



**Castle Vale Community Housing Association, The Sanctuary, Tangmere Drive, Castle Vale,
Birmingham B35 7BX • Website: www.cvcha.org.uk**

In 1994, Castle Vale Housing Action Trust asked several local Housing Associations for their ideas on providing new homes at Castle Vale. Focus and Sanctuary were selected because they recommended building the new homes and then getting the community to manage them. Residents and staff of the HAT and the housing associations worked together to decide the best type of organisation to set up. It was agreed that a “Community Housing Association” would be the best model to give local people effective control of the new homes.

Residents have been involved at every stage of the development of CVCHA. Prospective tenants who lived in the high rise flats and maisonettes due to be demolished and replaced with new CVCHA homes spent Saturday mornings working with officers to write the key policies that would be used to deliver services to CVCHA tenants. A number of the prospective tenants are now experienced board members. This has meant that CVCHA don't just consult residents, but that local people have been in control.

Since the first homes were completed and new tenants moved in, residents have been involved in a number of ways to make sure services are delivered in a way residents want them to be. This has included surveys, focus group meetings and discussions with community groups. Most notably a local office on the estate was set up and staff were employed as a direct result of residents' involvement in service delivery.

CVCHA is a “community led housing association”, with a

Board comprising of 15 voluntary members, eight of whom are local tenants and residents of Castle Vale. During 2001, CVCHA became one of the few fully independent Housing Associations in England with a majority of residents on the Board, and in September 2002 the Board elected it's first tenant Chairperson, this brought true control to local people.

In October 2003, over 1400 HAT tenants and leaseholders were balloted for their choice of future landlord once the HAT had finished its' work, the choice being a return to the Local Authority or to join CVCHA. Tenants voted overwhelmingly for CVCHA to become their landlord with only 19 properties choosing to return to the Council. This endorsed the work CVCHA had been doing with the community of Castle Vale since 1997. CVCHA currently has 2400 tenanted and 300 leasehold properties

CVCHA is a member of Castle Vale Neighbourhood Partnership Board and provides services for other organisations such as Castle Vale Community Care Partnership and the Environmental Trust, works in Partnership with Merlin Venture and supports an estate wide network of resident and community groups

Castle Vale's Community Safety Strategy is also delivered by CVCHA who work in partnership with the local Police, Youth Offending Service, Youth Inclusion Support Panel and the Probation Service; and employs a team of Community Wardens.

Community Development Unit

The Community Development Unit CDU was established during 2004 and key areas of activity were developed through investigating the local market and assessing the need. Projects are developed and delivered in partnership with a number of agencies and community groups. The 5 project areas for the CDU are:

Health

The unit focuses upon community health projects which compliment the wider health agenda, working closely with Castle Vale Community Care Partnership, Primary Care Trust, schools, Birmingham City Council, community groups and the Neighbourhood Partnership Board. Non-medical health initiatives are developed to reflect the local and regional need. Projects include: sexual health clinic for young people, teenage pregnancy support group, parenting courses, educational road-shows regarding healthy lifestyles, smoking cessation, projects for older people such as Extend and tea-dances.

Environment

Projects are undertaken in partnership with Castle Vale Community Environmental Trust to raise awareness of environmental issues and to engage the community. Projects include: Walk 2k, Community garden, washable nappies scheme.

Youth

Working closely with Birmingham City Council, the Community Safety Team and Youth Offending Service to provide a comprehensive inclusive youth activities programme, the range of work is both to support young people in increasing their aspirations and target those excluded from mainstream activities. Projects include: youth club, youth council, inter-generational activities, school holiday events, and an IT facility.

The Sanctuary

The Sanctuary is a community building that houses a number of organisations who provide services to support the social and health care of local people. Services include: Citizens Advice Bureau, Victim Support, Home Start and Jaffray Care, Society. Leisure and social activities also take place including karate, a community café, Extend and dance

classes; and the facility houses a community and meeting room for hire.

Guide Neighbourhoods

The unit is responsible for delivering the Guide Neighbourhoods programme in partnership with residents and other agencies.

The CDU has not only developed and delivered projects but also supports a variety of organisations. Partnerships have been established which have enabled agencies to focus upon core activities through the provision of administration and/or management support.

Contact Details

For more information regarding our Guide Neighbourhood Programme or to arrange a visit please contact:

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