whilst transforming the delivery of front-line services.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Delivering effective ICT services

- Provide a comprehensive asset management database for use internally and with our partners
- Improve the training and development of all staff in ICT
- Develop mobile working solutions to improve access to Residents services and provide state of the art, efficient and responsive solutions for our staff
- Improve reporting solutions in relation to performance management and information systems, particularly in relation to secondary performance management indicators
- Undertake a strategic business appraisal for a range of new systems and services including:
 - Electronic Document Retrieval System
 - Financial Management System
 - Consolidation of GCH Telephone Systems
 - A review of a Green ICT plan
 - Geographical Information Systems
 - Intranomic Systems
 - Use of e-services; Broad band and Digital service access
 - Intranet Systems

Aim 4: To deliver excellence in our Governance and Management Arrangements

Good Governance and Leadership

GCH provides strong and effective leadership. We are an accountable organisation which has integrity and a strong track record of delivery for our Residents. The company is limited by guarantee and is wholly owned by the Council.

Working together we have made significant strides forward in terms of delivery for our residents as outlined in Section 2 above. The relationship between the Council and GCH Board is governed by our joint Management agreement, which identifies the:

- Services GCH is required to perform on behalf of the Council,
- Service standards to be met by GCH,
- Action which will be taken if the services are not provided to the Council's satisfaction,
- Improvements to be delivered,
- Financial Management standards to be met,
- Frequency of reports to the Council and
- Calculation of the fee the Council will pay to GCH for the services provided.
- A duty to inform the Council of significant problems or non-performance

The Board has specific responsibilities including:

- Acting as the guardian of the organisation;
- Making decisions about policy and strategy;
- Acting as the final point of accountability;
- Monitoring, supervision and control of the activities of the company;
- Ensure that the company's commitments under the Management Agreement are delivered
- Approve resources and overall expenditure
- Providing a bridge between the organisation and the outside world.
- Ensuring the long term viability of the company

The Board has a minimum of 1 business planning day per annum and is appraised externally both collectively and individually. Training plans are developed to support individual board members development together with agreed collective training to meet best practice and company law requirements.

Tenant elections were held in 2009 using the Electoral Reform Services with 21% turn-out of our Residents voting. In 2007, this process was recognised as an example of positive practice by the Audit Commission.

The next Annual General Meeting will be held on the 6th October 2010 to present the financial position of the company, our achievements over the last 12 months improvements and targets for the future. The company will present our achievements and plans for the year ahead. As always the Board is always looking to strengthen its skills and experience and will do so again at its AGM in October.

The Board has also completed a Governance review to enhance its strategic role and commenced implementing these changes during 2009-2010. They will be fully implemented after the Audit Commission Inspection in 2011.

Risk Management Strategy and Business Continuity Plan

GCH recognises that all business risks need to be managed. GCH has a robust **Risk Management Strategy** incorporating the joint risk register with Gloucester City Council. The risk register is reviewed and updated quarterly and any amendments have a clear audit trail, which identifies the reasons for any changes in individual risk elements. The register is then evaluated and scrutinised by the Audit Committee.

All GCH projects are risk assessed to ensure that there are sufficient resources and budgets to deliver a successful outcome. The assessment is undertaken in line strategic risk register assessment matrix.

Our **Business Continuity Management Plan** focuses on dealing with unplanned events and emergencies. The plan provides for an emergency control centre and clear actions working in partnership with key agencies, but particularly the City Council. A test of this plan will be conducted during 2010-2011.

GCH is now part of the command chain for civil emergencies with the City Council. This follows the major flooding was experienced throughout Gloucestershire in July 2007, affecting some 1,000 households in Gloucester, 1,500 in Tewkesbury, and 1,200 in Cheltenham and the Cotswolds. The majority of households were back in their own property by July 2008, though a number still remain displaced.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Governance and Management Arrangements

- Maintain a comprehensive Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan
- Secures ISO 18001 & 18002 Occupational Health and Safety Management System
- Continually reviews the technical skills and capacity of the board in order to lead effectively.
- A company which adapts to meet the needs and demands of continually changing landscape
- The Board is representative of the community we serve.
- Provide effective succession planning by cultivating potential board members through training, development and other support.

Aim 5: To be a first class employer, nurturing top performing people

GCH is an employer where people enjoy working for us and a company which people want to join. In February 2010, GCH was re-accredited with the Investors in People award and also achieved the Gold standard, placing us within the top 1% of employers nationally. The award demonstrates our commitment to service excellence for our Residents through top performing leadership. We also secured a 'one to watch' accreditation via the Best Companies Framework and we now intend to break into the top 100 companies in 2011. The IIP Assessment report states:

"The Company is an exemplar of outstanding performance in particular of employee engagement. The values of the organisation are central to every activity particularly 'Pride' in delivering excellent service to residents, the community generally and each other. The enthusiasm of staff is palpable. There is an air of excitement and anticipation across the organisation. Everyone has a part to play and is recognised for it. Teams have become innovation hotbeds for ideas to extend, improve services and improve performance. Recognition at Gold level is an outstanding achievement by everyone who works for the Company. To have achieved success against 173 of the possible 196 Evidence Requirements (88%) is truly exceptional, a wonderful team effort"

Our Board reviewed and agreed our Human Resources Strategy 2010-2011 in June 2010 and we believe that our employees are our most valuable resource. GCH is committed to the continuous development of all employee and we will invest in our workforce to achieve our strategic aims and business objectives. We have achieved and will maintain our status as an employer of choice by continuing to:

- Recruit and retain high calibre employees to meet our core values
- Promote and ensure effective Health and Safety at work
- Train and develop employees to the highest standard
- Develop and embed a strong performance management culture linked to our core competences
- Undertake effective workforce planning and organisational development;
- Provide strong and effective leadership throughout the organisation
- Communicate effectively with our employees
- Promote equality and diversity
- Successfully managing change
- Provide attractive pay, terms and conditions of service, benefits and reward opportunities based on what we can afford.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: To be a top employer, nurturing top performing people

- Deliver the company's Human Resource Strategy
- Maintain the Gold Standard for Investors in People
- Attain a ROSPA Gold Award for Health and Safety
- Review organisational health and absence management
- Secure top 100 accreditation via the Best Companies Framework

Aim 6: To be responsible towards our environment to protect it for future generations

Our Environmental Strategy was originally agreed by the Board in July 2009 and updated in July 2010.

The aim of the Strategy is to achieve good practice in environmental management throughout GCH and our partners. As a socially responsible organisation, we will reduce negative environmental impacts and contribute to protecting the environment for future generations. We will use sustainable materials in the work we do in our residents homes, working towards being carbon neutral by Government target dates, whilst seeking to achieve high levels of energy efficiency and affordable warmth within all our homes.

The key aims of our environmental strategy include:

Aim1	Continually improve environmental practice for all GCH activities
Aim 2	Prioritise actions that produce the maximum environmental gains in the most cost effective way
Aim 3	Monitor our environmental impacts and performance, and set targets where appropriate
Aim 4	Promote an awareness and understanding of environmental impacts to all of our residents and stakeholders
Aim 5	Work in partnership to deliver our environmental aims and objectives

Our Core objectives to deliver our Environmental Strategy:

- Improve the Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth of our homes (as part of the Asset Management Strategy)
- Improve water efficiency within our stock and at GCH
- Ensure travel arrangements minimise carbon emissions
- Ensure our resources and materials are from sustainable materials
- We will recycle our waste
- We will value green spaces

The Environmental Strategy aligns to our Asset Management Strategy in terms of energy efficiency and affordable warmth and should be read in conjunction with that element of the Strategy. Another key area where the two strategies overlap will be our future investment decisions linked to the retrofit agenda in support of the Government’s targets for reducing greenhouse gases by 80% by 2050.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Our responsibility to our environment to protect it for future generations

- Deliver our Environmental Strategy
- Drive energy efficiency programmes
- Secure additional funding for affordable warmth programmes
- Support water efficiency in our homes
- Deliver environmentally friendly travel arrangements
- Encourage our partners to use resources and materials which are environmentally friendly
- Have a Sustainable Waste Management plan with our partners
- Achieve ISO 14001 as an Environmental Standard by 2012
- Review and develop the retrofit agenda to support Government's targets for reducing greenhouse gases by 80% by 2050

Aim 7: To be a Champion of Equalities and Diversity

In April 2009, GCH became the first organisation to be assessed and accredited against the **achieving level of the new equality framework**. The framework builds on the work of the Equality Standard and responds to new thinking on equality outcomes and the new challenges that public sector organisations face today. There are 3 levels: developing, achieving and excellence. GCH has been assessed as being at the achieving level.

Within each level of the standard there are five elements: -

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

We are currently working towards the excellence level of the framework. We will work with our Residents and partners to ensure diversity is valued and respected in such a way that builds strength and unity in our communities. GCH is totally committed to delivering fair and equal services and tailoring services to meet the diverse needs of our Residents and to developing and maintaining a diverse workforce. We regularly publicise our progress on equality and diversity targets to our staff and Residents via focus groups, newsletters, Local Media, Neighbourhood Projects and at customer events. Our Equality Policy and Service Standards have been developed with the help of staff and Customer Focus Groups, were consulted on at the a customer event in August 2006, with staff and Customer Forum in January 2008 and most recently in May 2009 as part of our annual review of GCH's Equality strategy. We are currently reviewing them again in the light of the single equality legislation.

We have developed a customer service diversity champion in every team and at every level within the organisation including the Board. They are involved in monitoring the quality of customer service across the organisation, undertaking impact assessments, monitoring service delivery and developing and implementing action plans for each service area to ensure challenging customer service and equalities targets are set and achieved. All GCH staff and Board members receive equalities training on an annual basis and as part of our comprehensive induction process. In 2009, GCH has introduced Respect and Dignity Workshops for all staff and board members; together with a programme of cultural awareness and a comprehensive e-learning resource covering all 7 equality strands. This has now become part of our protocol training for all new starters.

GCH has a strong Equality & Diversity Policy statement and Equalities Scheme (which is reviewed annually by the Board and contains challenging targets across all 7 equality strands) that are understood throughout the organisation.

We have also developed a range of more detailed supportive policies and practices to ensure that Residents and staff members are not discriminated against either directly or via one of our partners. These include our: Contracts Equality Scheme; a raft of

Employment policies including Harassment and Bullying/Fairness at Work Policy; Lifestyle Friendly Policies, Sexual Orientation/religious belief Policies; and Employment of Ex-offenders Policy. Policies are updated in consultation with staff and Residents, reviewed by the Customer Service Diversity Champions, Diversity Focus Groups, Customer Equality Proofing Group and Board annually.

Over the last three years GCH has worked hard to develop and populate a customer profile database with detailed diversity information currently held on 89% of our tenants and 86% of our leaseholders. Alongside this diversity information for all staff has also been collated and this is continually tracked against a range of local performance indicators to ensure that we achieve equality and diversity within the work-force in the way we attract, recruit and develop staff and that our workforce represents the local community. Consequently the diversity breakdown of both applicants and workforce is monitored and reported on regularly to ensure that policies and practices are effective and, where necessary, to identify areas of potential improvement and development.

To further support our work and our understanding of minority groups, GCH has become a Stonewall diversity champion, joined the employer's forum on age and religion and has been awarded the double tick positive about disabled standard.

Social Exclusion and supporting local communities

The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 places a requirement on registered providers contribute to environmental, social & economic well being of areas. The requirement is to build strong and successful communities and is one of the objectives within the remit of the new Tenant Services Authority.

The economic down turn has meant that it is more important than ever that housing providers focus on our local communities, our Residents and their families, especially in affordable housing communities where the links between tenure and social exclusion have been exposed by Hills. Within his paper, Hills defined social exclusion as follows:

“Social exclusion is more than about income poverty. It is a short - hand term for what can happen or areas have a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown. These problems are linked and mutually re-enforcing. Social exclusion is an extreme consequence of what happens when people don't get a fair deal throughout their lives, often because of disadvantage they face at birth, and this disadvantaged can be transmitted from one generation to the next”

Understanding our communities and supporting our Residents is vital during any period and the Government and professional bodies has identified a range of guidance to tackle inclusivity and the value of community over the last 24 months. Community Cohesion and Worklessness are prime examples of the shift in national policy requirements, where for example there have been 19 papers issued in the last 10 months associated on worklessness and 22 papers on community cohesion in the last 24 months.

Financial Inclusion and our work to develop key partnerships to support local Residents including the use of the credit union to alleviate financial burdens on our Residents through access to affordable loans rather than use loan sharks is a key plank of our strategy.

More generally, GCH has developed a range of strategies to address social exclusion and which impact on and interact with each other including:

- Community Cohesion
- Financial Inclusion
- Worklessness
- Environment
- New Development
- Asset Management

The Marmot Report - **“Fair Society, Healthy Lives”** issued in February 2010 came up with some very clear statements that Inequalities in health arise because of inequalities in society – in the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. The report went on to say:

“People with higher socioeconomic position in society have a greater array of life chances and more opportunities to lead a flourishing life. They also have better health. The two are linked: the more favoured people are, socially and economically, the better their health. This link between social conditions and health is not a footnote to the ‘real’ concerns with health – health care and unhealthy behaviours – it should become the main focus. Consider one measure of social position: education. People with university degrees have better health and longer lives than those without. For people aged 30 and above, if everyone without a degree had their death rate reduced to that of people with degrees, there would be 202,000 fewer premature deaths each year. Surely this is a goal worth striving for.”

“Reducing health inequalities is a matter of fairness and social justice. In England, the many people who are currently dying prematurely each year as a result of health inequalities would otherwise have enjoyed, in total, between 1.3 and 2.5 million extra years of life”.

Reducing health inequalities will require action on six policy objectives:

1. Give every child the best start in life
2. Enable all children young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
3. Create fair employment and good work for all
4. Ensure healthy standard of living for all
5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention

GCH is a major employer within the Gloucester City area, and as well as offering excellent career opportunities for local people we also provide a wide range of opportunities for local residents to access training and employment experience, with a

particular focus on traineeships and work experience placements for young people and under represented groups.

We recognise that our workforce should reflect the community we serve and have, in direct response to the customer profile, implemented a range of positive actions to achieve this including positive action traineeships and management training for staff within the organisation that are from group under represented at senior levels.

We have sort to be innovative and responsive to our Residents in the opportunities we provide opportunities, these include:-

- Thirty 6 month paid work placements between November 2009 and May 2011 for Gloucester residents who have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks
- Six 2 year paid professional Housing Management traineeships
- Five one day a week work placements for year 10 pupils to run for two years and to be followed by a two year paid traineeship.
- Work Experience Scheme - set up with senior schools situated on GCH estates to provide regular work experience placements to children from families within our catchment area.
- Launched SHINE in partnership with GLOSCAT which provide life skills and builds confidence amongst our Residents

In addition together with partner organisations such as Gloucester Works and Job Centre plus we have set up the OPTIONS (pathways to employment and training) partnership. The role of the partnership is to provide support and advice on employment and training opportunities directly to communities via road shows and targeted workshop events. Our first road show will run every day of the second week in March and visit all of our neighbourhoods.

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Championing Equalities and Diversity and building strong and successful communities

- Work with our partners on contributing positively to community cohesion and implementing our strategy.
- Embed the achieving level of the new Equalities Framework and meet the excellent level of the Framework by 2012.
- Embed our Equalities Strategy and develop it to ensure diversity and equality is at the forefront of our work in delivering accessible services to all of our Residents. We will want to extend our services by utilising our database further to improve access
- Continue to be recognised nationally for best practice on Diversity.
- Implement and embed a range of associated strategies including Community Cohesion; Worklessness; Financial Inclusion, Asset Management
- Support Local communities through empowerment and capacity building
- Secure external funding with our partners for traineeships and training.
- Build on existing partnerships to lever in support and capacity to create opportunities for our Residents

Aim 8: To achieve the long term sustainability of the company through business growth

In July 2007, the Board agreed a strategic vision for GCH to develop our services to secure independent income streams through managing for others and also to start building affordable housing in the City on behalf of the Council. Since then GCH has actively pursued opportunities to realise this vision and to put in place the foundations upon which a sustainable business growth strategy can be developed. This has included:

- October 2007: Housing Corporation accreditation to manage for others.
- January 2008: Board approval to form partnership with Derby Homes to develop a new build pilot project.
- June 2008: Housing Corporation approved Investment Partner Status achieved
- October 2008: Appointed Development Advisers (Ark Housing consultancy & Anthony Collins solicitors) following a competitive bidding process

In addition in the period January 2008 to March 2010 GCH has:

- Continued to work with GCC in identifying council owned housing land assets that are under-utilised or properties that do not have a long term sustainability and have the potential for regeneration.
- Opened a 14 room hostel for homeless families
- Entered into a three year lease with a private owner to manage a property in multiple occupation as an adjunct to the Caridas House Homeless Hostel
- Successfully bid to manage up to 500 new homes in the City and surrounding area for another housing provider on an initial three year contract

In August 2008 Gloucester City Council commissioned a strategic desk- top review of the HRA and it's options to secure affordable housing for the City and the role for GCH, its ALMO, within this. The report, which was approved in February 2009, concluded that GCH should focus upon completion of the decent homes programme and the achievement of three star standard to enable it to be well placed in the event of a decision for stock transfer in two to three years time and that the provision of new affordable homes is best provided for through the traditional RSL route and Section 106. This was based upon the conclusion that this offered the best value for GCC and that this avoided the need for prudential borrowing, which would likely to be a necessity should GCH provide new build homes.

However the report recognised the rapidly changing world of new build development and the impacts of the recessive economic climate and that this could present new opportunities for the Council to work with GCH in the provision of new affordable homes. In addition it was agreed to extend the management contract with GCH for an extra five years to 2016.

In May 2009 the Board approved the company's first comprehensive Business Development Strategy 2009 -2013 that consolidated the various business

development work streams in progress and under consideration into a coherent programme. The key objectives of the Strategy are as follows:

- Develop new affordable homes
- We will define the key partnerships required for GCH to fulfil our development objectives
- We will continue to outsource specialist development advice and assistance for the time being
- We will formulate and establish a framework of policy, processes and systems to support our development activity including defining our standards and expectations
- Extend our management services linked to the provision of estate management to properties in private ownership, leasehold flats and private rented accommodation
- Provide housing management services on an agency basis to other social landlords operating in Gloucester
- Provide estate management and allied services to public spaces or properties in the ownership of public bodies
- We will continue to broaden our offering of housing related support services
- Identify the potential to better utilise some existing properties managed by GCH for people with support needs.
- Pursue other opportunities to extend our portfolio of support services in line with our Supported Housing Strategy
- Seek to build upon the early success of Caridas House and expand the accommodation portfolio and services for homeless families

Where we want to be 2010-2015: Long-term sustainability of the company through business growth

- Have in place the new 5 year Management Agreement in place by the April 2011
- Increase the turnover of the company by working creatively and in partnership
- Develop a company asset base by building new homes,
- Manage more homes
- Expand services provided to other companies and individuals
- Become a partner of first choice for the City Council and other organisations, in regenerating communities and meeting housing need.

APPENDIX B Gloucester City Homes – Board of Directors



Tim Dare
Chair

Tim brings experience of corporate management, business start-ups, team-building and team development to the Board. He is Managing Director of a Cheltenham-based Executive Search firm specialising in management and board level recruitment. Tim's interest in community development and improvement drives his enthusiasm to be a Board Member of Gloucester City Homes.

Tim currently is and has been **Chair of the Board** since the company launched in 2005. He has led the transformation of the company through excellent leadership and a deep understanding of tenant issues.



Peter Baker
Independent

Peter retired from Bovis Homes in 2007 where he was Regional Managing Director for the South West Region. As well as managing a large house building operation, he has experience in urban regeneration and partnership development providing affordable homes for rent and sale. From a local farming family, educated at Hartpury College and Rycotewood Oxon, he has also managed an estate agency. His ancestors are reputed to have been involved in Gloucester City many years ago.

Peter is a member of the GCH Partnering Board



Councillor
Nick Durrant

Born and bred in Gloucester, Nick has been a councillor since 1986 and was the Cabinet member responsible for the Options Appraisal process. He was a member of Tenants Forum. For 28 years, he lived in a Council house and many of his relatives are still tenants, so he understands the issues that tenants face. He is a mechanical engineer and a qualified project manager.



**Councillor
Sebastian Field**

Sebastian Field was elected councillor for Kingsholm and Wotton in 2007. He is currently Vice-Chair of the council's Overview and Scrutiny committee. As a councillor Board member Sebastian is keen to help GCH continue to develop and thrive. He sits on the Partnering Board.

Sebastian sings in Gloucester Cathedral Choir, and works as a freelance singer and singing teacher.

Sebastian is a member of the GCH Partnering Board.



**Mike Groom
Tenant**

Mike has been a tenant in Coney Hill area for almost 30 years. Over the past 20 years Mike has worked tirelessly to improve the area in so many ways for the benefit of the whole community. His initial involvement with local people began many years ago when he set up a local Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the road where he lives. That started the ball rolling for Mike and he continues to this day to do all he can for the benefit of others. He was Chair of the Coney Hill Neighbourhood Project for three years.

Mike is a member of the GCH Partnering Board.



**Councillor
Jeremy Hilton**

Jeremy represents Kingsholm and Wotton on Gloucester City Council as a Liberal Democrat. He is also a county councillor. He has served as a local councillor for more than 18 years. Jeremy is also a director of Gloucestershire Airport and Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company. He is an accredited member peer with the Improvement and Development Agency, providing advice and training at councils around the country. Jeremy represents the Liberal Democrats on the Local Government Association's Fire Service Management Committee. He is a member of the fire service National Resilience Board.

Jeremy is a member of the GCH Services & Operations Committee.



Richard Ingham
Leaseholder

Richard was born in Halifax Yorkshire, and since then has lived and worked in various locations, in the UK and abroad. He has been a leaseholder since 1996, and a regular attendee at the meetings of the Leaseholders Forum and, earlier, of the Westgate Leaseholders Association, and has also been chair of his local community organisation.

Richard's main experience has been in the field of Further Education as a lecturer in English and Communications, and then Head of Department and Director of Marketing at the large further education college in Chippenham, Wiltshire. Other roles have included staff governor at Chippenham Technical College, a councillor in the Hebden Royd Urban District Council, a manager in the wool trade and an officer in the Royal Air Force. He is also a writer, an educational journalist and the former editor of a government magazine on further and adult education, as well as a published playwright and author, and a musician. Richard is married with three children, all of whom are now grown up.

Richard is the Leaseholder Tenant Board member, and is a member of the GCH Services & Operations Committee.



Councillor
Janet Lugg

Janet was elected in May 2006 as Labour representative for Matson and Robinswood. She serves on a number of committees including the Disability Equality Forum, the Electoral Working Party and Scrutiny 2 (Streetcare, Heritage and Leisure.)

Janet is a member of the GCH Audit Committee.



Chris Marshall
Independent

Chris works as a Land & New Homes Agent. He is Vice Chair of Gloucestershire Probation Board, a former Chair of the Estates Committee and Ryecroft Liaison Committee, a former member of Gloucestershire Courts Board and Chair of Stroud District Council Standards Committee.

Chris is a joint Vice Chair of the Board and Chairs the company's Audit Committee.



**Lesley Mower-
Hill
Independent**

Lesley has worked in housing since 1976, working for both local authorities and housing associations in England and Wales. In September 2006 Lesley joined the Neighbourhood Services Team at Gloucester City Homes as Interim Manager and applied to join the Board at the end of her assignment. Presently working in Wales, she is also spending time developing her own Interim Management business focusing on providing management solutions for housing organisations.

Lesley chairs the company's Services & Operations Committee.



**Councillor
Colin Organ**

Colin has worked in the Housing and Construction Industry for most of his working life and is a former Director Designate of a major housing Plc. Currently, he is the founder and owner of The Estate Agency and is a non-executive director of the Holloway Friendly Society, both of which are based in Gloucester City Centre.

Colin Organ is an elected councillor for Gloucester City and serves on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He is Branch Chairman of the Tuffley Ward.



**Peter Osborne
Independent**

Peter works as a Senior Strategy Manager in one of the UK's top 5 Commercial Real Estate lenders, and has a range of financial services experience, having worked in a number of large private and public sector organisations in areas including Internal Audit, Internal Consultancy and Strategy. Peter moved to Gloucestershire in 1993 after earning a BSc(Hons) in Accounting from Cardiff University, and holds a number of postgraduate qualifications including a MBA from Henley Management College.

Peter is a member of the GCH Audit Committee



**David Porter
Tenant**

David is now retired, but when he was in full-time employment spent 25 years at Dowty Rotol, where he was a foreman managing 50+ employees. His responsibilities included modelling undercarriages for international airshows at Farnborough and Paris.

David likes to spend his free time painting, especially wild animals. He is active in many areas of Gloucester City Homes, for example as a tenant inspector.

David is a member of the GCH Audit Committee



**Dorothy Smith
Tenant**

Dorothy is 65 years old and is a wife, mother and grandmother. She makes a real contribution on behalf of tenants through her work as a member of the Gloucester City Homes Board. She devotes much of her time to working on behalf of Gloucester tenants on how GCH spends, manages, prioritises and controls expenditure for the properties and estates they manage.

Dorothy is joint Vice Chair of the Board and is Chair of Partnering Board and is a member of the Audit Committee.

Executive Management Team



Ashley Green
Chief Executive

Ashley is responsible to the Board of Directors and leads the company's executive management team, overseeing the strategic service provision to improve your homes and communities in line with our strategic aims and objectives. He has transformed Gloucester City Homes into a top performing organisation which has been independently rated as a 2* Good organisation with promising prospects for improvement following inspection by the Audit Commission in June 2007. Ashley is professionally qualified and holds a postgraduate strategic management qualification, with over 20 years experience at Senior Management level.



Valerie Hayllor
**Director of
Services &
Business
Development**

Valerie is a housing professional who has worked with a wide a range of housing organisations, mainly in the Southeast and West Midlands.

She has 12 years Senior Executive Level experience within Housing Associations and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing. Valerie also holds a Masters in Business Administration and a BA (Hons) in Sociology and a Diploma in Housing.

She is responsible, through the Chief Executive, to the Board of Directors for the strategic direction and management of all Gloucester City Homes front-line and support services, ensuring they are developed, maintained and improved in line with best practice.



Rob Wharton
**Director of
Resources &
Company
Secretary**

Rob is a CIPFA qualified accountant who has over 20 years experience within the Housing Finance sector - the last seven at a senior and executive level. He is responsible, through the Chief Executive for the provision of all support services of the Company including Finance, ICT, Governance, Performance Management and Procurement. He is responsible for ensuring these services are delivered in line with best practice whilst ensuring compliance with relevant legislation. Rob is also the Company Secretary



Anita Pope
Executive
Manager of
Organisational
Development &
Diversity

Anita is a CIPD qualified Human Resources specialist who brings major experience in her role to the Company with a track record of success including the ensuring that GCH was the first ALMO to secure the achievement level of the Equality Framework and attaining the Investors in People Gold Award. Anita has implemented a range of strategies which have seen GCH become a champion of diversity. Anita's role also encompasses responsibility for the delivery of a range of strategies including Community Cohesion and Worklessness. She is key member of the Executive management Team working towards service excellence and developing the organisation's business strategies.

APPENDIX C 5 Year Performance Targets

Extract of Original No	INDICATOR	Housemark Top Quartile 2009/10	Outturn March 2010	GCH Target 2010/11	GCH Target 2011 /12	GCH Target 2012/13	GCH Target 2013/14	GCH Target 2014/15
1.	GCH % of emergency repairs completed in target	99.58%	99.51%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2.	GCH % of urgent repairs completed in target	99.13%	93.05%	98%	99.5%	99.6%	99.8%	99.8%
3.	GCH % of routine repairs completed in target	98.55%	94.63%	98%	99.5%	99.6%	99.8%	99.8%
4.	GCH appointments kept as proportion of all made	98.69%	90%	94%	95%	96%	97%	98%
5.	Overall satisfaction with Response Repairs service	90.00%	90.83%	92%	94%	96%	98%	99%
6.	GCH Proportion of planned maintenance to response repairs expenditure	70.50%	Final accounts 2009/10	60%	70%	70%	70%	70%

Extract of Original No	INDICATOR	Housemark Top Quartile 2009/10	Outturn March 2010	GCH Target 2010/11	GCH Target 2011 /12	GCH Target 2012/13	GCH Target 2013/14	GCH Target 2014/15
7.	BVPI 211b. Proportion of expenditure on emergency & urgent repairs / non urgent repairs	Not published	52:48	33:67	32:68	31:69	30:70	30:70
10.	GCH Response repairs resolved at first visit	93.95 %	85.77 %	94 %	95%	96%	97%	98%
14.	BVPI 184a Proportion LA homes non decent at 1 st April	0.61%	19.02 %	11%	0%	-	-	
15.	BVPI 184b % change non-decent LA homes	Not published	- 51.92 %	-66.7%	-100%	-	-	
18.	BVPI 063 Average SAP rating of LA dwellings	74	74	74	76	78	80	82
19.	GCH satisfaction with delivery of planned maintenance / Decent Homes contracts	95.85	97.98 %	96 %	98 %	-	-	

Extract of Original No	INDICATOR	House-mark Top Quartile 2009/10	Outturn March 2010	GCH Target 2010/11	GCH Target 2011 /12	GCH Target 2012/13	GCH Target 2013/14	GCH Target 2014/15
23.	BVPI 212 Average time to re-let	23.87 days	17.96 days	18 days	17 days	16 days	14 days	13 days
24.	GCH rent loss due to empty properties as % of rent due	0.90%	0.71%	0.69%	0.65%	0.63%	0.60%	0.585
30.	GCH % of gas services completed	Not published	96.74 %	99.6%	100%	100%	100%	100%
31.	Properties with a valid CP12	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
32.	BVPI 074a Satisfaction - tenants overall (Status Survey)	82%	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%	95%
60.	BVPI 66a % rent collected/rent owed	99.00 %	99.46 %	99.10 %	99.2%	99.2%	99.3%	99.4%
61.	BVPI 066b % tenants > 7wks gross arrears	Not published	3.79%	3.2%	3%	3%	2.9%	2.8%
62.	BVPI 066c % possession notices served	Not published	9.40%	10%	8%	8%	8%	8%



APPENDIX D 30-Year Projection of the Housing Revenue Account

To be inserted in September 2010

APPENDIX E Housing Need in Gloucester and the Surrounding Areas

Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Peter Smith Research & Consulting Technical Report (January 2009) and Fordham Housing Need Assessment (2009);

In 2007, Fordham Research were commissioned by the Districts in Gloucestershire to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs) of the County to develop a good understanding of how housing markets operate; and assess housing need and demand which can inform the development of Local Development Documents and Regional Spatial Strategy planning for housing policies. Fordham reported in 2007, the chapter on housing need was updated and the subject of a secondary report by Peter Smith Research & Consulting in January 2009. This has subsequently been followed by a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) carried out by Fordham Research. These pieces of work will form the foundations upon which Gloucester City Council policy relating to the delivery of Affordable Housing will rest.

The Fordham Housing Needs Assessment identifies the following in relation to Gloucester:

- There are 4,493 households who need or are likely to form from households in the City over the next two years, Newly forming households are just as likely to want to remain in the City, but less likely to want to move elsewhere in Gloucestershire. About 25.0% of all households are 'pensioner-only', while about 27.7% contain children. The proportion of households containing an employed person varied significantly across tenures. While nearly all (93.1%) of households with a mortgage contained an employed person, this fell to 37.9% in the social rented sector, while 56.4% of owner-occupiers without a mortgage were retired.
- Survey results for household income in Gloucester estimate the median gross household income level to be £20,690 per annum,
- The estimated average entry-level prices and rents across Gloucester City in July 2009 ranged from £69,000 for a one bed property to £184,000 for a four bed property. Entry level rents varied from £380 per month for a one bedroom flat to £750 per month for a four bedroom property.
- The costs of Social Rented Housing is significantly below those for private rented housing indicating a significant potential gap between the social rented and market sectors.
- 2,772 households (5.6%) in the City are currently living in unsuitable housing - the main reasons for this being mobility / support needs, overcrowding, and expense of accommodation. It was estimated that 1,893 of the 2,772 households would need to move home to find a solution to the unsuitability of their housing
- An estimated 30.1% of households in current need are found in the social rented sector and 40.8% in the private rented sector.

- The data suggests that on an annual basis there will be about 656 newly forming households requiring affordable housing and a further estimated 844 existing households. The total gross future need for affordable housing is therefore estimated to be 1,500 units per annum.
- The current stock of affordable housing is likely to provide around 830 units. This generates a total shortfall, or net future housing need, of approximately 670 units (1,500 – 830 = 670).
- High levels of housing need are found particularly among families (especially lone parent families), while pensioners generate relatively little of the City's need for conventional housing in the short to medium term.
- The latest version of the draft regional strategy suggests that 29% of Gloucester's Housing requirements would be met by using land in Tewkesbury, and a further 17% on land in Stroud. If this distribution were also applied to affordable housing provision, a need for 249 units would be displaced from Gloucester to Tewkesbury and 146 units to Stroud, bringing the total need for affordable housing within the boundaries of the Gloucester City Council area to 462.
- Fordham identifies the required mix over the next 20 years to meet the identified need taking into consideration issues such as the lag time built into the planning system.
- Fordham suggests that 60% of new housing should be market and 40% affordable. Within the affordable sector, this could be broken down to 20% intermediate and 80% social rented.
- Fordham identifies the types of affordable social housing required. One and two bedroom properties are required almost equally (36% two bedroom and 35% three bedroom) with a lesser requirement (22%) for one bedroom and four bedroom (7%). Unlike the P Smith report Fordham does not appear to emphasise the impact of "churn" on the availability of units. P Smith identified in his research the fact that those allocated houses are much more likely to remain in them than people occupying one bedroom flats. This means that availability of existing social houses units is relatively limited in comparison to 1 bed flats and that this should be reflected in local authority policy by increasing the proportion of family houses required from developers.

Peter Smith Research & Consulting assessment of housing need in the County and City identified a number of key drivers that may impact on future housing demand. These include:

- Population growth within the County which is expected to increase by 8.2% between 2006 and 2026 from 578,000 in 2006 people to 625,000 people in 2026. Fordham HNA identifies that The population of Gloucester is projected to increase by 15.5% over the period 2009-2029
- Household growth (21.7%) is predicted to increase at a faster rate than population growth due to the trend of decreasing household size. Fordham HNA identifies that household growth expected in the City from the household projections is considerably higher, at 12,661 over the 2009-2029 period. This equates to 633 new households per annum
- There is a relatively small (3%) but increasing BME population

- The need for around 187 new Gypsy and Traveller residential pitches throughout the County
- The provision of 56,400 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026 in the County
- By 2026, the number of people aged 65+ in the County is expected to exceed the current level by 52,000 people, with people aged 75+ accounting for most of the increase. This will greatly increase the number of pensioner and lone-pensioner households in the housing market. Fordham HNA concurs identifying that household types are also likely to change over this period, with a large increase in pensioner households, with only small absolute increases projected for other types of households
- The numbers of young adults (16 to 24) and people aged 25 to 44, the key age groups where new households are likely to arise, will decrease by approximately 4,000 and 6,000 people over the same period.
- Employment in the Gloucester travel to work area (TTWA) is expected to grow by about 9,300 to 12,700 jobs from the bordering local authority communities over the period 2006 to 2026 and the Regional Spatial Strategy states that balancing the provision of housing and jobs will be critical in creating more sustainable development and travel patterns through reducing the overall levels of in-commuting to Gloucester.
- The wards with the highest proportions of overcrowded households were in Cheltenham and Gloucester. c.2.0% of Gloucester Household as overcrowded which is below the National average of 2.5%
- The number of single-person households rose by 28% to 70,000 during the decade to 2001, accounting for nearly 30% of all households in Gloucestershire.
- The increase in the number of single-person households was due to a rise in divorce and separation, persons living alone and a growing number of lone-pensioners. Over half of single-person households in Gloucestershire (51%) consisted of a lone-pensioner
- One key feature of overcrowding that emerged was the wide variations between districts, with the proportions reaching 6.7% in Cheltenham and 6.0% in Gloucester, ranking the sixth and ninth worst in the South West region.
- Many migrants start out in the UK in accommodation provided by their employers or in house shares with other migrants. This has short-term implications for the monitoring of Housing In Multiple Occupation (HMOs). However, those migrants who intend to stay long-term are likely to want to have homes of their own eventually, either privately rented or owned

Housing Need Requirements

The following tables provided by the Peter Smith assessment outlines key statistics based on current housing need broken down by each district in the County. It also analyses supply and demand requirements:

Households on the Housing Register

	Cheltenham	Cotsw old	Forest of Dean	Gloucester	Stroud	Tew kes-bury	Gloucester-shire
Total number of households	3,082	2,145	2,100	5,016	2,252	1,325	15,920
- resident outside district	242	606	242	649	275	285	2,299
- current social renters	562	0	167	998	729	439	2,895
- single younger than 26 years	405	169	218	585	181	79	1,637
Remaining households	1,873	1,368	1,473	2,784	1,067	522	9,087

Breakdown of current need by household type

Household type	Cheltenham	Cotsw old	Forest of Dean	Gloucester	Stroud	Tew kes-bury	Gloucester-shire
Single people	48%	31%	38%	33%	44%	32%	38%
Couple without children	16%	25%	17%	11%	17%	21%	16%
Couple with children	15%	17%	19%	21%	16%	22%	18%
Single parents	21%	27%	27%	35%	24%	26%	28%

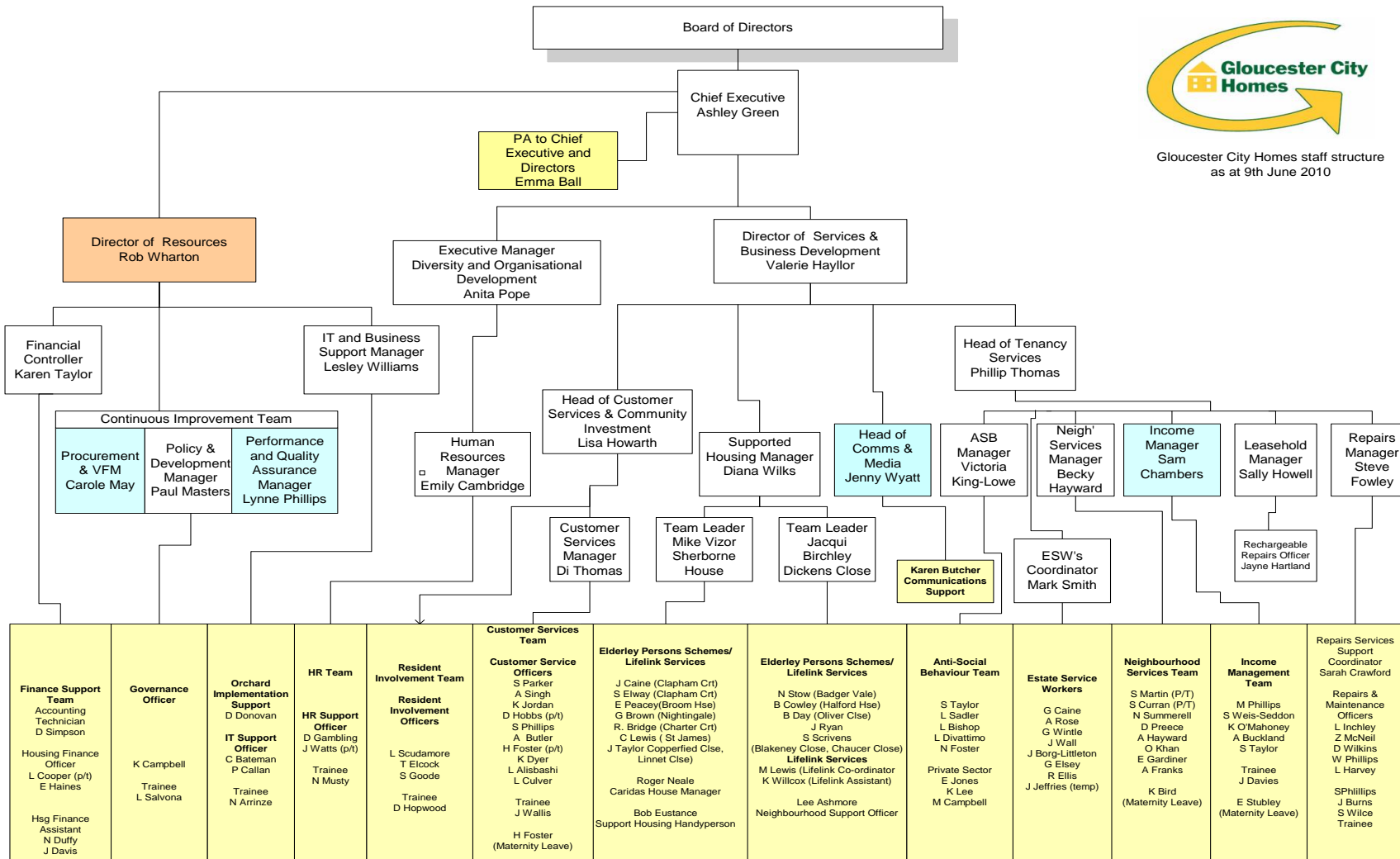
Housing need and supply by dwelling/bedroom requirement

Size and type		Cheltenham	Cotsw old	Forest of Dean	Gloucester	Stroud	Tew kes-bury	Gloucester-shire
1 bed flat or house	Total need	199	99	78	171	97	64	708
	Available supply	133	76	52	130	97	42	529
	Supply - need	-67	-23	-26	-41	-1	-22	-179
	Supply / need	67%	77%	67%	76%	99%	66%	75%
2 bed flat or house	Total need	225	132	92	188	113	78	829
	Available supply	113	41	27	71	72	84	407
	Shortfall/surplus	-113	-91	-65	-117	-42	6	-422
	Supply / need	50%	31%	29%	38%	63%	108%	49%
2 bed house	Total need	147	93	82	230	102	67	722
	Available supply	28	46	36	33	40	37	220
	Supply - need	-119	-48	-46	-197	-62	-30	-502
	Supply / need	19%	49%	43%	14%	39%	56%	30%
3 bed house	Total need	276	179	149	393	188	129	1,314
	Available supply	26	26	16	27	29	23	147
	Supply - need	-250	-153	-133	-366	-159	-106	-1,166
	Supply / need	9%	15%	11%	7%	16%	18%	11%
4+ bed house	Total need	37	25	20	49	25	18	174
	Available supply	4	0	0	1	1	2	8
	Shortfall/surplus	-33	-25	-20	-48	-25	-16	-166
	Supply / need	11%	0%	0%	3%	2%	9%	5%
All dwelling types	Total need	885	528	421	1,031	527	356	3,747
	Available supply	303	189	131	262	238	188	1,311
	Supply - need	-582	-339	-290	-769	-288	-168	-2,436
	Supply / need	34%	36%	31%	25%	45%	53%	35%

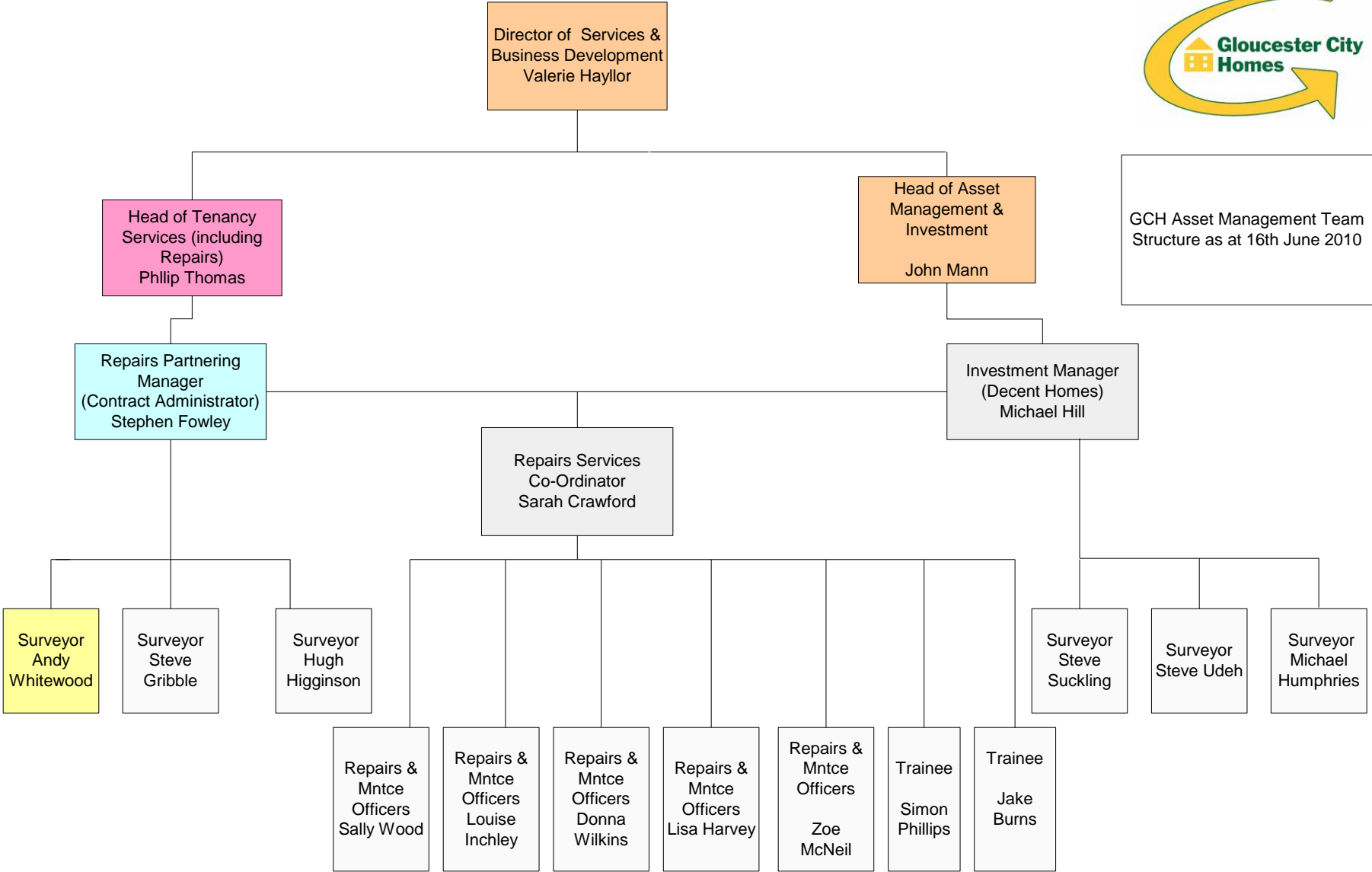
APPENDIX F Gloucester City Homes Organisational Structure



Gloucester City Homes staff structure
as at 9th June 2010



**Gloucester City Homes
Business Plan 2010-2015**



GCH Asset Management Team
Structure as at 16th June 2010

Committee Membership

