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NEWS RELEASE

School gardening projects get a helping hand

Young apprentices from Chevin Housing Group's training centre in Featherstone have been hard at work constructing planters for two schools in the Chapeltown area of Leeds. The apprentices, all learning construction skills, jumped at the chance to have a go at putting together the planters which Chevin are kindly donating to the schools.

A total of 6 planters were delivered to Bracken Edge School and Hillcrest Primary School on Tuesday 14th July 2009. The planters will be used by the children at Bracken Edge School to grow their own vegetables and at Hillcrest school to plant flowers. Compost and seeds are also being donated by Chevin. Children from both schools who are aged between 3 and 11 years are really excited about starting their own gardening projects. Hillcrest School will also have the opportunity to take part in a competition to paint the planters now they are in place.

Steve Close, Group Chief Executive of Chevin Housing Group said: "We are delighted to be able to help the schools with their teaching and it's great to see how excited the children are to be involved. Practical projects such as these are an important part of their education".

Charlotte Ryan from Bracken Edge School added "We are excited to have the planters so that we can go ahead with our plans for a school allotment. Many of our children love gardening but rarely get the opportunity because parents/carers are busy, so we intend to allow classes time to sow vegetables and nurture plants until they get to the exciting part of the first harvest. We want the children to see every stage from seed to produce and to involve them in recycling of any un-used plant matter in the composter that Chevin have also constructed for us. We are grateful for this gift from Chevin Housing because we would have had to fundraise for a long time to afford these ourselves, and we know that the construction industry is facing its own financial difficulties".

Photographed:

Children from Hillcrest School with the young apprentices from Chevin's training centre.

Children from Bracken Edge School along with the young apprentice's from Chevin's training centre and Ms Ryan (class teacher), Mr Primmer (Deputy Head) and Steve Lumb (Construction Training Co-ordinator) from Chevin.

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Notes to Editors

Chevin Housing Group

The Chevin Housing Group was formed in 2001 following the merger of a number of associations who had been in operation from as far back as 1974. The current group consists of Chevin Housing Association Ltd, Harewood Housing Society Ltd and Synergy Housing Solutions Ltd.

The vision for the Chevin Group is, 'building a better future for people and communities'. In order to achieve this we are involved in a diverse range of activities. These include; managing and maintaining rented and leasehold homes, the development of new and refurbished homes (including rented, leasehold and sale options) and regeneration services, working in partnership with local people to enable them to play a part in the future of their neighbourhoods.

The Group operates across Yorkshire and the Humber and North Nottinghamshire, with around 6,500 rented homes in management. We also manage a further 1650 leasehold homes which include 750 private sector flats.

The Group's reinvestment programme is around £6m per annum and the Development Programme is producing around 250 new homes each year. In 2004 the Group formed the Synergy partnership which is a regional based development partnership of associations with Chevin Housing Group as the lead partner for delivery. Synergy Housing Solutions Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Chevin provides a development service to the Synergy partners.

An inspection carried out by the Audit Commission in 2006 determined that Chevin provides a good 2 star service with promising prospects for improvement. The report commented that, 'Chevin is a customer focussed organisation, which develops services based on customer feedback'.

The Group employs around 200 staff headed by the Group Chief Executive, Steve Close.