



**GSA**

PARTNER NEWS

**SPRING 2024**





# REPORTING BACK



## Welcome to the Spring edition of our GreenSquareAccord partner update.

We want to continue to share news of our progress, challenges and opportunities with our most important partners. In this edition you can get an insight into:

- ◆ Who is taking over the reins from Robin Bailey as our Board Chair.
- ◆ Why we are backing Homes For South West's call for the next UK government to kickstart economic growth by building new affordable homes across Devon, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Dorset.
- ◆ How we're performing through our performance infographic, entitled 'How We're Doing', which shows our performance for the three most important areas of our landlord service, based on what our customers have told us.
- ◆ How we're investing in new, high quality and affordable homes across our localities.

We want this update to be useful for you and reflect what you want to know, so please take a few minutes to fill out the short survey at the end.

Thank you for being a valued partner of GSA.

Kind regards,

**Ruth Cooke** Chief Executive



*Ruth discusses construction progress at phase 2 of our Springvale development in Bilston with local MP Pat McFadden. Read more on p8.*



# MEASURING

# SUCCESS

**We report on key aspects of our performance each month which we share with colleagues, customers and stakeholders.**

Our *how we're doing* monthly performance infographic shows our performance for the three most important areas of customer service for our landlord service, based on what our customers have told us:

- ◆ Contact centre
- ◆ Repairs
- ◆ Complaints resolution

It includes customer satisfaction and our performance against aspects of our service customers have said make a difference to whether they have a good or poor experience.

Following feedback from our customers, we've also created our [performance web pages](#) which together with our performance infographic now include our key performance indicators (KPI's) and trends for:

## Contact centre

- ◆ Customer satisfaction
- ◆ Average call waiting time
- ◆ Average speed of answer to an email

## Repairs

- ◆ Customer satisfaction
- ◆ Fixed right first time
- ◆ Routine repairs completed within 28 days

## Complaints resolution

- ◆ Customer satisfaction
- ◆ Responded to within 10 days

See our latest performance infographic on the next page





## Customer Contact Centre

Customer satisfaction: **80%**



Calls answered within two minutes: **54%**



Calls received

**20,335**



Average call waiting time

**06 27**

MINUTES SECONDS



Emails received



**6,963**



Average speed of answer to email



**3 days**



## Repairs

Customer satisfaction: **90%**



Fixed right first time: **90%**



Repairs reported



**5 6 8 9**



Repairs completed



**5,733**



Emergency repairs completed within 24 hours: **100%**



Routine repairs completed within 28 days: **82%**



## Complaints

Customer satisfaction: **46%**



6%

Formal complaints



Responded to within ten days: **95%**



2%

### Top 3 reasons for complaints

Delays/service failures: **37%**



7%

Communication / information: **40%**



4%

Incomplete action: **20%**



5%

### Resolution

Upheld: **80%**



Partially upheld: **13%**



Not upheld: **7%**





## Colin Dennis announced as new Board Chair

Following a thorough recruitment process, we have appointed a new Chair to lead our Board.

Robin Bailey has stepped down as Board Chair following the successful completion of a three-year term at the end of March and we're delighted that **Colin Dennis** is now our Board Chair.

With decades of experience of working within the financial sector to lead culture change and business units alongside a nine-year stint as Board Chair of fellow housing association Citizen, Colin brings a wealth of knowledge to his new role.

Previously Colin has also taken on several non-executive director and Chair roles, predominantly in the social housing and health sectors, and has a track record of helping to strengthen financial and operational performance to benefit service users.

Colin has an initial three-year term as Board Chair leading our Board's oversight of the organisation, working with our Chief Executive and wider Executive Management Team to deliver first class services to our customers.

[> Read more about our Board](#)



## ROYAL VISIT

*Ben Taylor, our Director of Homes and Communities, meeting Her Majesty Queen Camilla at Jenni's House*

On Monday 22 January, Swindon Domestic Abuse Support Service (SDASS) welcomed Her Majesty Queen Camilla on a visit to the town's refuge, where she hailed the charity as "something very special".

The visit marks the start of the charity's 50th anniversary year and highlights the life-saving work it does through the refuge and in the community to support women, men and children. The Queen also officially unveiled the new name of the refuge building, Jenni's House, chosen by current residents in honour of the charity's founder, Jenni Manners.

Jenni's House, which was constructed by GSA, is one of the first purpose-built refuges in the UK and provides a safe home for up to 22 women and their children who are fleeing domestic abuse. We manage Jenni's House on behalf of SDASS.

During her visit, Her Majesty was introduced to the charity's staff and volunteers, as well as key partners and stakeholders including **Ben Taylor**, our Director of Homes and Communities who represented GSA at the event.

Her Majesty also met with women and their children who are residents at Jenni's House, speaking to them about their experiences and the support they've received to start rebuilding their lives after suffering domestic abuse.

[> Read more](#)



# INVESTING IN OUR EXISTING HOMES



*Some of our homes at Westcroft have received energy efficiency upgrades*

## Decarbonisation progress

In March last year, we announced that we had secured government funding to help improve the energy efficiency of our existing homes following a successful bid to the Social Homes Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF).

To date, we have upgraded 59 of our customers' homes at a housing scheme in Chippenham and in two locations near Telford.

We have formed a new Decarbonisation Project Team to coordinate the works which are being supported by the SHDF.

So far, the Decarbonisation Team have:

- ◆ Installed air-source heat pumps, new windows and external doors, solar panels, whole house ventilation and loft insulation for 39 bungalows in Westcroft in Chippenham.
- ◆ Undertaken various improvement works, including fitting air-source heat pumps at 20 homes on Brandywell Road and Blithe Close in Broseley, Shropshire.

We applied to the SHDF in a joint bid alongside the six other housing associations which form the Matrix Housing Partnership.

[> Read more](#)





# CALLING FOR CHANGE

## We are backing the call on the next Government to kickstart economic growth in the South West.

Homes for the South West (H4SW), a leading group of 12 housing associations including GSA, has warned that a chronic shortage of housing and lack of connectivity is holding the region back.

The group, whose members own more than 250,000 homes and house half a million people, is calling on the next Government to take urgent action to address this by driving investment and the building of new homes across the South West.

The investment the region needs could be kickstarted if the Government were to provide a clear 5–10-year pipeline of capital spending projects in the South West. This would give certainty to companies and contractors across the built environment, allowing them to invest in technology and the training of a new generation of skilled workers to build the homes the region needs.

The call is made in H2SW's manifesto, titled "Building the Affordable Homes the South West Needs".

Our Chief Executive Ruth Cooke, who sits on the H4SW board said: "Everyone deserves a safe, quality, affordable home and we need a long-term plan to tackle the profound housing crisis in the South West. We fully support the recommendations made in the Homes for South West manifesto and we're committed to playing our part."

[> Find out more about the Homes for South West manifesto](#)

# FIRE SAFETY COMMS

## All customers who live in our shared buildings have received crucial safety messages to ensure we meet new requirements under the Building Safety Act.

The communication, shared with 18,000 customers in total, explains the evacuation procedure in the unlikely event there is a fire in their building and provides other important fire safety information. Our Fire Safety team and Communications team have worked together on the project which has seen us create:

- ◆ A high-quality tailored, mailed personalised booklet explaining the evacuation procedure in their building with QR code/links to the new fire safety section of our website.
- ◆ A new fire safety section on our website with the ability to access the information using translation and other accessibility tools.
- ◆ Engaging animations for each evacuation policy with the ability to use translated captions.
- ◆ A new search facility so customers can easily find the relevant evacuation procedure for their building on our website.

Around 400 customers living in our high-rise buildings were the first to receive the information in late November 2023. We monitored the process of distributing the communication to this group to allow us to learn any lessons before sending out the information to larger customer groups.

[> Watch our 'Stay Put' animation](#)

[> Watch our 'Get Out' animation](#)



# BUILDING NEWS

## Matrix Housing Partnership celebrates 2000th home with Homes England

The Matrix Housing Partnership, a consortium of social landlords led by GSA, is celebrating the start on site at our Swan Lane development, West Bromwich, which will deliver the 2000th home through our strategic partnership with Homes England.

Homes England, a non-departmental public body which funds new affordable housing, awarded the Matrix Housing Partnership £84.5million in 2018 to support the delivery of 2,124 social and affordable homes across the Midlands and South West.

The Matrix Housing Partnership comprises of GSA, Black Country Housing Group, Citizen Housing Group, Pioneer Housing and Community Group, Rooftop Housing Association and Trident Housing Association.

In October 2021, the Matrix Housing Partnership also secured £185m from the UK Government's Affordable Homes Programme to support a further 2,167 affordable homes which will start before April 2026.

The Swan Lane development, which is being built by MORRO Partnerships on our behalf, will provide 147 homes for affordable and social rent. The development will meet a variety of local housing need by providing 41 two and 24 three-bedroom houses and 17 one and 65 two bed apartments.

The new homes at Swan Lane will be constructed using prefabricated open-panel timber frames supplied by LoCaL Homes – our award winning, low carbon manufacturing facility based in Walsall.

Construction work has now commenced at Swan Lane which marks the 2000th housing start for the Matrix Housing Partnership since attaining strategic partnership status from Homes England in 2018.

Sandwell Council are a key partner on the Swan Lane development who assisted with a successful bid for a £3.2million grant from the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership to support the delivery of the scheme.

[> Read more](#)



Front Row L-R: Ruth Ryan, Assistant Director of Affordable Housing Delivery (Homes England), Cllr Peter Hughes Cabinet Member for Regeneration and WMCA (Sandwell Council) and Ruth Cooke, Chair of the Matrix Housing Partnership and Chief Executive of GSA. Backrow: Representatives from LoCaL Homes, the Matrix Housing Partnership and MORRO Partnerships.



GSA colleagues, Tina and Barbara, welcome customer Tony Birrell into his new home.



Our Chief Executive, Ruth Cooke, discusses construction progress at phase two of our Springvale development in Bilston with local MP Pat McFadden and City of Wolverhampton Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Steve Evans.

## Handing over homes to our customers in Telford

With construction work complete at our Lightmoor Road development in Little Dawley, Telford, the final handovers have now taken place.

Working with MORRO Partnerships, LoCaL Homes and Telford and Wrekin Council we have delivered 49 houses and 3 bungalows all available for an affordable rent. The development contains two and three-bedroom bungalows alongside two and three-bedroom houses, catering to a variety of local housing need.

The new development is built on a four-and-a-half-acre plot where a concrete works once stood.

Our new homes on Lightmoor Road have been constructed using prefabricated open-panel timber frames supplied by LoCaL Homes - an award winning, low carbon manufacturing facility based in Walsall.

Tony Birrell, one of our customers who recently moved into a bungalow in Chapel Green which is part of the Lightmoor Road development, said: "I have been in my new home for a few weeks now. It is really suited to my needs, and I love the fact I am the first person to live here."

The award-winning Telford Town Park and all the amenities of Telford are less than ten minutes by car from our new homes on Lightmoor Road.

[> Read more](#)

## Construction starts at Springvale Sports & Social Club, Bilston

Construction has commenced on 57 new, energy efficient affordable homes, transforming the now demolished Springvale Sports and Social Club on Millfields Road, Bilston.

Our new homes are comprised of one and two-bedroom flats all of which will be available for an affordable rent.

Dating back to 1939, the Springvale Sports and Social Club was partly built using funds raised by employees at a nearby ironworks. The former clubhouse has given its name to our new development.

In February our Springvale development was visited by local MP Pat McFadden who represents Wolverhampton South East. Commenting on the progress made to date, he said: "This site has a special place in local hearts because it was the former home of the Springvale social club. It's great to see it being reborn with new housing.

I look forward to the development progressing and the homes being completed later in the year."

The new homes on Millfields Road are conveniently located with a supermarket, pubs and all the amenities of Bilston high street less than half a mile away. Our Springvale customers are well connected by public transport having just ten minutes to walk to get to The Crescent Metro Stop and with bus services running directly outside the development.

The homes are being constructed using sustainable timber frames manufactured and supplied by our LoCaL Homes facility in Walsall. A fabric first approach has been taken to the design of the apartments which will help customers save money on their heating bills. LoCaL Homes also helped deliver the first stage of the development.

[> Read more](#)



## Redditch regeneration

At the start of the year the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) sent a delegation of civil servants to visit some of our housing schemes near Redditch City Centre.

The purpose of the visit was to see how we're leading on the regeneration efforts near Redditch Train station with an investment of £35million which will see 200 high quality new social homes built. The delegation was taken on a guided tour of:

- ◆ Passingham Place which is a recently completed scheme providing 40 one and two bedroom apartments for social rent
- ◆ Our innovative virtually plastic-free homes at the CHARM building comprising 12 one-bed apartments
- ◆ Victoria Works which, once complete, will provide 75 new affordable homes.

The DLUHC visit was also a fact-finding mission, for the Department, to discover more about community-led housing projects and hear firsthand about how housing cooperatives function.

During the discussion the delighted representatives from the cooperatives were able to share insights based on their experiences of securing sites for development, engaging with the local community to get support for housing schemes and then managing homes through a cooperative model.

[> Read more](#)

## Lichfield MP visits Bowbrook

In February, the long-serving MP for Lichfield, Michael Fabricant, visited one of our Dementia Centres of Excellence.

The purpose of the visit was for Michael Fabricant MP to find out more about the services provided at Bowbrook and the experiences of our customers and colleagues at the scheme.

The Lichfield MP, whose constituency includes Fradley where Bowbrook is located, kicked off his visit to the Dementia Centre of Excellence with a guided tour of the scheme accompanied by **Lucie Willday** our Registered Manager at Bowbrook. Michael was able to meet some of our customers at the scheme and see first-hand the high quality facilities they are able to make use of.

Following the tour, Michael enjoyed some light refreshments for elevenses and had an in-depth discussion regarding the culture at Bowbrook with Lucie and other colleagues.

The local MP also heard about challenges concerning recruitment both at Bowbrook and in the wider care sector.

[> Read more](#)

## Street's ahead at LoCaL Homes

Our award-winning LoCaL Homes advanced offsite housing manufacturing facility in Walsall recently received a high-profile visit from a trio of Conservative Party politicians.

Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street CBE, Cllr Adrian Andrew, Deputy Leader of Walsall Council, Aldridge-Brownhills MP Wendy Morton and their staff were given a tour around our LoCaL Homes factory to learn more about modern methods of construction (MMC) and about the products which LoCaL Homes manufacture.

Sales and Partnership Manager at LoCaL Homes Mike Doolan chaired a discussion with the visiting delegation around the future of closed panel timber frames and the opportunities and barriers in housebuilding using MMC.

The visit comes ahead of the introduction of the Future Homes Standard – a set of rules which will ensure that new homes built from 2025 produce 75-80% less carbon emissions. LoCaL Homes is already manufacturing its Eco-200 timber frame panels for a number of developments, helping GSA, other housing associations and contractors across the country to achieve the standard ahead of time.

[> Read more](#)





# OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We strive to provide the best service we can, but we recognise sometimes things go wrong. When this happens, we will do everything we can to resolve the issue.

We have a dedicated customer contact centre and complaints team. If a constituent or member of your community contacts you about issues with our services, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us:

**Call** 0300 111 7000

**Email** [info@greensquareaccord.co.uk](mailto:info@greensquareaccord.co.uk)

**Visit** [greensquareaccord.co.uk](https://www.greensquareaccord.co.uk)

**Connect** [linkedin.com/company/greensquareaccord](https://www.linkedin.com/company/greensquareaccord)

**Like** [facebook.com/greensquareaccord](https://www.facebook.com/greensquareaccord)

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We want future editions of this update to reflect what you would like to see. Please take this **short survey** to help us make sure they do.

