

Keeping our Promises

FIVE years ago, Erimus Housing made a number of promises to its residents. Seventy five to be exact.



Those promises were made in November 2004, when out of 11,968 properties previously owned by Middlesbrough Council, 52.7% of homes were non-decent, over 1,300 were classed as 'difficult to let' and the Council's programme for repairs and improvements had been only around £5.8 million a year.

Following an overwhelmingly positive vote from residents, the council transferred its properties to newly-formed independent company Erimus Housing – and the 75 promises to residents were made.

Five years on and Erimus has met all 75 promises as well as continuing to enhance services for customers and improve on our performance.

The stock transfer has already delivered far more than was originally imagined and has exceeded the initial promises made to tenants.

Key highlights include:

- An investment of £150 million in repairs, modernisations and estate improvements providing 3,700 new bathrooms, 7,300 new kitchens, 6,300 new heating systems and rewires to 8,300 homes;
- 1,000 unpopular and outdated properties demolished to date;
- 220 training places, apprentices and training opportunities created;
- A nationally recognised resident involvement framework;
- Successful delivery of the Council's homelessness service which has slashed the number of homeless cases;
- A range of enhanced customer services such as the Disabled Persons Housing Service, tenant reward scheme, award-winning financial inclusion team Tandem,
- one-stop shop Homechoice and a dedicated anti-social behaviour team;
- 300 new homes completed or in programme, representing a further £31.5 million investment;
- A range of community investment initiatives including award-winning citizenship scheme Peer Kids;
- Multi-million regeneration schemes at Hemlington and Grove Hill;
- Ownership of sheltered housing properties in Stockton;
- A successful in-house repairs and improvement team at Erimus Building Services.

All of the services to residents have been transformed and this has resulted in greater customer satisfaction, as reflected in the latest residents' survey results.

In 2000, only 85.6% of tenants were satisfied with their home, a figure that has now risen to 91.1%, 78.5% were happy with the overall housing service, which now stands at 88.7% and only

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74.4% believed their rent represented good value for money. More than 88% now believe that is the case.

Mike Carr, Chair of the Board for Erimus Housing, said: "We are really proud that we have done the job we set out to do within the timescales we set.

"We are now looking forward to continuing our investment in communities and regenerating neighbourhoods.

"We will be looking at plans for new homes and how we can further support communities through these difficult times.

"Another priority will be how we can deliver even more enhanced services for our customers."

Erimus Housing has worked closely with Middlesbrough Council over the five years, a partnership which has proved to be a great success.

Middlesbrough Council Chief Executive Ian Parker said: "Erimus is to be congratulated on the level of investment it has brought to the town and to its properties.

"I look forward to a continued close working relationship in the years to come."



FIVE YEARS OF IMPROVEMENTS

MODERNISING properties was at the top of Erimus Housing's priority list when it took ownership of Middlesbrough Council's former properties in 2004.

The company reacted to the wishes of residents by starting its five year investment programme to bring properties up to modern day living standards and meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

Five years on and those wishes have not only been met; they've also been met within the £150 million budget that was originally set aside.

Any properties that did not meet a surveyor's standards received, where needed, items including new bathrooms, kitchens, windows and doors, heating systems and even rewires.

On top of this investment, environmental improvements have also been made, including repairs to paths and walls, new fencing and even extra garaging provision.

Improvements included:

- 3,700 new bathrooms
- 7,300 new kitchens
- 6,300 new heating systems
- 8,300 rewires

Chris Smith, Managing Director of Erimus Housing, said: "We are really proud of our investment programme, which we know has made a really big difference to people's lives and has received consistently high satisfaction scores from residents.

"But the work doesn't stop here. The programme will roll on year after year, investing even more money into our existing homes, where it is needed, to benefit even more residents.



FIVE YEARS OF CHANGE



ONE happy resident has spoken of the changes she has seen since Erimus Housing took over ownership of Middlesbrough Council's properties.

Rose Jones, from Berwick Hills, had been a Middlesbrough Council resident since 1971 and transferred to be an Erimus Housing tenant when the company started business in November 2004.

Since Erimus took over ownership of the properties, Rose said she has never looked back.

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"Keeping its tenants in line and stopping people from misbehaving is a real priority."

Since becoming an Erimus Housing resident, Rose has had a new kitchen fitted in her home, has attended consultation events and has even been helped to set up the Friends of Berwick Hills School group.

"The people at Erimus have been a real help," explained Rose. "I didn't know anything about meetings before."

Rose has been involved in a number of residents' consultation events and

believes Erimus is committed to listening to and involving residents.

"Erimus always asks for residents' opinions and takes them into account," she added.

"It's easy to get involved; members of staff make it very public that people can get involved and they are a really friendly bunch.

"My area is kept really well and there is a much bigger choice of properties. All in all I can't fault Erimus."

