

COTMAN ANNUAL REPORT 2011



COTMAN
Housing Association

A member of **places
to people**

CONTENTS

- 3 Chairman's Foreword
- 4 About Cotman
- 5 Homes in Management
- 6 Our Neighbourhoods
- 8 Our Customers
- 12 Our Homes
- 16 Financial Statements
- 17 The Board
- 18 Customer Satisfaction & Management Performance
- 19 Company Details



ABOUT PLACES FOR PEOPLE

Cotman is a subsidiary of the Places for People Group, one of the largest property management, development and regeneration companies in the UK. Together with Cotman and other subsidiaries they own or manage over 62,000 homes and have assets of more than £3 billion.

Their mission is to ensure the places they create and manage are successful. Their approach goes much further than simply building homes. They look at what an area needs to be able to thrive – whether it's new schools, shops, leisure facilities, childcare, job opportunities, and access to learning and training or specialist support services. They also continue to manage these places so they remain sustainable into the future.

They have developed a wide range of products and services, which are both socially and commercially driven. They are a not-for-dividend organisation and any profit they make is re-invested back into the business.

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



It has been a busy and successful 12 months for Cotman as we rose to the challenge of managing a 40% increase in our stock, whilst at the same time meeting or exceeding our targets on operational performance. From April 2011 our area of operation has extended into Essex and Cambridgeshire, managing a further 800 properties on behalf of the Places for People Group.

With the support of the Group's specialist expertise we continue to maintain an active development programme. Cotman has a long history in the provision of supported housing and we were particularly pleased to receive HCA Grant funding to develop a scheme in Great Yarmouth for people recovering from mental ill-health.

Our supported housing scheme at Mandela Close, Norwich, is an example of our strong commitment to partnership working, with Cotman staff working with the local authority, support agencies and future residents to create homes that meet their individual needs.

Providing excellent customer service is at the heart of Cotman's values and, as this report shows, our customers continue to be very satisfied with our performance in the management and maintenance of their homes.

The input of our customers into the shaping of services is essential if we are to deliver their expectations, and I am delighted at the interest customers have shown in creating our two new customer groups. The Cotman Customer Body will help the Board shape our strategic direction and the Scrutiny Panel will be a "critical friend" to us in reviewing the services we provide.

My thanks go to my fellow Board members for their positive support and active involvement during the year, in particular to my Vice-Chair Bett Barrett, who has worked with our customers to shape and develop our new customer involvement structure. My thanks also to Managing Director Vivien Farrow and her team for their unstinting hard work and commitment in delivering excellent results for the Association. This is a sentiment which, I know, will be echoed by many of our customers.

I am proud to have chaired Cotman during this very successful year, and am confident that the Association is well positioned to continue to thrive in a dramatically changing environment of welfare reform and social housing provision.

**David Hunt, Chairman,
Board of Management**

ABOUT COTMAN

Cotman Housing Association exists to give people with housing needs the best possible choices. We strive to provide our residents with appropriate homes, all designed, built and maintained to the highest possible standard. And we aim to ensure that customers who need specialist housing care and support receive it effectively.

Cotman Housing Association joined the Places for People Group as a subsidiary in 2009, at which time we took on the management of all Group-owned stock on Norfolk and Suffolk.

From April 2011 our area of operation has been extended to also include management of the Group's Essex and Cambridgeshire properties, bringing the homes in our management to in excess of 3,300, more than doubling our portfolio in two years.

We own and manage properties of a broad mix of tenures and client groups, including general needs and supported rented, shared ownership and Leasehold Schemes for the Elderly.

Operating from our spacious head office at Bowthorpe Hall on the outskirts of Norwich and a sub-office in Colchester, Cotman continues to tailor its services locally to meet the needs of the communities it serves, whilst benefiting from the support of the Places for People Group in the provision of central services in a number of key areas. These include information management and technology, treasury management and management accounting, and development support as an HCA lead development partner.

Cotman is a non-profit making housing association registered as an Industrial and Provident Society with the Registrar of Friendly Societies and having the status of a charity.



THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Vivien Farrow, MSc, MBA

DIRECTOR OF ASSET MANAGEMENT AND PROPERTY SERVICES

Wayne Tatlow, BA(Hons), DipH, FCIH

DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Jane Warnes, MBA, BA(Hons), FCIH

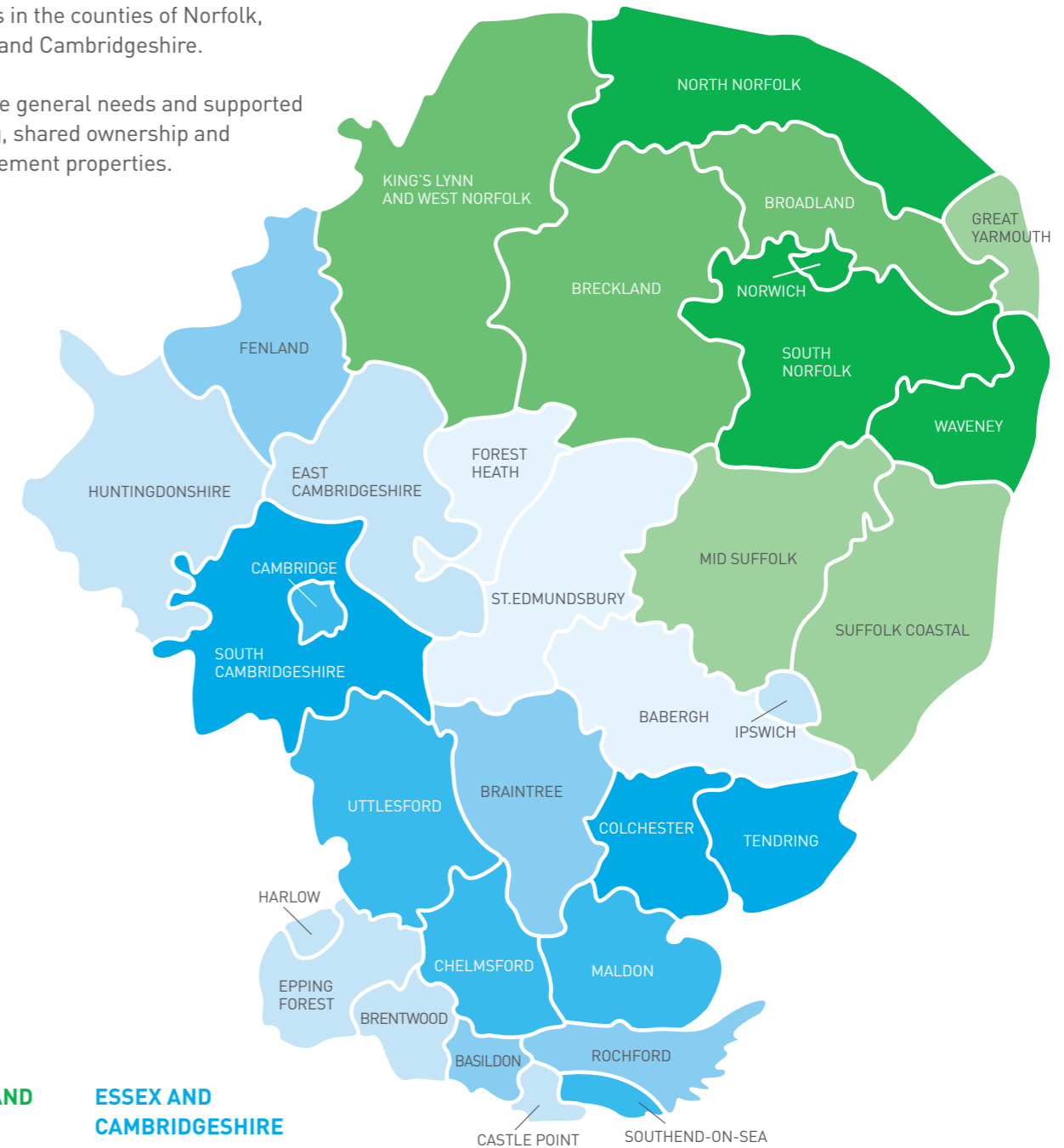
Pictured with Board Chair, David Hunt and Vice-Chair Bett Barrett

HOMES IN MANAGEMENT

COTMAN STOCK IN EAST ANGLIA

We manage over 3,000 homes across 24 Local Authority areas in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire.

Tenures include general needs and supported rented housing, shared ownership and leasehold retirement properties.



NORTHFOLK AND SUFFOLK

- LESS THAN 25
- 25 TO 50
- 50 TO 99
- 100 PLUS

ESSEX AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE

- LESS THAN 25
- 25 TO 50
- 50 TO 99
- 100 PLUS

OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

We manage and invest in our neighbourhoods. We improve homes and the environment and engage with the local community. We provide much more than just homes, we facilitate access to employment and training opportunities, and to care and support services.

CHANGING LIVES, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Through the 'Changing Lives, Strengthening Communities' initiative, we have formed a strong partnership which actively seeks to improve our customers lives by taking the lead on issues such as education, employment and financial well-being.

We aim to help Cotman residents to overcome any barriers they may face in getting into the work place in terms of skill shortages, qualifications and lack of work experience. We want to promote affordable credit options to buy essential items through responsible, social-minded lenders who will not make matters worse by charging extortionate rates of interest.

During the year we have worked with other local housing providers and a variety of local agencies including Job Centre Plus, Norwich City College, South Norfolk Council and Adult Education to host a number of events in the heart of our communities with the aim of tackling unemployment and raising awareness of learning opportunities.

These include Employment and Skills Fairs in areas where we have significant stock bases. The aim of these is to encourage adults back into training, education and formal/ informal learning. A number of local employers attend our events, as well as representatives from Norfolk Credit Union and Voluntary Norfolk.

Employment Fairs aim to tackle unemployment and raise awareness of learning opportunities

We have actively engaged with almost 1,000 individuals through these events, many of whom have been Cotman customers. Over 15% of attendees have signed up for a learning programme and many more have accessed informal advice about interview techniques and filling in application forms which has helped them build confidence.

An important side benefit is the promotion of low-cost financial products available from both the Norfolk Credit Union and Places for People, which our customers are able to access as a result of Cotman's membership of the Group.



Residents came together to take part in a community planting day at Lowestoft

SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

We want to ensure that our housing developments are pleasant places for our customers to live. As in all communities, problems of anti-social behaviour occasionally occur which may seriously impact on the individuals affected and the wider neighbourhood.

Wherever possible, we work with perpetrators to help them change their behaviour in order to sustain their tenancy. We do this through direct early intervention and partnership working with other agencies. These include Stonham Homestay, Environmental Health, the Police and Catch 22 Mediation Service, with whom we have a formal service level agreement. If problems persist, we are committed to taking legal action to resolve the situation. In 2010/11 we therefore ended three Starter tenancies as a result of firm evidence that ongoing noise nuisance was seriously disrupting the lives of others in the locality.

We also instigated Possession and proceedings in one other case. In all cases we ensured that we liaised with victims throughout the process so that they knew their concerns were being listened to and acted upon.

Our ability to manage cases of anti-social behaviour was enhanced this year through the introduction of REACT software. This sophisticated IT package has helped us to identify linked incidents and to take prompt action against disorderly households.

Finally, where we have significant concerns about the stability of a community as a result of frequent occurrences of anti-social behaviour, we work with local authorities to ensure that inappropriate allocations do not perpetuate difficulties. Our Carter Close/Blake Court development had seen legal action taken in three unrelated cases in 2010, as a result of which we negotiated a Local Lettings Policy with Breckland District Council.



OUR CUSTOMERS

CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT IN SERVICE DELIVERY

We believe that customer involvement in service development and delivery is key to excellent performance.

Our Customer Involvement Survey in May 2010 revealed that confidence and perceived skills gaps presented barriers to take-up of opportunities. We responded by offering a range of new tailored training opportunities to overcome this and to ensure customers are equipped to scrutinise our services.

Reflecting the importance we place on our customers' input into shaping services, we have strengthened opportunities for formal customer involvement with the creation of two new customer groups which will come into being during 2011. The Cotman Customer Body is an overarching group of customers with a remit to review and shape strategic direction, complimented by the Cotman Scrutiny Panel, which will provide scrutiny of the services we provide.

Our customer engagement processes have been strengthened further by offering a more varied menu of ways in which people can get involved. Residents are rightly often keen to improve the communal environment close to their homes and we have therefore introduced regular Customer / Officer Walkabouts on all estates over 40 units to identify issues of concern and work together to consider solutions.

The Sheltered Housing Forum met regularly throughout the year to debate internal and external policy matters. We believe this is vital at a time when Older People's services face significant cuts, and for the first time, we have held cross-estate focus group meetings for Home-Ownership customers.

We have introduced new mechanisms to record customer feedback, both positive and negative. We have improved our standard Complaints Response Times so that customers can expect detailed written replies in ten working days instead of fifteen as previously was the case.



We are keen also for our customers to interact with customers of other local social housing providers, to learn from experiences and discuss best practice. Two of our customers represent Cotman on the residents' arm of the Norfolk Housing Alliance.

The Sheltered Housing Forum met regularly throughout the year to debate internal and external policy matters



Residents are keen to improve the communal environment close to their homes

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Cotman recognises that there are areas of specialist housing provision where it is appropriate to work with experienced and skilled partners to ensure our customers receive the individual support they need and deserve.

One of our key partners is Leeway, a specialist domestic abuse charity supporting adults, children and young people across Norfolk and Suffolk. Cotman works in partnership with Leeway to manage two Refuges in Norfolk for women fleeing domestic violence. Through one-to-one support and a range of group activities women slowly begin to build self esteem and take control of their lives.

Many of the women face a range of complex issues. Leeway helps them overcome these and rebuild their self-esteem in order to maintain their tenancies not just at the refuges but when they move on into independent accommodation.

In 2010/11 around 80 women and 100 children were supported through the two Cotman refuges.

Julian Housing Support is another of our valued partners, providing housing support to our tenants at Devonshire Close. This innovative scheme enables 12 people with enduring mental ill-health difficulties to live independently in self-contained accommodation but with professional support on hand 24 hours a day if needed. Our Neighbourhood Officer liaises closely with staff of Julian Housing to ensure that the housing service we provide seamlessly meets the needs of clients.

SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Older people form a significant part of our customer base, with a third of Cotman customers aged over sixty. We pride ourselves on providing a range of specialist services to meet the diverse needs of this client group, many of whom are living in designated retirement schemes.

Our three sheltered housing estates are staffed by site specific scheme managers five days a week. All residents are encouraged to participate in drawing up a Support Plan which considers individual well-being in terms of health, social contact, personal care, and financial position. This holistic approach identifies interventions which may bring positive outcomes for the customer and often involves close liaison with other agencies such as Age UK.

Importantly, these developments are vibrant communities with regular activities varying from Companions Clubs to Arts and Crafts groups to Gardening Clubs. We have been particularly pleased this year that more activities have become resident-led. Not only do we see this as evidence that our customers are empowered to come together to meet their social aspirations, we also believe it will help maintain the equilibrium of our schemes in the face of current Local Authority spending cuts.

Our Luncheon Club at Ashwell Court, Bowthorpe, has gone from strength to strength this year and is now entirely self-funding. Open to all older people in the neighbourhood, it is especially welcome that some residents of our leasehold scheme for the elderly at nearby Rowan Court are regular attendees.

A remodelling of Day Centre services led to the merger of our two Day Centres funded by Social Services, with customers from the Bullace Road, Costessey, Centre transferring to the larger venue of Ashwell Court.

We recognise that many older people prefer to stay in their own homes, but value the opportunity to access the support services and facilities accessed by residents of sheltered housing. This was confirmed by the success of our recent pilot project, in partnership with Norfolk Supporting People, to provide Outreach Services from our Ashby Court, Norwich, scheme. People living in private rented, local authority and owner occupied properties all benefited from the service, as did customers of Cotman general needs accommodation. We anticipate building on the success of the pilot in shaping future service delivery to older people.



Residents at Ashby Court help tend the communal gardens



OUR HOMES

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Cotman has a strong record in the provision of supported housing, and over the last year this has been the focus of our development activity. HCA Grant funding was received for 19 assisted living flats for people recovering from mental ill-health, together with 5 general needs homes, in Great Yarmouth. Work commenced on site early in 2011 and the scheme is due to be completed in the summer of 2012. The £2.7m scheme has been designed to be highly energy efficient, and is the first social housing scheme in Great Yarmouth built to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Working in partnership with Norfolk Social Services, who provided an element of grant funding, we converted a bungalow in Hemsby, Great Yarmouth, to provide accommodation for three adults with learning difficulties, who were actively involved in the design of their new home.

Construction commenced on Mandela Close, a supported housing scheme of five one-bedroom apartments and support worker accommodation, for people with learning disabilities. Built on land provided by Norwich City Council and part-funded with HCA grant, the hallmark of the project has been one of partnership working with regular meetings between Cotman, the agencies involved and future residents who have had the opportunity to choose fixings and fittings. The project is on target for completion in the summer of 2011.

**Mandela Close
Supported Housing
Scheme**



The Government's new agenda for the provision of social housing has presented us with both opportunity and challenge, with bids for development funding submitted early in 2011 in accordance with the HCA's new Affordable Rent Model. If, as early indications suggest, the HCA have looked favourably on our bids and they are successful, the new properties will be let at 80% of market rent levels, and funded in part by an increase in rent levels for a proportion of re-lettings.

We continue to work with private housing developers, helping to meet their planning obligations in the provision of social housing, with several schemes in the pipeline.

Cotman has a strong record in the provision of supported housing, and over the last year this has been the focus of our development activity



PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

During the year we delivered planned maintenance and improvement work to over 300 homes, at a cost in excess of £1m. ensuring that all properties in our management met the Decent Homes Standard at the end of 2010.

This extensive programme of work, which included central heating, kitchen and window replacements, was undertaken through the Eastern Procurement Consortium, a collective of 10 social landlords who together manage almost 45,000 tenanted properties throughout East Anglia. EPC focuses on bringing together the needs and skills of its social landlord members and efficiently procuring works and services on their behalf.

Cotman has a strong track record of working in partnership with other local housing providers and is one of EPC's founding members. EPC is currently working with Places for People's procurement team in tendering repairs and maintenance and gas servicing framework contracts for Cotman across our area of operation and the potential benefit of other Consortium members in the future.

During the year we delivered planned maintenance and improvement work to over 300 homes

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Places for People is recognised as a leader of innovative environmental sustainability, and committed to meeting the Government's challenge of reducing carbon emissions in homes by 80% by 2050.

Over the last 10 years the Group has introduced a range of green technologies in new and existing communities, promoted energy efficiency to customers and staff, and adopted a low carbon approach in its offices. For Cotman this has included the extensive use of video-conferencing and recycling of office waste.

In 2010 the Places for People Group was awarded ISO 14001 Certification, in recognition of the Group's commitment to the environment.

Taking advantage of the Group's specialist knowledge and expertise in the field of green energy, Cotman took part in a pilot scheme installing photovoltaic panels through the Clean Energy Programme operated by Eaga

Plc to homes on a number of estates in Norfolk and Suffolk. The roofs of our properties are being used to facilitate the production of electricity which can then be used by our customers, with any excess generated being sold back to the national grid.

Customers living in these properties can expect to see a reduction of up to a third on their energy bills which is a welcome benefit during this period of increasing fuel poverty. Over 100 Cotman households have benefited from the project, made possible by the Department of Energy & Climate Change's Feed in Tariff scheme, which offers monetary incentives to companies or individual customers who install clean renewable energy technology to their properties. Lessons learned from the project will be used to inform decisions on future retrofitting options.



Photovoltaic panels are saving our customers money on their electricity bills

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2011

	Year ending 31 March 2011 £'000	15 months ending 31 March 2010 £'000
Turnover	8,360	9,343
Operating costs	(6,090)	(5,589)
Operating surplus	2,270	3,754
Loss on sale of fixed assets	(3)	-
Interest receivable and similar income	12	4
Interest payable and similar charges	(1,288)	(1,601)
Profit on ordinary activities before and after taxation	991	2,157

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2011

	Year ending 31 March 2011 £'000	15 months ending 31 March 2010 £'000
FIXED ASSETS		
Housing properties – depreciated cost	62,182	61,406
Less: Social Housing Grant	(33,013)	(32,282)
Other capital grants	(159)	-
Net book value of housing properties	29,010	29,124
Other tangible fixed assets	1,974	2,134
Total fixed assets	30,984	31,258
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors and prepayments	600	1,569
Investments	5,703	1,544
Cash at bank and in hand	60	409
	6,363	3,522
Creditors – amounts falling due within one year	(3,047)	(1,425)
Net current assets	3,316	2,097
Total assets less current liabilities	34,300	33,355
Creditors – amounts falling due after more than one year	21,743	21,789
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Called up share capital	-	-
Revenue reserves	12,557	11,566
Total capital and reserves	12,557	11,566
	34,300	33,355

THE BOARD

BOARD MEMBERSHIP AS AT 31st MARCH 2011 CHAIR

David Hunt, BSc(Hons), Dip Arch, MBA
Architect and former Housing Association
Chief Executive

VICE-CHAIR

**Bett Barrett, MSc, BA(Hons), RGN, RHV,
DN Cert, Cert Ed**
Health Training and Research Professional

Sarah Dixon, MRICS

Chartered Surveyor

Dawn Henry, SEN

Chief Executive, Young Person's Charity

Sam Morton, BA DSA DASS CQSW

Retired Senior Manager, Social Services

Peter Shields, ACIB

Retired Investment Banker

Judith Tait, Dip Ed

Residential Landlord

Paul Watkinson, MIME

Tenant Representative

Neil White, FCA

Chartered Accountant

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Steve Binks, BSc FCCA ACIS MIOB

Places for People Group Director,
Finance and IT

Vivien Farrow MSc MBA

Managing Director, Cotman Housing
Association

COMPANY SECRETARY

Chris Martin, Solicitor, BA(Hons)

Places for People Legal Services Director
and Company Secretary

SHAREHOLDING MEMBERSHIP POLICY

National Shareholding membership of the Association is open to the Places for People Group.

Community shareholding membership of the Association is at the discretion of the Board and is open to anyone with relevant knowledge, experience, skills or expertise which are complementary to the aims of the Association.

Expressions of interest in community shareholding membership should be made by written submission to the Managing Director.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Within the boundaries and scope of its Independence and Responsibilities Agreement with Places for People Group, the affairs of Cotman Housing Association are directed by the Board of Management. The agreement of the Places for People Group Board is required to the appointment of all Cotman Board members.

Non-Executive Board members receive a small payment in recognition of the contribution they make to the work of the Association.

GOVERNANCE

The Association has adopted the National Housing Federation's code of practice on governance "Excellence in Governance – code for members (2009)" and aims to comply with it fully.

Further details of any information that the Association is required by the code to disclose that is not given fully in this report can be obtained on written application to the Managing Director.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE 2010/11



We pride ourselves on high standards of performance, and met or exceeded all our operational key performance targets at the end of March 2011.

99.2% Emergency repairs were completed on time

98.9% Urgent repairs were completed on time

98.9% Routine repairs were completed on time

Our average property re-let time was **25 days**

Our rent collection was **101.34%**

Equally important as our performance in key operational processes is the satisfaction of customers with the services they receive from us. Key outcomes from our 2010 Satisfaction Surveys were that:

85.8% of customers were satisfied with our overall services

88% of customers were satisfied with their neighbourhood

88.5% of customers were satisfied with the overall quality of their home

80.4% of customers were satisfied with our repairs service

100% of new customers were satisfied with lettings processes

COMPANY DETAILS

Head Office and Correspondence Address

Cotman House, Bowthorpe Hall
Bowthorpe Hall Road, Norwich NR5 9AD
Telephone: (01603) 731699
Fax: (01603) 731698
Email: office@cotman-housing.org.uk
Web: www.cotman-housing.org.uk

Registered Office

305 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8QR

Bankers

Co-Op Bank
147 Church Street, Preston PR1 3UD

Barclays Bank Plc
Norfolk & Waveney Business Centre
PO Box 614, 1st Floor, St Cuthbert's House
7 Upper King Street, Norwich NR3 1WX

Solicitors

Mills & Reeve, Norwich

The Association, as a member of Places for People Group, also has access to the Group solicitors set out below:
Devonshires, London
Trowers and Hamlin, London

Registered Auditors

KPMG LLP
St James' Square, Manchester M2 6DS

Registration of the Association

The Association is incorporated under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 (Registered number IP19473R) and is registered under the Housing Act (Registered number L0284). It is also affiliated to the National Housing Federation and has charitable status.



Head Office and Correspondence Address

Cotman House
Bowthorpe Hall
Bowthorpe Hall Road
Norwich NR5 9AD
Telephone: (01603) 731699
Fax: (01603) 731698
Email: office@cotman-housing.org.uk
Web: www.cotman-housing.org.uk

