



Press release

For immediate release

16 January 2009

Island Homes takes a fresh approach to resident involvement

Following the Audit Commission's recent inspection of Island Homes HA, the association is prioritising resident involvement by taking a fresh, hands on approach to ensure that residents of all ages and backgrounds feel included in the local community and have the opportunity to get involved with the association's work.

Commenting on the new approach, Catherine Kyne, Interim Managing Director at Island Homes said: "A key priority for us moving forward is to involve residents to a greater extent in the work of Island Homes. We see 2009 as a new chapter and we hope to be able to work more closely with the Island's four Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) as well as local community groups. By working together in partnership we will achieve greater results and bring greater benefits to all living and working on the estates at Island Homes."

The new strategy was launched on 5 December with an event to mark the third anniversary of Island Homes. The afternoon's celebrations provided the opportunity for residents to meet neighbours, TRA representatives and staff. Staff worked closely with the Island's four TRAs to organise the day and promote it to residents. Entertainment, refreshments and children's activities were provided throughout the afternoon at the Island Homes offices as well as at the Alpha Grove and St Johns Community Centres.

The event was a huge success with over 100 residents attending as well as members of the Island Homes Board and other local stakeholders. Commenting on the day's event's, a resident said: "It is nice to meet staff I wouldn't ordinarily meet and to see their work environment." Another resident added: "It is great to see different groups and organisations from the local community represented and working together."

Representatives from Disability and Information and Training Opportunities (DITO), the Safer Neighbourhood Team, the four TRAs and the Island's Bengali Welfare Organisation took part in the day's activities as well as volunteers from the George Green School.

Another example of the new approach was a dinner event, organised by the Island's Bengali Welfare organisation's ALO Forum*. Prior to the event residents were encouraged to provide feedback on the relationship between residents and staff at Island Homes, the obstacles that have prevented them from participating in the past and any suggestions for improvement. The findings were then presented to staff at the event.

Held at Clifton Curry House on the Isle of Dogs on 18 December, the event was a huge success with over 45 members of staff in attendance as well as local stakeholders, including the Mayor of Tower Hamlets. Feedback on this approach from both residents and staff was very positive and all feedback and suggestions received will be fed into the association's service improvement plans for the coming months.

Catherine Kyne, Interim Managing Director at Island Homes, said: "Initiatives of this kind are invaluable in helping us engage with isolated communities on the Island. Feedback from a diverse range of residents is essential for us to assess the performance of our services and what improvements we need to make."

Ends

For more information please contact Fiona Crook at One Housing Group on 020 7428 4107 or email: fcrook@onehousinggroup.co.uk

Notes to Editors

* ALO means light in Bengali and the Bengali Welfare Organisation's ALO Forum was named after this to reflect its unique nature. The forum was set up as a consultation group to work on a variety of locally based projects. It has an informal structure and provides anonymity to its members. Over the coming year the ALO Forum will be undertaking a range of projects including themes based around communication, mutual understanding and respect, all of which were areas of weakness raised by residents and staff.

One Housing Group currently manages over 12,000 homes in 25 local authorities across London and the Home Counties, with over 2,700 homes in the development pipeline. These include shared ownership schemes; intermediate rent homes for key workers, affordable rented homes and homes for outright sale. All new schemes look at the need for balanced communities and therefore include a mixture of tenures and uses.

Community Housing Association, Island Homes Housing Association and Toynbee Housing Association joined to form One Housing Group in September 2007.

For more information visit www.onehousinggroup.co.uk