



Our Promises to you

2003 - 2010



Back in 2003,
a range of promises were made as part of the
stock transfer agreement which had to be met by 2010.
Cobalt has delivered all these promises and this
report outlines some of the highlights.

Delivery of Home Improvements

PROMISE 1 **DELIVERY OF COBALT'S IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME TO BRING HOMES UP TO A MODERN STANDARD**

Cobalt has achieved Decent Homes Standard for all our homes. We have fitted new double glazed, lockable windows, new front and back doors, full central heating, loft insulation in 2208 homes, 3417 new kitchens, 3651 bathroom replacements and 355 bathroom upgrades. The total amount invested in our houses over the last seven years is £80.7 million.

98% of Customers are satisfied with the improvements made.
99.8% of homes have gas safety certificates.



Service Improvement

PROMISE 1 **PROVIDE A BETTER REPAIRS SERVICE**

A budget for day to day repairs and a cyclical maintenance programme are in place and consistently deliver 98% customer satisfaction result.

PROMISE 2 **PROVIDE A FIRST CLASS HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICE IN THE AREA**

We have a centrally based office to ensure easy access for customers.

Housing Services has been restructured so it is fit for purpose. We have Service Level Agreements with local Advice Centres and the RAISE team to provide benefit and debt advice. We now offer a wide range of flexible payment options and financial training is also offered to all tenants.

Housing Services achieved ISO Accreditation.

Affordable rents

PROMISE 1 **NO LARGE INCREASES AFTER TRANSFER, RENTS WOULD STAY AFFORDABLE**

Rents have increased in accordance with the 5 year Rent guarantee given to tenants at transfer. This stated that there would be no increase until April 2004 and thereafter the annual increase for transfer tenants would be by no more than inflation +£1.50 per week until March 2008.

New tenants pay the target rents from the start of the tenancy.

PROMISE 2 **RENTS CONTROLLED BY NEW RULES LAID DOWN BY THE GOVERNMENT**

Rents Plan in place with target rents identified for all stock, in line with government guidelines for target rents.



PROMISE 3 **BENCHMARKING PERFORMANCE**

Cobalt is a member of Housemark and uses the cost and quality indicators as part of its approach to assess value for money.

Audit Commission inspection result was 2* good service with promising prospects for improvement.

PROMISE 4 **PROVIDE AN IMPROVED SERVICE TO TENANTS**

We have improved the way we deal with complaints handling so we can learn from our mistakes.

Overall 91% of customers are satisfied with the service provided. This makes Cobalt one of the highest performing associations in the country.

Tenant Involvement in Decision Making

PROMISE 1 TENANT BOARD MEMBERS IN PLACE

Half of Cobalt's Board (6) is made up of Tenant Board Members.

PROMISE 2 TENANT BOARD MEMBERS WERE ELECTED BY THE STEERING GROUP

Tenant Board Members service for up to a term of 3 years with one third retiring each year on rotation.

PROMISE 3 NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED

3 Neighbourhood Committees meet monthly to discuss and identify local priorities and they submit questions to Cobalt's Board. Officers attend these meetings to provide updates on service delivery.



PROMISE 4 PERFORMANCE ON DELIVERING HOUSING SERVICES IS MONITORED AND RESULTS PUBLISHED TO TENANTS

Cobalt encourages tenants to get involved in monitoring performance on a range of service standards and delivery. Initiatives in place include Tenant Auditors and Resident Inspectors. Tenant conferences are also held and customer surveys are completed for all services.

We publish an annual performance report to tenants.

PROMISE 5 INVOLVE LOCAL PEOPLE IN MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR HOMES AND THE AREA

A Menu of Options has been set up to engage residents to get involved using a variety of methods. A Resident Involvement Strategy is in place. We have collected tenants views more than 7,500 times to help improve our services.

PROMISE 6 KEEPING TENANTS UP TO DATE

A dedicated communications officer works with all teams to ensure tenants are fully informed about services using a variety of methods, including leaflets, audio versions and posters. An LCD screen has been installed in reception and the website is kept up to date. We publish a quarterly tenants newsletter.

Regeneration

PROMISE 1 CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL REGENERATION

Cobalt's demolition programme is complete. We have built 377 new homes and have reduced the number of vacant homes from 492 in 2003 to 37 in 2010 and introduced stability to areas. We have invested £3.5 million to improve the local landscape tackling grot spots and poorly designed areas.

PROMISE 2 SUPPORT FOR LOCAL EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING INITIATIVES

70 local people have been employed through apprenticeships or long term employment in partnership with our contractors. We are also a business and enterprise sponsor at Croxteth & Fazakerley High School and receive work experience students into from local areas.



PROMISE 3 SUPPORT FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

We support local Community Groups and work with Tenants and Residents Associations. We have invested £500,000 in a Community Fund. We also produce local newsletters for each estate called 'In View'.

Delivering Sustainable communities

PROMISE 1 TACKLING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

We have and continue to work closely with Merseyside Police and other external agencies including City Safe. We have a specialist Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team and a dedicated Police Officer and have launched the Making Waves Alt Valley initiative. 100% action is taken against ASB perpetrators where possible and all victims are supported by Cobalt or referred to external agencies.

We fund, deliver and support a range of diversionary activities aimed at reducing ASB.

PROMISE 2 IMPROVE SECURITY TO HOMES

We have improved security to homes by completing the external block modernisation of 23 blocks of flats benefiting 136 units and have cleared 2 no man's land sites in Braybrooke. The ASB team have also carried out security surveys and additional security lighting, CCTV cameras and fire alarms have been fitted where necessary.

Be Smart! Be Burglar Aware! Campaign resulted in 2,150 burglar reduction hardware packs, 50 PIR lights and 17 alarm systems and a 37% reduction in burglary figures in the area.

PROMISE 3 USE OF LOCAL LETTINGS

Local lettings policies are in place where they are needed.

PROMISE 4 NEW TENANCY SIGN UP SERVICE

We have a tenancy sign up service in place.



PROMISE 5 ESTATE CARE

Cobalt has implemented Estate Inspection programmes to monitor the condition of estates which resulted in 1,228 reports to Liverpool City Council about graffiti and street lighting this year alone. Cobalt has also implemented a Neglected Gardens Policy.

Cobalt uses the Repair Line service and works with Liverpool City Council referring actions where damage has been caused to properties.

Environmental improvement schemes have been carried out to a number of sites to design out crime.

Cobalt has bi-annual estate walkabouts with local residents and partners.

Vacant land is inspected regularly to make sure they are free from fly tipping.

PROMISE 6 SUPPORT ELDERLY PEOPLE AND THOSE WITH DISABILITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

We have put a Tenancy Support Strategy in place and offer advice and support on a range of services.

We have invested £1.72 million on adaptations to tenants homes. Tenant Support officers completed training to cut down waiting times for assessments. Nobody waits longer than 12 months now for a major adaptation. Disabled tenants are very satisfied with the service they receive.

Cobalt have developed a 3 year disability action plan to help improve services.

PROMISE 7 SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AREA

Cobalt employs a specialist Community Partnerships Managers to work with external agencies and community groups.

A Youth Board is in place. At one event, 150 teenagers got involved.

We support young people in the area and have set up a youth forum comprised of young people from our estates. We also support and fund youth related projects.

We continue to provide placement opportunities for students from local schools.

