



FAO: News editors/Journalists

Tuesday 31st March 2009

COTMAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION ENTERS THE PLACES FOR PEOPLE GROUP

On 1st April, Norwich-based Cotman Housing Association formally enters the Places for People Group. Cotman is one of East Anglia's leading housing associations, whilst Places for People is one of the UK's largest property management and development groups. The move aims to deliver excellent customer services and large scale developments across East Anglia.

Following extensive consultations with customers, staff and shareholders, Cotman now becomes part of the Places for People Group, with a combined portfolio of over 2,100 properties across East Anglia, principally in Norfolk and North Suffolk. These properties will be managed by Cotman, which has over 30 years' experience in housing management in the area.

The merger plays to the strengths of both organisations, combining the large scale regeneration and development expertise of Places for People with Cotman's strong experience and reputation in housing management and high-quality customer services.

Vivien Farrow, Chief Executive at Cotman Housing, said:

"From the outset of discussions, Cotman's Board has felt that there would be real benefits for both organisations in Cotman entering the Group. We consulted in depth with all our customers, our key partners, our employees and the Tenant Services Authority before our shareholders voted unanimously in favour of joining the Group.

We are greatly looking forward to working alongside Places for People, and by taking advantage of the Group's initiatives and resources, we will be able to provide a more extensive service to our residents, and local Places for People customers will benefit from the strong performance reputation that we have in the local area".

David Cowans, Group Chief Executive of Places for People, said:

"This is a good strategic fit for Places for People and Cotman, and I'm very pleased to be able to welcome them into the Group – I am sure that both of us will benefit from sharing expertise and sharing resources."

Aniekan Umoren, Managing Director for the South at Places for People, said:

“Places for People is not just concerned with the bricks and mortar of the houses it manages, but works to understand and improve the neighbourhoods in which it operates. It has specialists who work in employment creation, job training and skills development, environmental improvement, crime reduction, financial assistance, and the provision of extra neighbourhood facilities such as childcare nurseries.

“With Cotman’s reputation for local high quality housing services, we will provide a wide range of excellent customer services, widen opportunities for customer involvement, provide innovative ways to help people step onto the property ladder, and help create sustainable and cohesive communities in the region.”

The merger officially takes place on 1st April, with it being anticipated that there will be a three-month period in which time Cotman will adopt Places for People’s IT systems and procedures. Cotman will keep its existing identity, Board, and governance structures, but operate as a subsidiary of Places for People.

- Ends -

For all media enquiries please contact:

Places for People

Beth Hearn on 07929 161553, or e-mail beth.hearn@placesforpeople.co.uk

Cotman Housing Association

Ben Veal on 01603 731653 or e-mail ben.veal@cotman-housing.org.uk

Notes to editor:

Places for People:

Places for People is one of the UK’s largest property management and development groups, which is responsible for over 60,000 properties.

It has over 130,000 customers and provides solutions that focus on making neighbourhoods prosperous, popular and therefore sustainable into the future.

It is also a major developer and provides a range of social support services including affordable childcare nurseries; elderly care support and financial services such as mortgages and low-cost loans. Its vision for regeneration is not just about delivering housing and community facilities, but also delivering genuine choices and opportunities. This includes choices about whether to rent, buy or have an equity stake, and about the environment, training, employment and childcare provision in a place.

Cotman Housing Association:

Cotman Housing Association (CHA) is a non-profit-making housing association which aims to ensure that residents who need specialist housing care and support receive it effectively, and strives to provide our residents with appropriate homes, all designed, built and maintained to the highest possible standard.

2008 saw the total number of properties managed by the Association increase to 1,367.

The benefits to Cotman in joining forces with Places for People include:

- Access for customers to affordable finance, support services and flexible tenure options.
- Access to a wide range of customer services including web based repair ordering and online rent payments.
- The ability to compete with larger regional and national players for development and management opportunities.
- The opportunity to participate in large scale mixed-tenure initiatives.
- Access to in-house industry experts in sustainability, regeneration and development.

The benefits to Places for People in joining forces with Cotman include:

- Strengthened expertise in the management of rural housing, and local delivery of high quality services.
- The opportunity to develop effective partnership opportunities with Local Authorities in a strategic growth area.
- Access to local knowledge and key contacts in a priority development area.
- The opportunity to consistently improve service delivery to customers.