

“The Independent Judging Panel is satisfied that APH provides an exceptionally high quality of service to your users. This is an award not easily won, and this is a tribute to your organisation.”

Independent Chartermark Assessor

## ANNUAL REPORT 2001-02

# our chartermark

One of our proudest achievements at Ashton Pioneer Homes has been our Chartermark Award.

This is awarded on behalf of the Government's Cabinet Office to recognise "excellence in public service." These awards are not given out lightly; 40 % of those who apply are unsuccessful.

We "earned" the award by demonstrating to an independent assessor that we set high standards, and delivered these to customers. We then monitored them and made improvements where possible.

The assessor wanted to see written evidence of how we did this and he also visited us for a day to see for himself by talking with staff, tenants and other partner organisations.

This annual report is built around a number of comments made by the Inspector with examples of why he said them.

Whilst we are delighted with the award and the comments, we know that there is always room for improvement and that at times our standards can slip.

We are determined to improve and need your feedback to help us. Please take advantage of the opportunities available through questionnaires, the suggestion box or even simpler a chat with any of our staff.



Awarded for excellence

## chair's review

From Councillor Warren Bray



“Ashton Pioneer Homes remains firmly on course to deliver...”

The last year has been another hectic one at Ashton Pioneer Homes. We have continued to carry out the promises we made at ballot in 1998. These promises have mainly been to improve tenant's homes and to keep rent increases low.

We realise that it's not just improved homes that will make our estates a better place to live. We have therefore been busy working with a wide range of partners to help regenerate the area. Our staffs have contributed to the Ashton Renewal Partnership who together have been trying to improve job and training opportunities. We have worked with the Police in trying to reduce crime on the estates and with Tameside Council's crime & disorder team to tackle anti-social behaviour.

None of this would be possible, but for the hard work of our dedicated and enthusiastic staff and I would like to thank them for their efforts and high achievements that we have now come to expect.

I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Board for their support during the year in helping to guide the future direction of the Company.

The Company's financial position remains healthy and for the third year running we have made a smaller financial loss than we budgeted for.

Ashton Pioneer Homes remains firmly on course to deliver our original promise of making the West Park, Richmond Park and Victoria St. estates a better place to live.



APH Chair: Councillor Warren Bray

“You consult users about proposed improvements.”

Independent Chartermark Assessor

Our last improvements to the inside of tenants' homes started during the year- John Southworth Builders Ltd have been installing new kitchens and bathrooms and rewiring where necessary in the last 240 homes. We will have improved all of our properties within 4 years of transfer rather than the 5 originally promised. As usual we have provided as much choice as possible over tiling and unit colours and layouts.

We have also consulted widely on our environmental improvement contract, which represents the final building works. We know that security is a major concern and that many people felt that the paths and carparks around the estates were in urgent need of improvement. The finalised plans directly address these concerns whilst ensuring a high quality feel to the external areas. Further consultations on the final plans are still to be held.

One of the best examples of how consultation has influenced our improvements has been with the opening during the year of the West Park Play Area.

The tenants Association: RAWTARA, have worked tremendously hard with Action Factory and St Peter's Primary School to design the playground and artwork around a canal theme. RAWTARA have also improved the look of the area and make it more interesting, by organising and installing a large, colourful mosaic on the wall of the substation on West Park.



“You provide services in a user friendly way and in a warm and welcoming environment.”

Independent Chartermark Assessor

We want people to be easily able to rent a home from us with a minimum of fuss. Once they become a tenant they should be able to receive our services in ways they want.

We have vastly improved our part of Katherine St and by building next to the newsagent we have extended our influence beyond our traditional estate boundaries.

During the year we finished building 18 new family houses on Katherine Street. As all our homes are available to the whole community, we wanted to make sure that everyone had a chance to rent one. This included many people in the Holy Trinity area who needed large, good quality homes. We made an effort to give everyone a chance by translating our advertising signboard and leaflets into three languages. We then delivered leaflets to all homes in Holy Trinity and advertised in local shops.

As the houses were almost finished we organised an open day for anyone that was interested to look inside, whether they wanted to rent one or not.

The result of this "user friendly approach" has been a successful new development. Katherine St represents a good example of a mixed community, all of whom needed large family housing, living together peacefully.



## working for you

“Your staff are enthusiastic and are keen to provide an exceptionally high quality of service to your users.”

Independent Chartermark Assessor

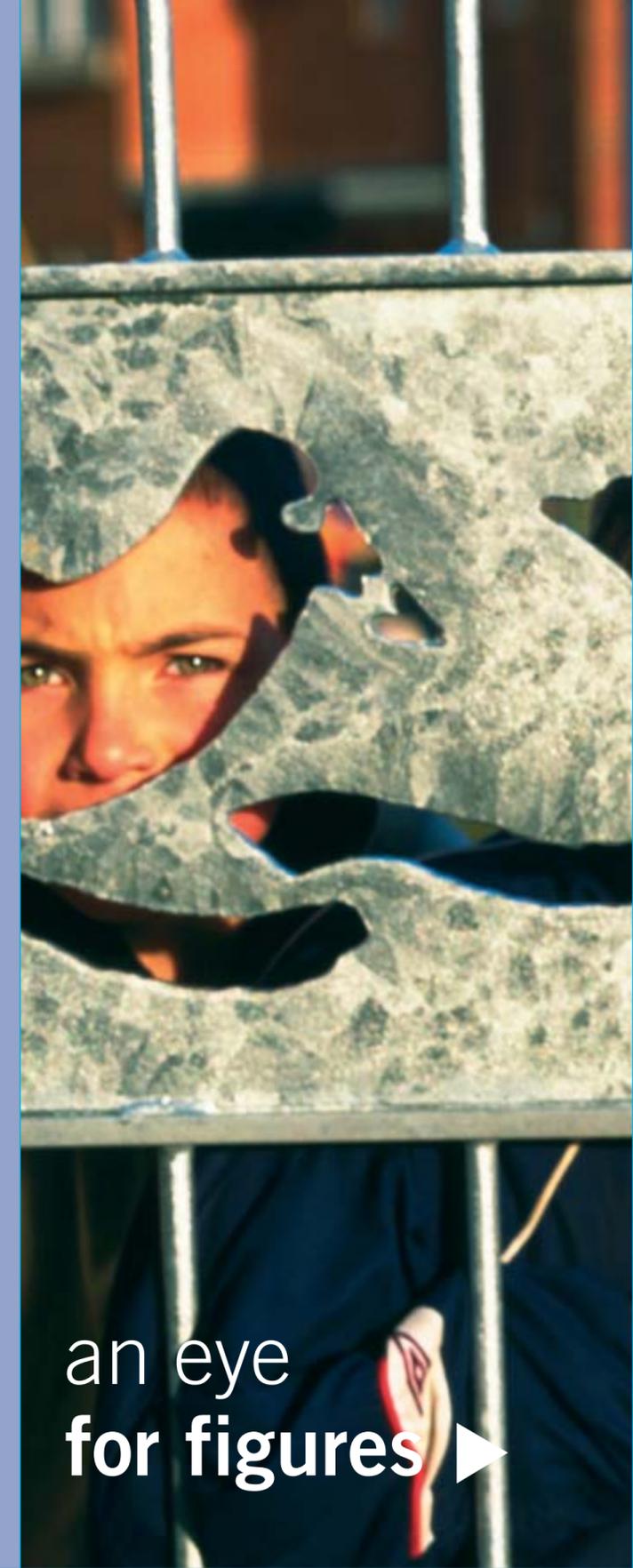
The key to us delivering quality services is our staff. We continue to train our staff in new ways of working; for example new computerised rent receipting and race awareness. If they are not meeting your needs than please tell us -we always want to improve.

Our newest team; our Housing Services Assistants have made a big impact during the year. They are responsible for monitoring the CCTV cameras and providing cleaning services to the multi storey blocks. They are contactable 24 hours a day and have assisted many tenants, especially with security issues, often outside office hours.

As they drive around our estates in their van they provide a welcome security presence. Information they have collected has been used to assist the police in making a number of arrests.



an eye  
for figures ▶





every new year



## Board members in 2001-02

Name	Age	Date of appointment	Resignation date & reason
Warren Bray	51	02/07/97	
Nayan Joshi	34	13/12/01	
Dorothy Parry	62	02/07/97	
Khalil Rehman	31	12/04/01	
Brian Lees	64	07/03/00	
Robert Wheeler	48	13/12/01	
Katherine Forster	38	30/07/97	
Paul Burns	32	16/09/99	
Daniel Craig	49	09/06/97	
Bill McAulay	48	12/04/01	
Kathleen Higginbottom	72	13/12/01	
Joy Poulter	60	09/12/99	
Frank Stevens	62	09/05/00	
Manjula Misry	52	11/12/00	
Linda Fletcher	49	11/12/00	
William Harrison	51	02/07/97	
Alison Hartney	42	09/12/99	

## The Management Team



**Ian Ankers** Director of Housing Services  
**Tim Pinder** Chief Executive  
**John Auty** Director of Finance

## the year's performance

“You benchmark your services against other like organisations nationally and are able to demonstrate very favourable results.”

Independent Chartermark Assessor

Lettings	Total Lettings - 250	73	74
Ethnic Minority Lettings - 15.6%	Transfers - 4%		
Nominations from TfHGs - 50%	Waiting List - 46%		
Victoria Street (Newbuild)	11	18	29
Katherine Street (Newbuild)	18	29	45
West Park (Maisonettes)	9	9	9
Richmond Park (Maisonettes)	9	9	9
West Park (Maisonettes)	9	9	9
Richmond Park (Maisonettes)	9	9	9
West Park (Maisonettes)	9	9	9
Richmond Park (Maisonettes)	9	9	9

## “You are able to demonstrate very favourable results”

Independent Chartermark Assessor

**Income and Expenditure - Year ended 31 March 2002**  
 (Where brackets appear in these accounts they mean that the figures in them are minus)

	2002 £ thousands	2001 £ thousands
Turnover (money we get from rent & grants)	2,930	2,845
Operating Costs (money we spend on providing services)	(3,493)	(4,255)
Operating Deficit (our loss for the year)	(563)	(1,410)
Interest we got on our cash	92	124
Interest Payable (on our loan from the Nationwide)	(418)	(140)
Deficit for the Year (amount needed to break even, which is less than the 1,211 we predicted)	(889)	(1,426)
Transfer to Revenue Reserve (top up from savings)	(899)	(1,426)

**Balance Sheet - Year ended 31 March 2002**  
 (Where brackets appear in these accounts they mean that the figures in them are minus)

	2002 £ thousands	2001 £ thousands
Fixed Assets		
Costs this year of new houses	5,714	4,136
Minus Government grants	(2,183)	(1,980)
Other Fixed Assets (offices & equipment)	3,531	2,156
Current Assets	121	102
Debtors (money owed to us)	132	160
Cash at Bank and In Hand (money held in bank)	1,536	1,715
Creditors: Due within one year (money we owe to others)	(1,436)	(2,910)
Net Current Assets (readily available money)	232	(1,035)
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	3,884	1,223
What the company is worth after paying its debts		
Financed By:		
Creditors: Due after one year (grants still to come)	137	137
Long Term Loans (from Nationwide Building Society)	7,150	3,600
Revenue Reserves (money spent now but not earned)	(3,403)	(2,514)
	3,884	1,223

## Net Rents

This table shows net rents i.e. without service charges for various landlords with homes to rent in Ashton at 31st March 2001 (as supplied by the Housing Corporation)

	A.P.H	New Charter North	West Pennine	Sanctuary
1 BED	£46.42	£44.88	£41.23	£52.72
2 BED	£48.32	£46.00	£50.41	£46.72
3 BED	£54.26	£46.07	£56.08	£NA
4 BED	£54.65	£49.37	£75.36	£NA

Total Rents we charge: £2,199,761 Rents Arrears: £183,109 (7.1%)



## The small print

Bankers THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK plc  
 Funders THE NATIONWIDE BUILDING SOCIETY  
 Solicitors TROWERS AND HAMLINS  
 Auditors MITCHELL CHARLESWORTH  
 Internal Auditors DELOITTE AND TOUCHE  
 Development Consultant PAUL HIGH ASSOCIATES  
 Designers FAITH CREATIVE

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 Margaret House, Margaret Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL16 7TH  
 T 0161 343 8128 F 0161 343 6420 E ap@ashtonpioneerhomes.co.uk

A.P.H is a company limited by guarantee without share capital. Companies House: 33839655 Housing Corporation: 04199

## Complaints

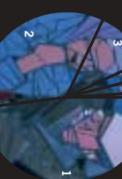
This year we made complaining easier. The more informal complaints we get the better. That way we know what we need to change. So instead of 4 complaints last year we got 59 this year. All of these were sorted out at the first stage in our procedure.

The type of complaints we got were:

Complaint Type	Number
Housing Applications	3
Neighbour complaints	13
Repair contractors	17
Improvement contractors	15
Blocked access	1
Car parking	1
Vermitt	1
Cleaning	4
Rent account	3
Tenancy enforcement	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>

## Where the money comes from....

**Income - 2002**  
 Total = £5,650.0



- Nationwide Loan 48% = £3,150.0
- Property Rents 34% = £2,202.9
- D.L.E.R. Grants 11% = £650.6
- Other Grants 3% = £206.6
- Social Housing Grant 3% = £218.0
- Interest Received 1% = £91.9

**Expenditure - 2002**  
 Total = £5,953.5



- Housing Management 6% = £384.0
- Services 8% = £476.7
- Maintenance 10% = £510.0
- Catch Up Repairs 33% = £1,963.7
- New Development 32% = £1,890.6
- Interest Paid 7% = £418.1
- Void & Arrears 4% = £210.4

	2002	2001	Rents We Charge	Rents Arrears	%
	£2,202,888	£1,951,207	£173,613	7,88%	8.25%