iN business for neighbourhoods: the evidence

The scale and scope of housing associations activity beyond housing
The National Housing Federation would particularly like to thank the following housing associations for providing the case study materials and supporting documentation used in this report: Accent Nene, Coastline Housing Ltd, Connect Housing Association, Cross Keys Homes Ltd, East Midlands Housing Association Ltd, Family Housing Association (Birmingham) Ltd, Genesis Housing Group, Home Group, Maritime Housing Association, Midland Heart, Mendip Housing, Mhal Homes Ltd, Newlon Housing Trust, Places for People Group, Richmond Housing Partnership, Stonewall Housing, Tenenay Housing, Trafford Housing Trust and St Vincent’s Housing Association.

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Acknowledgements

Further evidence of the excellent work that housing associations do can be found at: www.inbiz.org.

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Foreword

Housing associations provide more than two million homes for more than five million people across England. What is less well known is that they deliver a huge range of other services which support and add value to the neighbourhoods where they work. This work is for the whole community, not just their own residents. The quality and range of that work means that housing associations contribute massively to the quality of life of the nation.

For the first time, the National Housing Federation has conducted a full audit of the neighbourhood services and facilities housing associations provide. The audit has discovered that there are more than 6,800 identifiable projects, many with a plethora of different activities, and hundreds of neighbourhood facilities like community centres, sports facilities and others which contribute to the economic, environmental and social stability of our neighbourhoods.

We have also identified that housing associations annually invest at least £435 million in this work, made up of £272 million of their own funds and an additional £163 million from other sources. This work benefits the equivalent of around one in ten of the population.

We believe that even these impressive figures are an underestimate of the movement’s true investment. The audit asked for details of what is often described as non-core activities. Many housing associations have this work so deeply embedded that it cannot be separated from the ‘core’ work of building, managing and maintaining homes. Investing in neighbourhoods has become part of the culture – part of the DNA – of the work. And it is worth noting that this is in addition to the well established, and equally critical, investment that housing associations make in the provision of support and care where it is needed.

We used the audit to collect case studies to illustrate the detail of the work that housing associations now do. Within this report we showcase a very small selection of these. They cover all parts of the country and include rural communities and inner cities. They show that associations’ work is benefiting all sections of society, from the very young to the very old, those looking for work or being assisted into training, those from all cultural, racial and faith backgrounds alike.

It is clear from the audit that this is the great untold story. Housing associations are often the best resourced agencies in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, and they are committed to the long term. They are making responsive local decisions with residents to provide a staggering wide range of services including community radio, children’s play facilities, new business start-ups, energy efficiency programmes, healthy eating advice and food co-ops, savings schemes, retail enterprises and village halls. And that just scratches the surface. If you can think of a service, somewhere in England a housing association is providing it.

The sustainability and further development of this work will require the strengthening of local partnerships and further work to understand more fully the impact of this level of community investment. There are important debates to be had about future government and other investment. For now, though, this report celebrates what has been achieved so far. It is something that housing associations, their residents and partners, should be proud of.

David Orr
Chief Executive
National Housing Federation
Summary of findings
Overall findings

In 2006/07 housing associations:
- Delivered 6,800 neighbourhood services and provided or maintained hundreds of neighbourhood facilities
- Employed 4,560 staff, directly, to deliver these neighbourhood services
- Benefited around 5.5 million people.

To do this housing associations:
- Invested almost £435 million, made up of:
  - Contributions of almost £272 million from their own money, and
  - An additional £163 million secured from external sources.

This £435 million investment divided into the following:
- Investing almost £365 million to provide neighbourhood services, made up of:
  - Contributions of almost £242 million from housing associations’ own money, and
  - An additional £123 million secured from external sources.
- Investing £70 million to provide hundreds of neighbourhood facilities, made up of:
  - Contributions of £30 million from housing associations’ own money, and
  - An additional £40 million secured from external sources.

Neighbourhood services

The audit defined neighbourhood services as services that are in addition to the provision of basic housing management and the extensive services delivered through Supporting People and registered care services.

The audit survey instructions provided clear definitions of housing management, housing services, Supporting People and registered care services. Housing associations were asked only to report on activities and investment not included within these definitions. The definitions used in the survey to describe housing management, housing services, Supporting People and registered care services are given in the Methodology Section at the end of this report.
Key neighbourhood services findings

Employment and enterprise services

• 574 services delivered
• Around 67,600 people benefited
• 640 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested almost £45 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of almost £26 million from their own money, and
  o An additional £19 million secured from external sources.

Poverty and social exclusion services

• 984 services delivered
• Around 368,000 people benefited
• 450 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested £44 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of more than £30 million from their own money, and
  o An additional almost £14 million secured from external sources.

Education and skills service

• 1,238 services delivered
• Around 246,400 people benefited
• 950 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested £66 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of almost £46 million from their own money, and
  o An additional £20 million secured from external sources.

Safety and cohesion services

• 1,878 services delivered
• Around 1.7 million households benefited
• 1,250 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested almost £90.5 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of almost £55 million from their own money, and
  o An additional almost £35.5 million secured from external sources.

Well-being services

• 656 services delivered
• Around 406,000 people benefited
• 580 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested almost £41 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of almost £23 million from their own money, and
  o An additional £18 million secured from external sources.

Environmental services

• 1,472 services delivered
• Around 1.7 million households benefited
• 690 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested almost £78.5 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of more than £62 million from their own money, and
  o An additional £16.5 million secured from external sources.
Key neighbourhood facilities findings

Over a five year period up until March 2007, housing associations:
• Provided or maintained nearly 1,000 neighbourhood facilities ranging from community centres to sensory gardens, city farms, and travellers’ sites.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested almost £351.5 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of almost £151.5 million from their own money, and
  o An additional £200 million of funding secured from external sources.

Other findings

• Housing associations work in partnership with a huge variety of funding partners. The most frequently cited was local government.
• As well as providing financial support, housing associations also offer in-kind benefits, notably staff volunteering their time and free room hire.
Employment and enterprise services

Key findings
During 2006/07 housing associations achieved the following:
• 574 services delivered
• Around 67,600 people benefited
• 640 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested almost £45 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of almost £26 million from their own money, and
  o An additional £19 million secured from external sources.

Housing associations work hard to unlock the potential within our neighbourhoods and deliver an extensive array of employment initiatives. Benefiting around 67,600 people, their investment has provided opportunities for employment and training to help people into work.

Providing opportunities for employment
Housing associations innovatively work to create opportunities for people to find employment or to create employment for themselves – audit figures showed this benefited around 36,000 people.

Examples include:
• Resident service organisations, which are community-led enterprises employing local residents to deliver local services, so sustaining communities – benefiting around 10,200 people
• Youth enterprise projects aimed at helping young adults into self-employment – benefiting around 6,600 people
• Full employment pilots to help long-term unemployed people into employment – benefiting around 5,100 people.

Audit evidence
Overall, the sector invested almost £24 million to provide opportunities for employment – around £14 million of associations’ own money and £10 million from others, and directly employed 310 staff. Intermediate labour market projects represented the largest financial commitment with the sector investing £8.5 million – spending around £4.5 million of associations’ own money supplemented with almost £4 million from other sources.

Group of participants on the Home 2 Work Sunderland scheme all kitted out with the tools of the trade.
“I am really pleased that I have been taken on for an apprenticeship. The project has taken me out of a dead-end job into proper work and a real future. You only get one chance in life.”

Adam Jones-Hendon, who was given an apprenticeship by Dunningham Decorators.
Case study
Placing hope in the lives of young people
Home Group – Work placements

Home has a turnover in excess of £250 million, manages 52,000 homes and annually provides specialist housing, care and support services to more than 18,000 people across the UK – the majority of them supported by Home’s care and support arm, Stonham.

Home 2 Work Sunderland
This is just one of the many initiatives Home undertakes. Home 2 Work Sunderland provides disadvantaged young people with the opportunity for a six-month work experience placement using builders as mentors.

Key referral partners include Back on the Map, Connexions, Job Centre Plus, Etec and Job Linkage. While a variety of construction companies supply placements and mentoring (such as Dunningham Decorators, SLJ Construction, Houghton Heating, Gordon Durham and K and G Decorators).

The project is primarily funded by Back on the Map, which provides £103,000. Home provides valuable in-kind contributions, plus management and practical support, employing one full-time co-ordinator and a part-time administrator.

The initiative plans to help around 60 young people over 24 months.

The initiative includes:
• Recruitment and induction
• Six-month work placement, and
• Training (Health and Safety, Construction Skills Certification Scheme Card, First Aid etc.).

A bright future
On completion of their placement participants are offered either employment, full apprenticeship or intensive job search.

There are currently nine young people on the project, two of whom have received permanent job offers from their employers. Several young people have found places in Home’s direct workforce. They now provide a valuable resource to the company and a benefit to the community. Other young people have been placed in construction-related industries and fabrication companies, based in and around Sunderland.

Home is planning to extend the project and attract additional funding to the Sunderland area. In the next 12 months Home are planning to duplicate the model elsewhere in the North East, and share the good practice model with the rest of the Group so that it becomes a national project. The Group anticipates there will be over 60 per cent positive outcomes based on the experience of other projects using this approach in Scotland.
Providing training to help people into work

Housing associations also invest in training to improve people’s chances of finding and maintaining employment – audit figures showed this benefited around 31,600 people.

Examples include:

- Supporting job seekers to find work – benefiting around 9,300 people
- Training people in construction skills – benefiting around 9,200 people
- Developing employment life skills – benefiting around 7,400 people.

Case study

Constructing a future for young people

Places for People Group – Construction skills training

The Places for People Group is one of the largest property management and development companies in the UK. The Group manages more than 59,800 homes and has assets of £2.4 billion. In the past three years, the Group has helped 1,277 people into employment, and helped 2,301 to access new learning and training opportunities. It has also helped 245 new businesses to start up and supported over 800 existing businesses to grow and thrive.

Building Links is one of the Group’s longest running projects. It bridges the gap between those seeking work in the construction sector and the skills needed by employers. Building Links has worked in partnership with Preston College in Lancashire since August 2003 on the Future Build and Firm Foundations Programmes, providing opportunities for unemployed people to gain the skills and experience required for employment in construction. On these programmes, so far, 148 candidates have received valuable work experience with construction companies, 101 of these candidates have completed their work placement and 83 candidates have progressed into sustainable employment.

“I think the Future Build Programme is an excellent stepping stone into the construction industry.” John, aged 23, participant.

Audit evidence

Housing associations invested nearly £21 million in employment and enterprise services – £12 million of their own money and a further £9 million from other sources. To deliver these services, associations directly employed 330 staff. In more detail, the audit reveals that the sector committed more than £7 million to provide employment-related qualifications and almost £6.5 million to develop employment life skills.
The audit findings revealed that housing associations provide access to the following employment and enterprise services:

Building trade skills, business sponsorship and support, business start-up initiatives, full employment pilots, intermediate labour market projects, job search, life skills for employment, local recruitment incentives, qualifications for employment, research into worklessness, resident service organisations, work experience, youth accreditation, Youthbuild and youth enterprise projects.
Education and skills services
Key findings
During 2006/07 housing associations achieved the following:
• 1,238 services delivered
• Around 246,400 people benefited
• 950 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested an overall total of £66 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of almost £46 million from their own money, and
  o An additional £20 million secured from external sources.

Housing associations are expanding learning opportunities and life chances in our neighbourhoods and deliver a diverse range of services from children’s breakfast clubs to IT workshops for older adults. Their engagement is wide and embraces all generations, from young to old, benefiting around 246,400 people in the audit.

Learning and life skills opportunities for young people
Housing associations are investing in our young people’s future – benefiting around 87,700 people in the audit.

Examples include:
• General initiatives to support and work with schools – benefiting around 36,600 people
• Arts and theatre initiatives – benefiting around 18,500 people (assuming an equal split between young people and adults), and
• After school studies and breakfast clubs – benefiting around 16,700 people.

Audit evidence
Overall, the sector invested £28 million to improve learning and life skills opportunities for young people – with £18.5 million of associations’ own money topped up with £9.5 million from other funders. In delivering these services, associations directly employed 430 staff.

Learning and life skills opportunities for all
Housing associations are also helping other members of our community through the provision of learning and life skills opportunities for adults – benefiting around 158,800 people in the audit.

Examples include:
• Parenting skills – benefiting around 29,500 people
• IT training and learning initiatives – benefiting around 27,000 people, and
• Arts and theatre initiatives – benefiting around 18,500 people (assuming an equal split between young people and adults).

Case study
Building confidence and enabling learning
Accent Nene – Community learning
Accent Nene is based in Peterborough and manages over 3,500 homes. In partnership with Paston Area Community Trust it runs the Learning Community. This enables local people to participate in adult education by providing childcare and overcoming barriers such as a lack of transport and low self-esteem. More than 500 people have benefited, with learners passing formal qualifications, starting their own businesses and becoming learning champions.

“I lacked confidence before I came along to the classes – thank you for changing my life.” Kelly Murray, learner.

Audit evidence
Overall, the sector invested £38 million to improve learning and life skills opportunities for adults – with £28 million invested directly by the sector and additional £10 million from other funders. In delivering these services, associations directly employed 520 staff.

One of the most significant investments was in adult education, where almost £17 million was spent with associations supplying around £11 million and an additional £5.5 million provided by others.
The Newlon Housing Trust is based in Hackney, East London and currently manages more than 6,000 homes. Newlon Fusion is the communities arm of the Newlon Housing Trust. Within its training portfolio is the Progress Model.

Designed as a personal development and vocational skills model for disengaged young care leavers, Progress has become one of the most widely delivered programmes of its type in central London. It was also featured at the National Care Conference as a methodology for engaging significantly ‘at risk’ young people.

The Progress Model for Care Leavers delivers achievement through the accumulation of short-term gains. Although the design was unconventional, the Learning Skills Council supported the project to a successful conclusion. Since then the model has become widely used. In 2007, Islington Borough Council requested that the model be adapted to meet the needs of young people failing mainstream education within the borough.

The model’s commissioner list demonstrates how housing associations play a significant role in developing service users through partnerships with specialist providers:

- Refugees – The Women’s African Centre
- Care leavers – Shaftesbury Young People
- Mental health needs – Outward
- Workless adults – Islington borough council
- Young people failing in mainstream education – Islington-based schools
- Young people not in education employment or training – London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Building self-esteem and positive outcomes through achievement

The Progress Model is helping to change the lives of some of the most disadvantaged groups:

**Refugees – 100 people enrolled**
- 100 achieved 104 qualifications
- 100 achieved 140 non-accredited qualifications, and
- 42 achieved further education.

**Looked-after young people (care leavers) – 100 young people enrolled**
- 78 achieved 145 qualifications
- 81 achieved 259 non-accredited qualifications, and
- 49 achieved employment, training or further education.

**Workless adults – 42 were enrolled**
- 31 people achieved 61 qualifications
- 42 people achieved 37 non-accredited qualifications, and
- 42 people received employment assistance.

**Top marks**

The Progress Model continues to be used
- Progress is still developing young care leavers in Islington
- Additional service user projects are being implemented in Tower Hamlets and Hackney.

Focusing nervous minds before the exam. One young participant was initially hostile to learning but went on to achieve four exam passes, her first ever qualifications. She later addressed 300 delegates at the National Care Conference before successfully gaining employment with Islington Council.
The audit findings revealed that housing associations provide access to the following education and skills services:

Adult education, advice and guidance, after-school and breakfast clubs, arts and theatre initiatives, capability building training for residents, child care provision, children’s play facilities, community-based radio, confidence building and independent living, cycling training, education for women, education grants, educational literature, foyers, heritage projects, holidays for children, home improvement training, homework clubs, Horsemart, horticultural training, information resource centres, inter-generational learning, IT learning initiatives, links with local schools, literacy and language training, musical equipment and training, older people’s education initiatives, parenting support, school citizenship lessons, school support, skills for life, voluntary work placements and walk-to-school initiatives.
Well-being services
Key findings
During 2006/07 housing associations achieved the following:
• 656 well-being services delivered
• Around 406,000 people benefited
• 580 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested almost £41 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of almost £23 million from their own money, and
  o An additional £18 million secured from external sources.

Housing associations are using their understanding of their customers’ needs and good partnering skills to improve health outcomes in our neighbourhoods. From health advice to health provision and from competitive sports to relaxation, these initiatives have benefited around 406,000 people.

Providing health advice and services
The bulk of housing associations’ well-being investment is in providing health advice and support – benefiting around 344,000 people in the audit.

Examples include:
• Community health workers – benefiting around 153,000 people
• Healthy living initiatives – benefiting around 80,700 people, and
• Partnerships with other health providers – benefiting around 60,000 people.

Audit evidence
Overall, the sector invested £34 million to provide health advice and services – with £18.5 million of associations’ own money plus an additional £15.5 million from other sources. In delivering these services, associations directly employed over 490 staff. One of the largest investments was in healthy living initiatives where almost £8 million was spent – with associations contributing almost £5 million, supplemented by £3 million from other sources.

Case study
Bringing health agencies together at a local level
St Vincent’s Housing Association – BME Health partnership

St Vincent’s Housing Association is based in Rochdale and manages around 3,000 homes. The association works in partnership with the local health centre, diabetic nurse, oral hygienist, healthy walking and healthy eating representatives, smoking cessation advisers and drug awareness outreach team to provide health checks and healthy living advice in an area with a large Asian population. Around 140 people have benefited from this initiative so far. Health service providers recognise this approach is a good way to engage hard-to-reach groups and more events continue to take place. St Vincent’s has also organised healthy eating courses for Asian women.

Providing sports and leisure in the community
Another strand of housing associations’ work in this area is funding sports and leisure – benefiting around 62,000 people. These activities include many types of sports and relaxation activities from football to pilates. An excellent example of how associations are delivering this type of service is Testway Housing Association. Further details of its work are provided in the case study.

Audit evidence
Overall, the sector invested almost £6.5 million to provide sports and leisure services – with £4 million of associations’ own money plus an additional £2.5 million from external funders. In delivering these services, associations directly employed 90 staff.
Case study
Sports initiative that passes test with flying colours
Testway Housing – Community sports

Established in 2001, Testway 7s is a youth sports initiative operated by Testway Housing. Working with numerous partners it uses sport to transform the lives of local children. It also addresses issues around anti-social behaviour, crime, healthy living and drugs awareness.

In 2006/07, in addition to £2,000 spent by Testway Housing, funding totalling £23,500 from a diverse range of organisations was secured. With a permanent sports development officer, Testway 7s is now firmly part of the association’s service.

Testway 7s demonstrates that housing associations are well placed to team up with local partners, delivering:
• Boys’ rugby in collaboration with Andover Rugby Football Club
• Boys’ and girls’ cricket in collaboration with Andover Cricket Club
• Girls’ football in collaboration with Andover and Romsey football clubs
• Hockey, working with Andover Hockey Club
• Fishing initiatives working with Andover MENCAP, the Environment Agency and National Federation of Anglers, and
• Popular skip2Bfit programmes used by Test Valley schools.

A winning streak
• Since 2001, more than 14,000 children have benefited from this initiative. Some are encouraged to record personal goals and achievements – 94 per cent expressed satisfaction
• The initiative has made a significant impact on community safety, with police recording a drop of 48 per cent in incidents involving youths in early years
• In 2004/05, the initiative was extended to include drugs awareness, with over 100 participants to date
• Efficiency improvements – more activities, to more people, for less cost. Spend per person in 2006/07 was £7.64, in 2007/08 this was £1.39
• Children are offered fresh fruit and juice, and shown how to warm up and down – encouraging healthy eating and living
• UK’s first Youth Darts Academy established – improvements in maths and general schoolwork were recorded amongst darts players
• Unique multi-sports cage allows activities to be delivered to hard-to-reach groups.

Future goals
Plans include buying a multi-use vehicle for greater access to rural communities and outlying schools. Testway also wants to involve more new Central and Eastern Europe migrants.

“...if it wasn’t for Testway 7s and the help I received to encourage me to play rugby with my hearing problems, I don’t know what I’d be doing now. The support was great and now I play for England, (the England deaf rugby team) how cool is that?”
Mark Todd.
Chart 5: Share of people benefiting by type of well-being service

Community health workers 38%
Sport & fitness initiatives 15%
Partnerships with local health providers 15%
Healthy living initiatives 20%

Chart 6: Share of total investment by type of well-being service

Harm reduction initiatives 18%
Sports & fitness initiatives 15%
Mental health initiatives 10%
Support work for individuals 9%
Partnerships with local health providers 6%
Health promotions 3%
Community health workers 2%
Other 10%

The audit findings revealed that housing associations provide access to the following well-being services:

Assistance with access to services, chiropody, community health workers, cookery training, cycling, drugs health initiatives, family intervention initiatives, food co-ops, harm reduction initiatives, health and safety promotions, health clinics, healthy eating and living initiatives, health needs surveys, mental health initiatives, older people’s health and well-being initiatives, outings and holidays, parent and toddler services, partnerships with local health providers, sexual health advice, sports and fitness provision, support for older people and support work for individuals.
Poverty and social exclusion services

Key findings
During 2006/07 housing associations achieved the following:
- 984 services delivered
- Around 368,000 people benefited
- 450 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
- Invested £44 million, made up of:
  - Contributions of more than £30 million from their own money, and
  - An additional almost £14 million secured from external sources.

Housing associations spend time and money tackling poverty and social exclusion as they understand that the premium cost of poverty is felt by individuals, families and whole neighbourhoods. Benefiting around 368,000 people in the audit period, their investment targets improving financial inclusion from help with savings and loans, and managing debt, general advice on welfare benefits and money, through to dealing with fuel poverty.

Help with saving and managing debt
Housing associations use a range of projects to encourage people to save and manage debt – benefiting around 132,000 people in the audit period.

Examples include:
- Credit unions, these are financial co-operatives that offer savings accounts and loans to their members – benefiting around 72,400 people
- Help with opening bank accounts – benefiting around 48,900 people, and
- Other loan schemes for tenants – benefiting around 7,200 people.

Case study
Helping residents to manage
Moat Homes Ltd – Financial inclusion

Moat is a large housing association based in the South East, managing over 18,000 homes for affordable rent and shared ownership.

Financial inclusion is a high priority at Moat since it recognises that poverty and financial exclusion have serious impacts on the lives of residents.

Moat’s financial inclusion team works with residents to help them access banking and affordable credit and promotes financial capability. Moat also offers a specialist benefits advice and advocacy service. Since 2000, this service has increased the income of over 8,500 Moat residents by an overall total exceeding £7 million.

One example is a resident who was close to eviction due to rent arrears. He was considering giving up work and returning to benefits since his Working Tax Credits had been stopped. This meant that he was unable to manage on his reduced income and had even sold his car to support his family.

Moat calculated that he was still entitled to Working Tax Credits and assisted him with his appeal. This resulted in a back award of £15,000. As a result he remained in his home and job, and bought a new car.

Audit evidence
Overall, housing associations invested more than £25 million to help people to save and manage debt – around £17.5 million of associations’ own money and £7.5 million from others. In delivering these services associations directly employed 125 staff. Credit unions received the largest funding from the sector – almost £13.5 million, with more than £1.3 million of associations’ own money being invested.
Other financial inclusion initiatives

Housing associations also provide advice on welfare benefits and money, and a range of other financial inclusion initiatives, from helping with fuel poverty and furniture re-use projects to cheap home contents insurance – benefiting around 236,000 people in the audit period.

Examples include:

• Advice on welfare benefits – benefiting around 80,000 people
• Advice on money and debt – benefiting around 57,000 people
• Furniture and white goods re-use – benefiting around 25,600 people.

Audit evidence

To deliver this extensive range of additional financial inclusion initiatives housing associations invested almost £19 million – with £12.5 million provided by the sector, topped up by almost £6.5 million from other sources. In delivering these services associations directly employed 325 staff.

One of the largest investments was in providing welfare benefits, where almost £6 million was spent – with housing associations contributing almost £5 million, supplemented by almost £1 million from other sources.
Case study
Helping make ends meet
Genesis Housing Group – Financial inclusion initiative

Genesis Housing Group manages over 38,000 homes (including both general needs and supported housing) across London and the South East. Genesis Community, a charitable foundation and part of Genesis Housing Group, manages this financial inclusion project.

The project was initiated in 2006 by Genesis Community in partnership with Barclays Bank to pilot financial advice and guidance. Initially targeted at Springboard Housing Association customers with debt problems in East London (Springboard is part of the Genesis Housing Group). It has been running for two years.

In 2006 Barclays contributed £15,000 towards this project and a further £10,000 in 2007. Genesis Community covers the remaining costs including the employment of a money adviser (total project cost per annum is around £35,000).

The services include:
• Financial health checks
• Money advice
• Support with setting up bank accounts, and
• Referrals to furniture re-use projects.

A growing asset
The service now supports tenants in other Genesis Housing Group subsidiaries across London, Hertfordshire and Essex. A crisis fund is being established to help tenants purchase essential items like furniture.

Hitting the gold standard
The project has exceeded all the targets agreed with Barclays. The Audit Commission’s inspection of Springboard Housing Association praised Genesis Community’s work regarding this project and its link with Change – another financial inclusion initiative. Notable successful outcomes include:
• 583 customers engaged through the project
• 310 financial health checks completed – with a significant impact in averting possession proceedings and obtaining arrears repayment plans
• During 2007/08, 27 potential evictions were prevented due to the project intervention
• Over two years the total amount of potential evictions prevented was 34, with significant associated savings

Helping Rita to take back control of her life
Rita, aged 47, is a divorced, single mother of three. She is a Springboard general needs customer who, when referred to the financial inclusion project by her arrears officer, had rent arrears of £997 plus other debts totalling £18,000.

Rita had to give up work following a nervous breakdown and now lives on incapacity benefit. She failed to notify the housing benefit department who then froze her benefits as they were not informed of a change of circumstances.

On interviewing Rita it came to light that she owed over £18,000 to a raft of creditors, including credit cards, utility companies, catalogue companies and friends.

Rita was in denial and had not been opening any letters or post. A bailiff had attempted to gain entry due to an unpaid parking fine. It also transpired that she had failed to keep up payments on her TV licence repayment plan.

A financial statement was drawn up and quickly submitted to the Springboard arrears officer who agreed to accept token monthly repayments provided her housing benefit claim was resolved. Rita was referred to the in-house housing benefit officer who was able to assist her in backdating her claim, which is still pending. The creditors were all contacted and told about her situation, offered token payments and a request to freeze interest.

Rita was advised to stick to the repayment plans and not on any account to use her credit cards or to borrow more money from any source.
The audit findings revealed that housing associations provide access to the following poverty and social exclusion services:

- Assistance with opening bank accounts
- BME financial inclusion initiatives
- Charitable donations
- Clothing grants
- Community development finance initiatives
- Credit unions
- Financial inclusion awareness activities
- Financial literacy training
- Fuel poverty advice
- General tenancy support
- Household insurance schemes
- Housing benefit appeals
- Loans schemes
- Youth financial inclusion initiatives
- Money and debt advice
- Pay point services
- Rent deposit initiatives
- Saving schemes
- White goods and furniture re-use
- Web-based service delivery for rural areas
- Welfare and benefit advice

The audit findings revealed that housing associations provide access to the following poverty and social exclusion services:
Community safety and cohesion services

Key findings
In 2006/07 housing associations achieved the following:
• 1,878 services delivered
• Around 1.7 million households benefited
• 1,250 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested almost £90.5 million, made up of:
  • Contributions of almost £55 million from their own money, and
  • An additional almost £35.5 million secured from external sources.

Housing associations are helping to create safer and more inclusive neighbourhoods and provide a wide range of services from community wardens to working with excluded groups. Their investment benefited around 1.7 million households in the audit period.

Promoting cohesion
The majority of housing associations’ investment is directed towards promoting cohesion and working with specific groups within the community – benefiting around 1 million households in the audit period.

Examples include:
• Community events and conferences – benefiting around 216,400 households
• Youth diversionary measures such as youth clubs and other activities – benefiting around 164,400 households, and
• General community development and cohesion work – benefiting around 36,800 households.

Audit evidence
Overall, the sector invested almost £52 million to promote cohesion and work with specific groups – with associations spending almost £28.5 million, plus an additional £23.5 million from other funders. In delivering these services, associations directly employed around 570 staff. Youth diversionary measures received the largest financial contribution at £24 million – with housing associations contributing £10 million and £14 million received from other sources.
Crime prevention and creating safer neighbourhoods

Another element of housing associations’ work is crime prevention and creating safer neighbourhoods — benefiting around 3,829,400 households in the audit period.

Examples include:
- Community wardens — benefiting around 256,700 households
- Domestic violence support — benefiting around 167,000 households, and
- Supporting people to deal with the effects of crime — benefiting around 50,500 households.

Case study
Fighting back against domestic violence
Stonewall Housing — Domestic violence support

Stonewall Housing received funding from Comic Relief over three years to establish the Domestic Abuse Housing Advice Project. This project is led by a part-time member of staff who specialises in providing advice to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) victims of domestic abuse.

During 2007/08, over 125 advice line callers identified domestic abuse as a support issue. Studies show that LGBT people who are homeless are prone to mental health problems, alcohol and drug misuse and sexual exploitation, as they fear accessing services. Stonewall’s advice and support services ensure that LGBT people get the assistance they need and prevent the exacerbation of support needs which could become a costly burden on society in the future. The Housing Options Guide for LGBT victims of domestic abuse was downloaded over 3,000 times in the first two months of release by a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies.

Audit evidence
Overall, the sector invested £38.5 million to tackle crime and help create safer neighbourhoods — with associations spending £26.5 million topped up by £12 million from other funders. In delivering these services, associations directly employed around 680 staff.

Community wardens had the greatest funding — almost £11 million — with housing associations spending £7 million and almost £4 million received from other funders.
Case study
Two original approaches for dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour

Maritime Housing Association (part of the Regenda Group) manages more than 4,000 general needs and leasehold properties around Merseyside.

Local solutions
Working with local schools, police, and Mersey Travel, Maritime is operating two new initiatives in St Helens and Newton-le-Willows aimed at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. As well as providing support and resources, Maritime has so far invested around £18,000. This has been used to deliver:

• A police quad bike used to patrol neighbourhoods. The quad bike is used to tackle “fear of crime and lack of visibility” in open land and hot spot areas unreachable via standard police vehicles.
• School presentations by Big Dave (previously held the title of the World’s Strongest Man) to make young people consider the impact of anti-social behaviour.

These two unique approaches show how Maritime is responding to local needs.

Creating safer neighbourhoods
The police quad bike continues its patrols working in conjunction with Maritime neighbourhood officers. In addition, more presentations are planned for Big Dave. Already both initiatives are having positive outcomes:

• 700 children have attended the schools presentations with 90 per cent of children saying that the presentation increased their knowledge of respect and anti-social behaviour. Favourable comments have also been received from the schools involved.

“The presentation, especially to Year 8 was, I think, what they needed to hear.”
Anthony Giles, Assistant Head Teacher for St Cuthbert’s Catholic High School, Sutton, St Helens.

• The use of the police quad bike has been effective at tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. Official police figures are still being compiled but a similar project in a nearby neighbourhood led to the following results in one year:
  o Seizing of 77 uninsured vehicles and mini motorbikes
  o Issuing of 114 written warnings for anti-social use of vehicles
  o Prosecution of 193 offenders, and
  o Seizing of alcohol from youths and dealing with other similar incidents.

The police quad bike (pictured above) is a good example of a housing association working in partnership with the local police.

“Feeling safe in their neighbourhoods is very important to our residents and something the Regenda Group aims considerable resources at. By working in partnership with local schools, police and other agencies, we are seeing very positive results in our aim to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour across our estates.”
Alex Heyes, Neighbourhood Manager Maritime Housing Association (pictured on the left).

“The bike can be fully utilised to patrol our hot spot areas. The bike will become a welcome sight in the parks and open spaces in the neighbourhood. I would urge the public to get to know the officer who will be riding the machine and tell him of any concerns they have about crime and anti-social behaviour.”
Inspector Tim Kelly (pictured on the right).
The audit findings revealed that housing associations provide access to the following safety and cohesion services:

Additional police patrols, anti-bullying initiatives, asylum, refugee and immigration initiatives, citizenship classes, combating anti-social behaviour, community research, community history projects, community information services, community publications, community radio, community safety partnerships, community support officer funding, crime support, domestic violence initiatives, sanctuary schemes, drug awareness, equality and diversity initiatives, events and conferences, fire safety projects, LGBT hate crime initiatives, home security and property safety initiatives, mediation services, neighbourhood watch schemes, newsletters, police and justice partnerships, restorative justice, street safety initiatives, support to community groups, victim support schemes, volunteering initiatives, wardens, witness support schemes, working with excluded groups, youth advice services and youth diversionary measures.
Environmental services

Key findings
During 2006/07 housing associations achieved the following:
• 1,472 services delivered
• Around 1.7 million households benefited
• 690 staff directly employed.

To do this housing associations:
• Invested almost £78.5 million, made up of:
  o Contributions of more than £62 million from their own money
  o An additional £16.5 million secured from external sources.

Housing associations are improving the places people call their neighbourhood and are helping to create greener and more pleasant communities. Benefiting around 1.7 million households in the audit period, their work in this area is very wide-ranging, from landscaping and gardening, initiatives to improving public facilities plus energy conservation and recycling schemes.

Greening and landscaping our neighbourhoods
Housing associations are providing services to create greener and more pleasant neighbourhoods – benefiting around 388,000 households the audit period.

Examples include:
• General environmental improvements – benefiting around 291,000 households, and
• Maintaining gardens in the community – benefiting around 97,000 households.

Case study
A blooming success
Connect Housing Association – Community garden plus local involvement

Connect Housing Association has 3,200 homes across Leeds, Kirklees and Calderdale in both rural and inner city areas.

The Woodland Mount Pocket Park was once unwanted derelict land in the heart of Chapeltown, inner city Leeds. Connect Housing, together with other agencies, has transformed it into a small community garden. The project has been a great success, with the following outcomes:
• Provision of safe play space for local children
• Provision of pleasant recreation space for all
• Active involvement of local people in the design process, and
• Positive publicity for Chapeltown.

Local people were consulted throughout the project and schoolchildren helped to design the sculptures on site. The park also has a central courtyard area used for community performances, teaching and leisure. Micah Richards, the England football star who grew up in Chapeltown, opened the park in summer 2007. Connect is currently planning to install a mural and sculpture which will be designed by local children to reflect the diverse ethnic backgrounds of the local community.

Audit evidence
Overall, the sector invested £41.5 million to deliver services used to improve the shared spaces in our neighbourhoods – with £34.5 million spent by housing associations and an additional £7 million from other sources. In delivering these services, associations directly employed 187 staff. The most significant investments in these types of services were in general environmental improvements, where more than £31 million was spent, with associations giving more than £25 million and an additional £6 million supplied by others.
Other environmental services

Many other environmental services are delivered by housing associations, ranging from energy efficiency measures and recycling, to dealing with litter and graffiti, plus a lot more – benefiting around 1.3 million households in the audit period.

Examples include:
- Estate caretakers – benefiting around 272,000 households
- Waste and bulky items collection – benefiting around 227,500 households, and
- Promoting and implementing measures to improve energy efficiency – benefiting around 227,000 households.

Audit evidence

Overall, the sector invested almost £37 million to deliver other environmental services – with contributions of almost £28 million from housing associations with a further £9 million from external funders. In delivering these other environmental services, associations directly employed 500 staff. Promoting and implementing measures to improve energy efficiency received the largest investment at more than £13 million, with associations spending more than £8 million and an additional £5 million invested by others.
Case study

Creating a warm front by working with local residents

Family Housing Association (Birmingham) Ltd – Eco Awareness Project

Family Housing Association (Birmingham) Ltd (FHA) has been providing social housing for 40 years, and currently has 2,100 properties, mainly in the most deprived areas of Birmingham.

Summerfield is an inner-city area of Birmingham located in the heart of Ladywood – one of England’s most deprived neighbourhoods. In 2004, residents wanting to make a difference formed Summerfield Residents’ Association (SRA). Their aim was to make Summerfield a thriving community by reducing turnover and improving the local environment. Working in partnership with FHA, Birmingham City Council (BCC), and Urban Living (the Birmingham and Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder), many of these challenges have been met.

Following successful boundary wall and front garden projects, FHA, SRA and other local partners set about recreating Summerfield as an Eco Village. The project aims to make the neighbourhood more eco-efficient and increase local residents’ environmental awareness.

An effective element of this project has been work with six local schools facilitated by BCC’s Housing Education Initiative. This included local children producing:

- Short films on the eco programme
- A CD featuring eco-themed songs the children had written and recorded
- An internet podcast eco radio station www.eco-radio.co.uk.

An Eco Office was also established at the local church hall. This is used to demonstrate how a range of eco-technologies can be used effectively to achieve energy efficiency.

In June 2008, Summerfield Eco Village played a key role in Birmingham’s first Climate Change Festival. Residents worked closely with FHA and BCC to plan an exciting programme to engage local people in the eco agenda. A highlight was Dame Ellen MacArthur’s visit to Summerfield Eco Village, where she was greeted by children from local schools engaged in the project. Since 2006, more than 1,000 visitors have toured Summerfield Eco Village, including Summerfield’s first Eco House and Eco Office.

Other achievements include 329 homeowners meeting fuel poverty criteria having solar panels and energy efficient boilers installed. It is estimated that the eco installations will deliver 60 per cent of each household’s hot water and reduce fuel bills by at least £150 a year. A local contractor installing these improvements engaged local unemployed residents as trainees. One of these trainees gained a permanent job with the contractor while the others increased their skills and confidence, so helping them secure future employment.

Sheffield Hallam University conducted an independent evaluation of the scheme and concluded that it had a very positive eco impact, including positively influencing residents’ attitudes and behaviour with respect to energy consumption and other eco-friendly practices.

Hotting-up

Summerfield residents and partner agencies are currently working together to develop:

- A Summerfield Eco Village Neighbourhood Charter, and
- An eco school.

The good practice achieved in Summerfield is shaping future eco-programmes, including an Urban Living funded Eco Neighbourhood Programme in South Lozells, Birmingham, which FHA will deliver.
The audit findings revealed that housing associations provide access to the following environmental services:

- Abandoned vehicles removal
- Community chest fund
- Anti-dog fouling measures
- Art and street decorations in public places
- Assisted decorations
- Community facilities
- Community gardening
- Energy efficiency measures
- Environmental enforcement and improvements
- Environmental and regeneration community involvement
- Estate caretakers
- Handyperson schemes
- Litter and graffiti initiatives
- Tidy-up days
- Mobility schemes
- Nature reserves
- Payback partnerships (ex-offenders work on environmental improvements)
- Recycling projects
- Street parties
- Waste and bulky items collections

Chart 11: Share of households benefiting by type of environmental service

Chart 12: Share of total investment by type of environmental service
Key findings

Over a five year period to March 2007 housing associations:

- Provided or maintained nearly 1,000 neighbourhood facilities.

To do this housing associations:

- Invested £351.5 million, made up of:
  - Contributions of £151.5 million from their own money, and
  - An additional £200 million of funding secured from external sources.

Housing associations invest in a wide range of community facilities – regenerating and creating sustainable neighbourhoods. This investment provides and maintains nearly 1,000 neighbourhood social and economic community hubs across the country.

Housing associations are one of the greatest social enterprise success stories ever. No other third sector organisations can match this scale of investment in neighbourhood facilities using such a range of funding options. This illustrates housing associations’ professionalism, dedication to social values, their local knowledge and long-term commitment to the neighbourhoods in which they work.
How housing associations are investing in neighbourhood facilities

The audit reveals that from all sources housing associations invested:

- £235 million – providing more than 550 community venues. These are places where people can socialise or receive social support. This includes 350 community centres. Community centres were the most frequently cited type of neighbourhood facility and received the most investment. In total, £129 million was invested in community centres with £56 million spent by housing associations and £73 million from all alternative sources. Other community venues included more than 90 information centres.

- £66 million – providing more than 140 general community facilities – these included improving the well-being of neighbourhoods by funding more than 30 health centres, enabling an entrepreneurial spirit by sustaining almost 30 business start-up and retail units, plus engaging in the educational and cultural life of neighbourhoods by supporting arts venues, nurseries, and IT learning facilities etc.

- £32 million – providing more than 110 community spaces. These are shared outdoor spaces and facilities, ranging from city farms to landscaped areas.

- £18.5 million – providing 160 community sports facilities. These include nearly 100 play areas and more than 50 mixed sports facilities.

Case study

Building a better place to live
Richmond Housing Partnership – Community centre and traveller site upgrade

Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP) owns and manages more than 10,000 properties in South West London. Working in partnership with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Richmond and Twickenham Primary Care Trust and key community representatives from the traveller site, RHP has developed a community centre at Bishops Grove Traveller Site in Hampton and upgraded the site – improving drainage, the play area and parking. The community centre is now used to engage with residents from the traveller community and address issues of social exclusion and quality of life.

The cost of site upgrades was £299,000 with Communities and Local Government contributing £224,000 and £75,000 of funding from RHP. The cost of developing the community centre, £23,000, was also paid for by RHP. Ongoing costs of running the centre are funded by RHP and local partners.

This investment and good management of the site is paying dividends with improved facilities and environmental conditions. The centre itself has helped to improve relationships between members of the travelling community and other local residents and is currently attaining the following outcomes:

- 28 young people engaged in a healthy eating programme
- 12 participants in literacy and numeracy-orientated English Language Programme
- 19 homework club participants, and
- Eight participants in computer training.
Case study
Working to create a future
Midland Heart – Broad Heath School Redevelopment Project

Midland Heart is the largest housing and regeneration group in the Midlands. It invests more than £100 million every year in improving homes, building new ones and making neighbourhoods more desirable and sought after places to live. In total it manages 32,000 homes.

One of its many projects is the Broad Heath School Redevelopment in Foleshill, Coventry which cost £4.5 million to complete. In addition to £1 million invested by Midland Heart, funding totalling £3.5 million was sourced from a diverse range of partners including Coventry and Nuneaton Regeneration Zone, Advantage West Midlands, Learning and Skills Council, Prince’s Trust, Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and Coventry University.

This project has transformed a formerly disused listed Victorian school into a vibrant mixed use development. The success of the redevelopment has reinvigorated the Foleshill neighbourhood, which has a diverse community and is designated one of the UK’s most deprived areas. The project includes the following neighbourhood facilities:

An enterprise centre
The centre is targeted at young people and provides a One Stop Shop approach to enterprise and business guidance, advice, signposting and training. It encourages business start-ups by providing spaces for pre-start companies.

Social live/work apartments
These include eight flats and are the first social rented live/work units for young entrepreneurs in the West Midlands. Entrepreneurs using these units include: a website designer, a photographer/artist, a textile designer, a life coach, a Mexican jewellery retailer, a graphic designer and a trader in African artefacts.

As a direct result of these two initiatives there have been:
- 17 jobs created
- 42 businesses supported
- 15 business created.

A young persons’ centre
This is managed and staffed by the city council and works very closely with the enterprise centre. They both share the same aims and objectives, which are to maximise opportunities available to local young people. Over the past 12 months 17 local schools have used the centre. These schools have included special needs, mainstream and excluded students. By offering an alternative curriculum to these young people some have attained qualifications that they would not have been able to do normally. The centre provides:
- A recording studio with multimedia equipment
- An IT suite
- General counselling and information facilities to help young people successfully negotiate their adolescent years.

The young persons’ centre has achieved the following:
- Assisted 2,988 people
- Created 8 community initiatives.

“Since I launched Studio Skizm in 2005, all the support I have received from living in a Broadheath live/work unit and Broad Horizons Enterprise Centre has enabled me to sustain my business and given me a stable environment to work in. I am currently working with Broad Horizons Enterprise Centre providing an empowerment training scheme called Brains and Beauty.”

Natasha Graham, entrepreneur.
The audit findings revealed that housing associations provide and maintain the following neighbourhood facilities:

Alcohol treatment centres, allotments, arts and drama facilities, business start-up units, CCTV and street lighting, children’s centres, city farms, community centres, community cafés, community and sensory gardens, community kitchens, community resource and information centres, cricket grounds, cycle paths and footpaths, day and drop-in centres, football fields, foyers, furniture recycling workshops, greenhouses, health and well-being centres, holiday homes, IT facilities, landscaping, libraries, hostels, nurseries, parks, parking facilities, places of worship, play areas, police bases, schools, shop and retail enterprises, sports facilities, swimming pools, training centres, village greens, village halls, women’s refuges and youth centres.
Housing associations are independent social businesses, they have a strong borrowing record with major lenders plus a multi-billion pound asset base. Being independent, they are able to invest in neighbourhoods without their borrowing counting towards public debt. In addition, the sector is one of the best examples of independent third sector organisations collaborating with an array of funders to deliver real outcomes for communities.

Some of the most successful neighbourhood initiatives undertaken by housing associations are in conjunction with partners. To illustrate the range of funders housing associations work with the audit examined how often each funding partner is cited.

Please note that these audit results do not reflect the amount of funding received from different partners.

Neighbourhood services funding partners
As shown in Chart 15 the most frequently cited funding partner that housing associations worked with to deliver neighbourhood services was local government, accounting for one in four (24 per cent) of all partners. This was followed by charitable, voluntary and faith organisations: one in five (19 per cent) and joint funding with other housing associations: one in six (15 per cent).

Neighbourhood facilities funding partners
Chart 16 reveals that housing associations’ most frequently cited funding partner used to provide and maintain neighbourhood facilities was also local government, accounting for two in five (39 per cent) of all citations. This was followed by charitable, voluntary and faith organisations, which accounted for one in three (30 per cent) and the National Lottery which was one in five (21 per cent).

Place shaping
Local government now has a strategic place-shaping role, alongside other local partners. The audit results demonstrate that housing associations are working in partnership with local government on neighbourhood initiatives, which make a key contribution to this place-shaping agenda.
Older people are among those who will benefit from the multi-agency toolkit, which offers voluntary and statutory groups the ability to find out about each other’s work and team up to deliver services.

Case study
Making partnerships work
Mendip Housing – Multi-agency toolkit

Mendip Housing manages more than 4,000 homes in rural Somerset. A grant of £30,000 from the Mendip Strategic Housing Partnership helped develop an accessible web-based toolkit that voluntary and statutory agencies in Mendip use to identify and co-ordinate projects. Its usefulness was demonstrated when two members of the partnership realised they were doing similar work. By amalgamating their findings they were able to make cost savings and realise joint funding opportunities to the ultimate benefit of the wider community.

The toolkit is managed and maintained by Mendip Housing. They have used it to collaborate with Somerset Racial Equality Council, Adult Learning and Leisure plus the Primary Care Trust. The toolkit currently holds details of 85 individual contacts and 31 organisations.

Older people are among those who will benefit from the multi-agency toolkit, which offers voluntary and statutory groups the ability to find out about each other’s work and team up to deliver services.
Chart 15:
Share of citations for funding partners who contributed to the delivery of neighbourhood services

- Local government: 17%
- Charitable & faith organisations: 14%
- Joint funding with other housing associations: 11%
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund: 9%
- Home Office & police: 8%
- Private sector: 5%
- National Lottery: 5%
- European Union: 4%
- Government agencies: 4%
- Other: 23%

Chart 16:
Share of citations for funding partners who contributed to the provision or maintenance of neighbourhood facilities

- Local government: 16%
- Charitable & faith organisations: 13%
- National Lottery: 9%
- Joint funding with other housing associations: 8%
- Regional government & regional development agencies: 7%
- Communities & Local Government: 6%
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund: 5%
- Home Office & police: 5%
- Government agencies: 5%
- Other: 24%
Housing associations give practical help and support to neighbourhood initiatives by providing numerous in-kind benefits. Without this support many initiatives would not succeed.

Housing associations are key anchors to many neighbourhood initiatives. On top of the huge financial investment the sector makes, associations quietly and constantly give an enormous amount of alternative support. This help is commonly seen as part of the day job and is often unrecorded. Even though this support does not figure on the balance sheet, it is still very important.

Overall, staff volunteering their time was the most frequently cited benefit in kind – accounting for one in three (30 per cent) of all in-kind benefits. The second most frequently cited was free room hire – accounting for a quarter (25 per cent). If supplied on a commercial basis both these would incur a considerable cost.

The audit categorised the in-kind benefits associations provide into the following two types:

- Facilities and equipment
- Support and advice

Overall, associations gave an equal amount of both types of in-kind benefits.

Facilities and equipment
The most frequently cited types of in-kind contribution listed here were free room hire, transport and general supplies.

Support and advice
The most frequently cited types of support and advice are staff volunteering their time, administrative support and managerial and technical support.
Case study
Using space, time and computers to create knowledge
Coastline Housing Ltd – Customer resource facility

Coastline Housing Ltd (CHL) is based in Cornwall and manages 3,500 homes. Following consultation with residents, a once disused space within a sheltered housing scheme was identified as a suitable venue for a customer resource facility. Residents worked with CHL to organise IT equipment and volunteered to staff the facility. At present a much wider customer consultation and review is being undertaken to plan the future development of the facility.
How neighbourhoods depend upon housing associations’ in-kind contributions

Chart 17 illustrates the in-kind benefits that associations provide in order to make the various strands of their neighbourhood work a success.

Chart 17:
The share of in-kind contributions made by housing associations for each category of neighbourhood service.

The audit findings revealed that housing associations provide the following in-kind benefits:

Administrative support, advice, flyers, furniture, heating and lighting, IT support and equipment, management advice, mentoring, office equipment, officers time, parking bays, phones, postage, printing, prizes, publicity, refreshments, research, rooms, storage, training and transport.
Methodology – how the audit was conducted

The audit is the largest study yet to measure and categorises the range, scale and scope of the sector’s neighbourhood investment. It also identifies how this work is funded and who benefits.

The audit surveyed the neighbourhood services provided by housing associations for the financial year April 2006 to March 2007. The audit also collected information on the range and number of neighbourhood facilities (e.g. community centres and health facilities) that housing associations invested in over a five-year period up until March 2007.

Since this was the first national survey of this type, the audit was initiated with extensive background research. This included pulling together the list of neighbourhood services. This list was based on work undertaken by Liverpool Housing Trust and published by the Housing Corporation in Up your street: Housing associations and the neighbourhoods and communities agenda.

A major challenge was to design a form that was comprehensive, but also applicable to the diverse range of housing associations that make up the sector. To ensure the form was fit for purpose it was piloted before the main study began.

Having completed this background work, in December 2007 an audit form with full instructions was mailed to 1,269 Federation members.

The instructions clearly stated that the audit was only concerned with neighbourhood services and facilities and so did not include services relating to housing management, housing services, Supporting People and registered care services. The definitions used to define housing management, housing services, Supporting People and registered care services are shown in the following box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services that are not included in the audit:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing management</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy formulation, appointing management agents, selecting tenants, setting and collecting rents, managing the estate, insuring the property, consulting tenants, dealing with tenant disputes, advising tenants on matters related to their tenancies, dealing with resettlement, liaison with providers of other services needed by the residents, occasional temporary help with matters of care, welfare and support, payment of the salaries and employment costs of staff engaged in these management activities, payment of a proportion of finance and administrative overheads charged to these management activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal heat, light, water, television, telephone, lifts, providing security devices, maintaining gardens, grounds, car parks and play areas, cleaning windows and communal areas, refuse disposal, providing fire equipment and alarms, pest control, maintenance of communal kitchen machines, replacement of communal equipment, payment of the salaries and employment costs of staff engaged in the provision of these services, payment of a proportion of finance and administrative overheads charged to these services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting People</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services funded by Supporting People under contract to the the local authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Registered care services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care homes and registered domiciliary care services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Throughout this report:

• All staff numbers quoted are based on full-time equivalents. For example, one full-time equivalent equals one staff member working fulltime on a service for a year. If they worked for 50 per cent of their time this equals 0.5.

• All total investments for neighbourhood services include the total of a housing association’s own investment (see below) and funding from other sources.

• When calculating a housing association’s own investment for neighbourhood services this includes both staff costs and project costs.

• When calculating a housing association’s own investment for neighbourhood facilities this includes capital costs only.

• A service is a top-level collective term used to describe all projects relating to a particular neighbourhood service that a housing association delivers. A service could therefore include multiple large projects based in several locations, or it may refer to a small single project.

Regional distribution. The audit is therefore the largest and most detailed national evidence base of the neighbourhood services and facilities provided by housing associations ever undertaken.

To estimate the sector’s total neighbourhood contribution the results reported in this document have been weighted and grossed-up to reflect Federation members’ total stock.

This report and a copy of the audit form can be downloaded from: www.housing.org.uk/neighbourhoodaudit.

Technical details

Throughout this report:

• Within each service, data was collected for the number of people and households that benefited. Only the most relevant figure is quoted in this report. For example, if the service is more people-based then only the number of people benefited is reported.

• Housing associations used their own definitions of what constituted a benefit to a person or household. Benefits covered a wide range of activity including providing information, signposting people to services and individual support.

• The numbers benefiting from the services that housing associations deliver is based on the number of instances of any benefit from an individual service. For example, if a single person/household accessed two different services, this counts as two people/households benefiting.
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The National Housing Federation represents 1,300 not-for-profit, independent housing associations who together provide two million homes for around five million people in England.

Housing associations have launched IN business for neighbourhoods, a project to improve performance and challenge negative perceptions of the sector and its customers. They have made fresh commitments to neighbourhoods, customers and excellence.
For more information see www.iNbiz.org

The National Housing Federation’s audit showed that in 2006/07 housing associations:

• Delivered 6,800 neighbourhood services and provided or maintained hundreds of neighbourhood facilities.
• Benefited around 5.5 million people, the equivalent of around one in ten of the population.
• Employed 4,560 staff, directly, to deliver these neighbourhood services.
• Invested almost £435 million to provide these services and facilities – made up of £272 million of their own funds and an additional £163 million from other sources.
• Offered a wide range of services including community radio, children’s play facilities, new business start-ups, energy efficiency programmes, healthy eating advice and food co-ops, savings schemes, retail enterprises and village halls to name a few.