

PRESS RELEASE

9th November 2005

First steps



Photographs available of children from the Nrtya Jyoti dance troupe performing at New Charter's head office

The final step to incorporating Aksa Housing Association (based in Oldham) as part of the New Charter Housing Trust Group was taken formally on Tuesday evening (8th November).

The two associations announced in February they were exploring how they might work more closely together, and the Housing Corporation gave the green light in September.

Board Members and senior staff gathered to celebrate the historic event. As well as the usual formalities and documents to sign, the event celebrated the diversity agenda, as one of only two BME associations in the North West joined what was once Britain's biggest transfer landlord. Children from an Oldham-based troupe, Nrtya Jyoti, made it a colourful spectacle as they entertained with traditional dances.



business for neighbourhoods

Ian Munro, Group Chief Executive at New Charter was pleased with the amalgamation. “Our motivation is to expand both our businesses by using our strengths. Unlike some other arrangements between associations, which are trying to reduce management overheads, this has been driven by the opportunities out there. Yes, we expect and will achieve some efficiency savings, but this is an arrangement which will position us to grow,” he said. “I’m confident this will open up new markets for us both.”

Sajjad Hussain, Managing Director of Aksa, added: “We’ve been careful to embrace the respective strengths of both Aksa and New Charter. In succession over the last few months, our tenants, Board Members and the Housing Corporation’s internal Registrations Assessment Committee gave it the go-ahead. Now we will develop the two brands side by side for the benefit of Greater Manchester tenants.”

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

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 651 homes in Oldham, Manchester, Tameside and Bury.

3. The alliance will not affect existing tenants' rights and responsibilities.
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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