



## **Cartrefi Conwy hailed as shining example**

A housing association has been singled out for praise after blazing a trail with its £30 million improvement programme.

The tribute from Jocelyn Davies AM, the Welsh Assembly Government's Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration, came during a visit to Cartrefi Conwy.

After a meeting at Cartrefi Conwy's Colwyn Bay head office, Ms Davies, said she had been impressed by their enthusiasm and vision.

She added: "Their efforts show the investment that can be made and the real benefits of that investment for their tenants and for job creation and economic regeneration locally."

Ms Davies met with members of Cartrefi Conwy's board and senior management team to discuss the ambitious programme of improvements to former council properties in Conwy.

Cartrefi Conwy took over the housing stock of Conwy County Borough Council in September 2008.

They are on schedule to meet the Welsh Assembly Government's new housing quality standards by the end of 2012.

In all Cartrefi Conwy own 3,800 properties across Conwy county and the current programme of work involves, where necessary, internal refits including the installation of new bathrooms and kitchens and rewiring as well as new heating systems and doors and windows.

Ms Davies, who has promised to return to visit some of Cartrefi Conwy's housing estates, added: "They're on target to reach the Wales Housing Quality Standard by 2012 and they're one of the very few housing associations who are and that's something they can be proud of."

Cartrefi Conwy Chair Pam Lonie was delighted with the visit and said: "It was excellent. The Deputy Minister showed a real appreciation of the work that's going on and she has a shared vision of how we should go for further housing development in the future.

“It’s about social inclusion. It’s not just about building houses if you haven’t got the jobs for people and the environment they want to live in.”

Conwy County Borough Councillor Goronwy Edwards, the Cabinet Member for Community Development, said that Cartrefi Conwy’s takeover of the Council’s housing stock had worked very well.

He said: “It’s been a very good arrangement and the tenants seem to be very happy – we want to continue to work closely together in the future. Cartrefi Conwy are reaching their targets.

“Now we can look at areas of land where we can deliver more affordable housing and if we can work with Cartrefi Conwy we can put together some joint schemes.”

Cartrefi Conwy Chief Executive Andrew Bowden said: “It was great to get the Deputy Minister here. What we were keen to demonstrate to her was that we’re here to deliver and we wanted to make sure she went away with that message that our energies are being spent on delivering those housing quality standards and linking that with best practice in procurement and social inclusion.”

He added that Cartrefi Conwy had insisted in awarding contracts for the improvement work that there should be a commitment to using local labour and sourcing materials from local firms.

They had also involved local social inclusion co-operative Crest – to recycle the old materials from the renovated properties and that had been hugely successful: “Ninety-nine per cent of what is being taken out of the houses is being recycled and that’s a phenomenal success rate,” he said.

The partnership with Crest alone will provide up to 200 training placements for local people and the improvement programme will create apprenticeships for heating engineers, plumbers, plasterers and joiners.

One of many satisfied tenants is Kathy Black, of Ffordd Elisabeth, Llandudno, said: “I’m delighted with the work – they’ve done a very good job.

“We’ve had facilities to cook and wash and I’ve been really pleased with the contractors and I’ve written to say how good they’ve been. They’ve been nice and pleasant and polite and they’re worked really hard.”

Giovanni Braia, Tenant Liaison Officer, for main contractors G Purchase Ltd, said: “The job is going really well and everyone is getting on and the tenants seem really happy.

“We’re on schedule and in places we’re ahead of schedule which means we can move on smoothly without delaying the programme.”

Adrian Johnson, Cartrefi Conwy Business Liaison Partner, said that they were currently fitting some 120 doors a week and so far had installed over 1,000 while some 350 to 400 bathrooms and kitchens had already been put in. He added: "It's gone really well and it's been great that we've had a number of letters of appreciation from tenants."



**Pictured: Members of the Board and senior management team with Jocelyn Davies (centre of front row) at Cartrefi Conwy's Colwyn Bay Head Office.**