

PRESS RELEASE

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Board boost for growth partnership

A planned alliance between the New Charter Housing Trust Group and Aksa Housing Association (based in Oldham) moved closer, with Boards of both landlords agreeing the deal late last week.

The two associations announced in February this year they were exploring how they might work more closely together for the benefit of their tenants in the Greater Manchester area.

Danny McLoughlin, Director of Legal Services at New Charter has been steering the partnership arrangements and was pleased at the unanimous approval of Boards. ‘Our motivation is to expand both our businesses by using our strengths. We expect some efficiency savings as well, but this is an arrangement which will position us to grow,’ he said. ‘New Charter’s status as a transfer landlord meant that we’ve had constitutional



changes to draft and approve which preserve the strong voice of tenants. I'm confident this will open up new markets for us both."

Sajjad Hussain, Chief Executive of Aksa, commented: "Combining our expertise, financial strength and organisational capacity makes sense, especially as the housing association sector is in a significant period of change. Bringing Aksa and New Charter together has mutual benefits, and we plan the sum to be greater than the two parts. Our Boards were satisfied we had canvassed tenants' views, and that we will develop the two brands side by side."

The business case for the partnership envisages strengthening and expanding Aksa's successful development programme with more resources; and New Charter increasing its ability to work within the BME communities and over a wider geographic area.

Now the remaining step is the approval of the Housing Corporation's Registration Committee, planned for November. Some benefits are already being realised, with Aksa taking advantage of repairs and maintenance services offered by New Charter Building Company. The partnership will be formally enacted by the end of the year.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage homes transferred from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. With a turnover of almost £60million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is one of the country's largest Registered Social Landlords, and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog. It owns just under 14,600 homes.



2. Aksa Housing Association registered with the Housing Corporation in 1990. It was originally known as Oldham Muslim Association, but changed to Aksa following the merger with Bury-based Dar-ul Aman Housing Association in 1995. It owns 700 homes in Oldham, Manchester, Tameside and Bury.
3. Existing tenants rights and responsibilities are unaffected by the proposed partnership.
4. **iN business for neighbourhoods** is a long-term project to improve housing associations' performance, and challenge negative perceptions of the sector and its customers. The project was launched at the National Housing Federation's annual conference in 2003. To date, 80 per cent of the sector's stock – over 1.5 million homes – is managed by associations who have joined the initiative and made fresh commitments to neighbourhoods, customers and excellence.

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