



**7 April 2005**

## **Reaching for the stars**

The foresight of councillors to lead Coventry into the new millennium with a new housing association has paid off after independent inspectors awarded Whitefriars Housing Group top marks.

A report released today by the Audit Commission has stated that services provided by Whitefriars Housing Group are 'good' with promising prospects for improvement.

The housing group, which came into existence in 2000 following the voluntary stock transfer of all 20,000 Coventry City Council properties, has claimed two stars from the commission. This is the first inspection from the commission the housing group has received since transfer.

Its policy on gas servicing, which had led to almost 100 per cent of all properties being checked this year, won particular praise, along with its work to ensure the lettings policy is as flexible as possible.

Whitefriars' work to combat anti-social behaviour was also singled out for excellence, along with its asb4 mediation service. asb4 is the Midlands' first complete anti-social behaviour package for housing providers which brings together in one place all the skills and expertise needed to provide a full range of anti-social behaviour resolution services.

Whitefriars is well on track to reach the Decent Home Standard ahead of schedule, and has delivered its internal improvements programme a year early and on budget.

Chief Executive Howard Farrand said the starting point for all this was the councillors' then pioneering decision to undertake such a large scale transfer.

He said: "Back in 2000 the city council had the foresight to see drastic action was needed and we can see today that their approach to ballot tenants for a voluntary stock transfer has been a fortuitous one for tenants and the city of Coventry.

"We are absolutely delighted with the results of the report. To achieve two stars and be given promising prospects for improvement just four years after transfer is an incredible achievement. It endorses the years of hard work by staff, tenants and the board."

John Bolton, director of social services and housing at Coventry City Council, said: "This is a richly deserved recognition of the hard work that Whitefriars management and staff have put into the creation of the new organisations whilst continuing to improve the standards of socially rented housing across the city.

"This recognition gives us a growing confidence that our joint partnership with Whitefriars, along with other housing associations and developers, will enable us to deliver the ambitious housing strategy that we all share for the city."

**Ends**

**For further information please contact Michelle Hallmark at The Bridge Group on  
02476 217 398 or [m.hallmark@bridge-group.co.uk](mailto:m.hallmark@bridge-group.co.uk)**