



Press Release

HACT celebrates its 50th anniversary by announcing winning grass roots projects

LONDON, 23rd NOVEMBER 2010: The results of a nationwide search to find the best new grassroots housing and neighbourhood projects will be announced today by HACT - the housing action charity, as part of its 50th birthday celebrations at the House of Lords.

HACT launched its Golden Projects competition in June 2010 to mark its 50th year of working with the housing sector for the benefit of poor and marginalised groups. Housing providers and community groups across the UK were invited to submit bids to secure funding and advice to help turn their new ideas into reality.

Around 85 submissions were received and evaluated by the charity's panel of judges, which included Heather Petch, HACT's Director. The shortlisted 12 projects announced today will seek to bring residents and other sections of the community together on initiatives from training and employment, community cohesion and financial inclusion to healthy eating and food production, reducing fuel poverty and improving mental health.

All of the winning projects will be supported over the coming year to develop and test their ideas on the ground, with the most successful and viable amongst them likely to provide a key focus for HACT's work over the coming two to three years.

HACT's Patron, the Right Reverend John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, said: "For 50 years HACT has worked with the housing sector to find homes for the poor in our communities. The twelve national Golden Projects chosen to celebrate our Jubilee Year show local people building cohesive communities. Like the Church, HACT has a vision of people helping their neighbours. It is my hope that this vision is caught and advanced by everyone."

Heather Petch, HACT's Director, added: "Over the years, HACT has provided the spark for many of the once groundbreaking ideas that have gone on to become key strands of service delivery to poor and marginalised groups within the UK's increasingly diverse population."

"Reaching 50 is a time for looking forward as well as back and we are very excited at the fresh ideas that have come forward, all of which will now have a real chance to take root and deliver lasting benefits for those on the fringes of society."

HACT was founded in 1960 as the charitable arm of the organisation that later became the National Housing Federation (NHF). Over the years it has helped secure and provide the funding and support that helped establish many of the emerging mainstream and Black and Minority Ethnic housing associations of the 1960s and 70s as well as the national Care and Repair network, Empty Homes, People for Action and Homeless International.

David Orr, the National Housing Federation's Chief Executive, said: "HACT was born in an era of intense housing and social deprivation and has kept pace with the changing agenda whilst remaining true to its founding values. In the difficult times we are experiencing now, with affordable housing in desperately short supply and the majority of social housing tenants living in poverty, HACT remains as relevant as ever. By focussing on those most at risk of poverty and exclusion, HACT helps to illuminate and inspire social landlords with new approaches to helping people live more fulfilled lives."

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Notes to the Editor

About HACT:

HACT, the housing action charity, is a national organisation that works with social housing providers to improve the wellbeing and living conditions of poor and marginalised people. Our projects deliver lasting change, by harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of local people, housing providers and other organisations. We provide the expertise and the resources to make change a reality.

Details of the winners of the Golden Projects Competition:
Please see in the table attached.

For more information, please contact

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HACT's Golden Projects Competition – details about the 12 winners (Golden Pilot Projects)

	Project name	Applicant	Partners	Region	Type of project	Brief Description
1	Community Control	Fortunegate Community Housing.	Brent Homeless User Group	Harlesden, LB Brent	User involvement, co production of tenant services.	Whilst housing associations have developed to a level that would have been unimaginable 50 years ago, the mechanisms for tenant involvement have not evolved at the same speed and certainly don't take into account the needs of tenants on large ex local authority estates that are now owned by housing associations. This project will train tenants from ethnically diverse estates on community research & leadership. It will build on a local neighbourhood hub. Could develop as a potential national model.
2	Community Research and Action	Moat	Various local community groups, institute of Development Studies, Just Housing Academy.	South East	Developing community involvement and co production.	A potential model for a new approach to empowering local communities to speak for themselves. The project would enable local communities to identify local issues and solutions, to plan and cost improvements based on actual need not on professional interpretation. It will enable communities to become 'co-producers' of services, to share responsibility and for individual participants to gain new skills, confidence and networks. An on-line practice toolkit

						will be developed alongside web-based seminars etc.
3	Cultivating Cohesion Initiative	Horton Housing Association	Bradford Base Social Enterprise.	Bradford, West Yorkshire	Bringing together 2 very different communities to work on a project to develop allotments project on unused ground, growing food.	An unusual project which is designed to support 2 distinct client groups - Refugees from the vulnerable Burmese Rohingya Community now settled in Bradford after 18 years in Bangladeshi Refugee camps and homeless people with alcohol problems living in supported accommodation. This unusual alliance will build on the expressed desire of both groups to transform unused land and grow food. The project aims to improve health, finances, confidence and mutual understanding of both groups through working together and sharing skills and experience..
4	Eco Teams	Knowsley Housing Trust	Residents Associations, Glocal Action, Knowsley Borough Council.	Knowsley, Merseyside	Carbon reduction, financial inclusion	Eco teams will support tenants to reduce carbon footprint and costs associated with energy, transport food and waste. Project originated from a home energy audit. Through monthly meetings tenants will be supported to reduce carbon footprint and energy costs and food wastes. This is an area it would be good for Hact to potentially take a lead on.
5	Growing Communities	Places for People	Tenants and Residents Associations. Gro-Fun, a national charity. Empty Land	Bristol	Develop local 'growing' projects to improve environment, encourage better nutrition and sense of community.	This is one of the best examples of similar applications demonstrating a growing interest in horticulture and food production. The aim is to encourage resident involvement in cultivating and growing food; on underused land;

			Officer, Bristol City.			encourage healthier eating; help elderly etc. tenants cope with garden maintenance. It will also develop individual skills, improve the environment for wildlife and improve the appearance of local estates..
6	Harpurhey Timebank.	Northwards Housing/Adactus	Harpurhey Community Church	Harpurhey, North Manchester	Time bank, supporting health and well-being.	This project will set up a local time bank (in a very deprived area) focussing on improving mental health, building skills, sharing power amongst excluded/marginalised groups e.g refugees, disabled people, young. It aims to develop practical skills, reduce social isolation and share power through the development of 'co-production' arrangements with housing, mental health and social care providers.
7	Local Roots	East Potential	Tenants and residents groups	LB Newham and LB Barking and Dagenham	A feasibility study into establishing social enterprises for grounds maintenance.	2 pilot schemes exploring the feasibility of establishing social enterprises to deliver grounds maintenance services. This would look initially at 2 deprived estates, assessing viability, capacity and support needs. Local residents would be involved determining what was needed, helping set up the SEs and in training for and carrying out the work identified.
8	Neighbourhood Editors	Castle Vale Community Housing Association.	Birmingham Library, Falcon Lodge Community Centre, The	Falcon Lodge Estate, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands	Improve the representation, image and skills of an isolated and deprived estate.	Based on JRF research this project aims to change a very negative view of the area held by not only those living outside the area but also by local residents

			Chamberlain Forum, The 'Balsall Heathen'.			themselves. It will develop a local media strategy to include an on-line community newspaper, opening a community library with volunteers and establishing a neighbourhood newsroom.
9	New Skills for New Beginnings.	Endeavour Housing Assoc	Community Campus '87	Middlesbrough, North East	Training for vulnerable young people.	A one year pilot to assess the viability and effectiveness of a service providing homemaking, decorating etc training for vulnerable young people taking on new tenancies. The housing association has identified the practical problems young people have when first trying to set up home on their own and the risk this poses for eventual tenancy breakdown and further demoralisation. As well as helping sustain tenancies this project also aims also to improve the social interaction and skills and confidence of some very vulnerable young people.
10	Sheltered Housing Community Hubs.	Trafford Housing Trust	Age UK (Trafford), WRVS, Trafford PCT Trafford College etc	Trafford, Manchester	Developing sheltered housing schemes into community hubs for older people.	Ultimately this project seeks to transform 20 sheltered housing schemes into community hubs serving the wider community of older people. These will draw in outside agencies to provide a range of health improvement, education and leisure activities with a high degree of user control. The aim is to improve well being and reduce social exclusion amongst older people. Also improve participation, build social networks encourage volunteering. It should provide a potential

						model for dissemination.
11	TARA Twinning	RotherFed (Rotherham Federation of tenants and residents).	2010 Rotherham Ltd (an ALMO). Local Housing Repair and Maintenance contractors.	Rotherham, South Yorkshire	Linking up local tenants and residents associations to increase the voice and effectiveness of such groups and to reach the most marginalised people in these communities.	Initially bringing together 4 tenants and residents associations to establish a steering group. This steering group would determine the specific activities around which the community interests would develop. These might include the development of a community website, social activities, sports and a skills focussed training programme
12	Volunteer to Work	Flagship Housing	Keystone Development Trust, Voluntary Norfolk, KAVO, Job Centre Plus.	Thetford and Brandon, Norfolk	Tackling Worklessness including amongst NEETs.	Provision of training and mentoring to build skills confidence and networks and practical skills leading to employment and/or volunteering. It will particularly target young people (NEETs) and will encourage people to see the not-for-profit sector as a route to eventual employment.