



PRESS RELEASE

NORTH DEVON HOMES LTD

Date: 25th September 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Devon Homes' customers benefit from Housing Procurement Club that wins National Award

Advantage South West's (ASW) procurement club, made up of 15 Housing Associations and Local Authorities, has won the 'Best Purchasing Initiative by a Smaller Organisation' at the prestigious Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply (CIPS) annual awards 2009.

Local Barnstaple business, North Devon Homes, is a founder member of the club, and has worked since its inception to build the successful approach that took it to victory, alongside blue chip companies such as Sainsbury, Axa Uk, CocaCola and Credit Suisse. The club has delivered savings and other value for money improvements which each individual member on its own could not have achieved. This has resulted in better products for customers, and the ability to undertake more improvements as budgets allow.

Neil Biddiscombe, Procurement Manager for ASW, who collected the award during the ceremony held at the Grosvenor Hotel in London, said "This award is testament to the commitment shown by the members in driving improvements in value for money whilst ensuring that tenants have the opportunity to have their views listened to."



To date the club has secured savings of over £5m (24% saving) and additional value for money improvements (extended warranties, improvements in specification, savings for new build and void properties) of almost £1m. These savings will be delivered through 4 year contracts.

The club operates a very participative model. The products required for each project are examined by a designated group, and the supplier selected following a tender process, according to a strict process overseen by a senior manager from a member company.

Part of the non-price assessment gives customer representatives an opportunity to examine all products and consider aesthetics and ease of use. This gives them a significant degree of ownership of the decision, which leads to commitment to use the contracts.

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Notes to Editors

*** Photo shows Mike Kay (Yarlington Housing Group), Phil Smith (Ocean Housing), Sue Francis (Devon & Cornwall Housing Association), Neil Biddiscombe (ASW), Martyn Gimber (North Devon Homes) and Richard Connolly (Devon & Cornwall Housing Association).**

*** An interview with Martyn Gimber, Chief Executive of North Devon Homes is available; please contact Nicola Smith, PR & Marketing Advisor at North Devon Homes to arrange.**

* A variety of factors have contributed to the success of the club, including:

Customer input – having had an initial event for tenants representatives where they identified how they wanted to be involved in the procurement process, tenants are consulted on specification issues and have an input into the decision making process

Pressures on budgets – like many public sector organisations, delivering improvements in value for money is essential. To have a collaborative vehicle which enables this to be achieved whilst ensuring that employees and tenants have an input into the decision is highly valued

No dominant member – because there is no one member with significantly more properties than the others, the club is not forced down a particular route due to one member's self-interest

Chief Executive support – the Chief Executives of all members have signed up to the club, and receive quarterly reports on meeting attendance

* ASW represents collaboration between 15 Housing Associations, providing the buying power of almost 50,000 homes. ASW is a limited liability partnership owned by

- North Devon Homes
- Yarlington Housing Group
- Ocean Housing Group
- Devon & Cornwall Housing Association

* In 2007, with the help of implementation funding secured through the DCLG's National Change Agent programme, six other residential social landlords (RSL) in the south west joined with ASW LLP creating the ASW Procurement Club to let collaborative contracts. The six other RSLs were:

- Coastline Housing
- Penwith Housing
- Riviera Housing
- Teign Housing
- Tor Homes
- Westcountry Housing

* The club became operational in January 2008 when the Procurement Manager started, and since then five additional RSLs have joined:

- Tarka Housing
- Purbeck Housing Trust
- Weymouth & Portland Housing
- Taunton Deane Borough Council
- East Dorset Housing Association,

The club is open to membership for any RSL in the south west. Each member contributes time and expertise through the product groups, and financially through the annual subscription to ensure the success of the club.

ASW received the Housing Corporation's Gold Award in recognition of work in founding ASW and for sharing excellent practice in the social housing sector, ultimately supporting improvements to services for residents.

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