

FACT SHEET



ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

- Castle Vale Housing Action Trust (HAT) actively implemented the Government Greening Operations Programme – a Government initiative aimed at putting the environment at the heart of policy making.
- The HAT set up a number of environmental initiatives including an annual litter pick involving HAT staff and local schools, bulb planting and the purchasing of two push bikes for staff use.

PROGRESS TO DATE

HAT Green bikes

- As part of the Green Transport Plan, the HAT purchased two pushbikes for use by staff around the estate. This initiative aimed to reduce the number of short car journeys undertaken by staff thereby reducing pollution and contributing in a small way to improve the environment. The bikes have been in operation since September 1999 and over 30 staff used the bikes clocking up over 200 miles.

Eco-Schools (CVCET are working with all 5 schools on Castle Vale)

- The HAT supported two schools in Castle Vale to achieve Green Flags under the Eco Schools Award.

Eco-homes

- Construction of 11 houses using pre-fabrication to demonstrate efficiency in building procurement and energy saving. Foundation work began in June 2000 and by the following August, 11 houses were built in 11 days.

Wooden Window frames

- Refurbished houses are fitted with high performance softwood window frames which are environmentally friendly.

EMS (since known as the NEAT group)

- Working with Groundwork, the HAT introduced a cross directorate Environmental Management System (EMS) within the HAT and introduced an environmental strategy.

Project Wagtail

- An estate perimeter walkway/cycle route/bridle-way linking neighbourhood schools and shops. Now fully complete. This is part of the comprehensive transportation Master Plan for Castle Vale.

Raising awareness of environmental issues

- Numerous initiatives undertaken raising awareness of environmental issues including
 - annual litter picks by HAT staff and local schools
 - bulb planting by school children
 - Give away a tree day and Apple Day
 - Two energy efficient light bulbs given free to all Castle Vale residents
 - Poop Scoops to all dog owners
 - Have now successfully installed 3 underground recycling stations)
 - Leading on kerbside paper collection with CVCET, BCC and CVCHA
 - Leading on the Washable Nappy scheme in partnership with the CVCET, HAT and PCT

- Qualified Walk Leaders to work with CVCET, PCT and Castle Vale residents on the Walk 2000
- CVCET manage the Walking Bus scheme
- CVCET playing a key role in the abandoned cars work with police, Fire service, BCC, CVCHA & Community Wardens.

Environmental Trust

- The HAT supported residents in the establishment of the Castle Vale Community Environmental Trust and appointed three workers.

CONTACT

For information contact CVCET. Tel: 0121 749 7132, e-mail info@cvcet.org.uk, website www.cvcet.org.uk.

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ECO-HOMES SCHEME

WHAT IS IT?

- The Eco-homes scheme consists of 11 pre-fabricated houses built to demonstrate efficiency in building procurement and energy saving.
- Started on site June 2000 and completed February 2001.

DESCRIPTION

- The 'eco-homes' concept of developing energy-efficient houses was first developed in 1999 in partnership with Focus Housing Group and CVCHA to demonstrate the benefits of energy efficient design. The scheme was extended to include efficiency in building procurement ("Egan" Compliance – see below) and the site at Long Close Walk identified. The London based architectural firm, PCKO, was appointed by Focus.
- Planning permission for 4x2 bed, 5x3 bed and 2x4 bed houses was obtained in February 2000.
- Kingfisher Building Company was selected by Focus as a partner in the project on the basis of their track record of construction quality, cost efficiency and collaborative working methods.

Scheme Details

The scheme consists of 11 family houses for rent and exhibits the following features:

- "Advanced" timber frame construction, pre – fabricated off site, resulting in minimum wastage and optimum construction time.
- Centralised "service core" and non – load bearing partitions, enabling maximum flexibility in layout, both currently and in the future.
- Flexible design to enable orientation of rooms and windows to maximise solar gain.
- Approximately 10% increase in floor space (paid for by savings in capital cost and construction time) plus "tenant choice" features such as bay windows.
- Environmentally friendly / energy saving features such as:
 - The use of timber from a natural renewable source as the main construction material.
 - High levels of insulation associated with timber frame construction.
 - Recycling of waste water (e.g. from baths) for WC flushes.
 - Low capital WC cisterns reduces mains water usage.
 - Rainwater collection for garden use.
 - Maximisation of passive solar gain.

Funding

- The project was funded partly by the HAT on the basis of Housing Corporation TCI and grant rates with the balance being raised by Focus Housing Group. The HAT funding amounts to £360,550.

EGAN COMPLIANCE

- The government is committed to the achievement of continuous improvements in the efficiency of construction and building procurements, based on the recommendation of a report by Sir John Egan published in 1998. By the year 2003/4, all of the Housing Corporation's funding will be directed to Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) that are "Egan Compliant". In summary, Egan Compliance involves achieving the following year on year targets.
 - 10% reduction in capital cost
 - 10% reduction in construction time
 - 20% increase in predictability
 - 20% reduction in defects
 - 20% reduction in accidents
 - 10% increase in productivity
 - 10% increase in turnover and profit
- In the lead up to 2003/4, RSL's will be able to demonstrate their progress towards Egan Compliance by signing up to various organisational and project specific "proxies" e.g. the use of Key Performance indicators (KPI's) and membership of the Housing Forum, a government sponsored body charged with promoting Egan Compliance.
- The development at Long Close walk has been chosen by the Housing Forum as a demonstration Project i.e. it will be used to demonstrate to other social housing providers how the Egan targets can be achieved. Regular meetings are held by the Housing Forum to discuss progress on demonstration projects.
- Contract administrators for the scheme is maintained and fed into the industry's K.P.I's. It is by comparing data from different projects that the Housing Forum can measure the success of a scheme in terms of Egan compliance.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Feedback following handover:** Focus Housing Group sent out client satisfaction questionnaires to occupants to gain feedback on their new houses. Particular attention was paid to comments relating to 'eco' design features. Fuel bills were compared to look at the fuel efficiency of the homes. Positive feedback from the residents will be utilised in the design of new schemes where possible.
- The scheme was selected as a Housing Forum demonstration project and in October 2002 won the 'Urban Regeneration' category in the 27th Birmingham Post and Mail Design Awards.

CONTACT

For more information please contact the Community Regeneration Partnership on 0121 523 1017, mobile 0777 185 0033, e-mail enquiries@crp-ltd.co.uk, website www.crp-ltd.co.uk.