

B E T E R  
W O N E N  
V E C H T  
D A L 

## Beter Wonen Vechtdal thrives!

In 2002, we summarized our policy resolutions for the period 2002-2007 in seven points, which appeared in our 'Point by Point' policy plan. After working out the specific details of this plan together with clients and relations, we put all the results into a business plan. As we said in 2002: 'We believe in the power of evolving together. Housing is important to people. We at Beter Wonen Vechtdal are aware of this fact. A good home forms the basis of a pleasurable life.'

Beter Wonen Vechtdal is thriving: we not only carry out our obvious tasks, but also go the extra mile. Many of the hallmarks of 'Point by Point' stand firm today. This is due largely to the correctly chosen objectives of the plan. Direction and vision are our core values.

It is now time to move on. With the most recent public-housing developments in mind, we have formulated a more concrete and more concise policy plan for the period 2008-2013.



Consultations with our stakeholders are both an ongoing part of our activities and an influence on the objectives determined thus far. This is a living plan, a constantly changing plan, a plan being cultivated by all parties involved. We will continue to work on it – for one another!

### **For One Another**

Beter Wonen Vechtdal believes that a better, safer, more enjoyable and more social world relies on people taking responsibility for their own environment. On people paying attention to and talking to their neighbours. On people assuming responsibility for their neighbourhoods and for the world by taking the initiative, by developing plans, by joining forces. On people letting their voices be heard – among themselves, at Beter Wonen Vechtdal, in their municipalities and in the world. In short, on people being emancipated citizens who – rather than simply letting life happen – *shape* their lives in every possible way.

Our role transcends the building, renting out and maintenance of housing. It transcends the stimulation of well-maintained neighbourhoods. It's about alliance, about people getting involved. And it's about tackling far more than our official obligations.

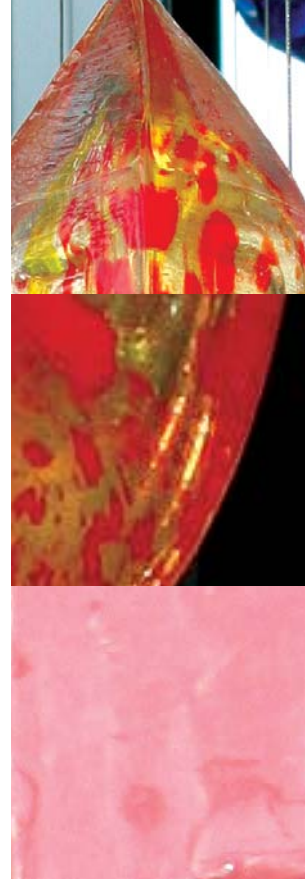


We are not only partner and ally, but also protector, stimulator and instigator. We serve as an example, too, because the mentality we preach must show in our own thoughts and actions. It has to be part of our DNA, our heart. It should be interwoven into our organization.

Our core business is the creation, maintenance and promotion of a safe, familiar housing environment. This environment can exist only if all parties involved feel responsible for it. Assuming responsibility rests on a foundation of trust. For this reason, Beter Wonen Vechtdal aims for an emotional bond with its tenants. Our leitmotif is the meeting, the contact, the mutual responsibility. Consequently, Beter Wonen Vechtdal is an approachable conversation partner that stands up for its tenants, stands up for the neighbourhood, and promotes contact among all parties. We are engaged, dependable, client-oriented and innovative. We are also active and communicative, clear and consistent, fair and humane. In short, Beter Wonen Vechtdal represents the concept 'for one another'!

### **Home, Neighbourhood, World, Plans and Partners**

In our new policy plan, we zoom in on three areas of work – *home, neighbourhood and world* – and on the *sub-plans* we want

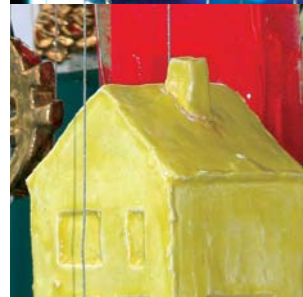


to achieve with our partners. Underlying these sub-plans and determining the various 'chapters' of the policy plan are, of course, rules and regulations (the Housing Act and the Bylaw). Also of significance to relationships with our partners is the responsibility test that makes up part of the KWH's visitation report. (The KWH evaluates and determines the quality of Dutch housing corporations involved in rental properties.) Time and again, we focus on the question of whether we are getting things done and can keep getting them done. We study the various policy issues at the outset, but we do not deal with all of them. We give top priority to those matters that can make an important contribution to getting things done.

### **Vital Countryside**

The municipality of Hardenberg is a fairly prosperous outlying district (317 km<sup>2</sup>; 83% in use as farmland) consisting of a large regional centre (Hardenberg, with about 27,000 inhabitants), surrounded by several villages located within a vast rural area. The population has remained stable for years: 60,000. Population density and housing density are about half of that calculated for the province of Overijssel and about a third of that calculated for the Netherlands.

Beter Wonen Vechtdal is a small-town housing corporation.



In carrying out activities related to housing, quality of life and social services, we find ourselves aiming more and more at smaller households and at people younger than 25 and older than 55 years of age. Those who can afford to buy a house of their own are doing so to an ever-increasing degree. The same can be said of the traditional family. Our wish to serve these people as well has taken the form of offering our existing rental properties for sale. Although fewer families in Hardenberg are looking for social rental housing these days, the family remains an important target group for Beter Wonen Vechtdal. Money from the sale of these homes is used for the construction of new social rental properties for our primary target groups, for major repairs and renovations and, in particular, for investments made to improve the quality of life in the municipality of Hardenberg.

In recent years, the population of Hardenberg has grown very little. Even though we note a decrease in the number of occupants per dwelling, a long-term view shows no need for a structural increase in the number of properties we own. A new municipal review of Hardenberg's housing situation comes to the same conclusion. What is necessary is the adaptation and renovation of our existing housing stock. The process of renewal achieved through the sale of single-family homes, in particular –



along with demolition, new-build units and major renovations – will continue for several years. It will take about five years for Beter Wonen Vechtdal to complete its largest (re)construction operations. Renewal does not stop with our approach to the housing stock, however; renewal also involves wellbeing, social services and so forth. A population with a changing composition demands different housing environments. For this reason, we are making substantial investments in projects that benefit society. Pleasant living in a rural society is at the heart of our philosophy.

In October 2005, 'Kansen voor het platteland' ('Opportunities for Rural Areas'), an advisory report issued by the SER (Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands), had already pointed out that many Dutch people favour a housing environment with a rural – green, rustic, pastoral – character. Expected from housing corporations in this respect is a strong contribution to the improved quality of housing and housing environments, including those in outlying areas. The SER suggests that housing corporations working within the framework of a developing entrepreneurship can broaden their activities to include social services and wellbeing by investing, for example in the type of multifunctional facilities so important to the quality of life in villages.



This recommendation reinforces our view that a crucial task set aside for Beter Wonen Vechtdal is the promotion of a vital countryside. Of rural areas undergoing change. Of rural areas in need of a different kind of housing corporation. A proactive corporation that places great importance on the interests of its local stakeholders, especially its tenants. Short, direct lines to those stakeholders and roots in the local society – that's what it's about. It's about a society with deep common commitments. This is a good thing in itself, but also a necessity for the future. After all, the social dynamic is on the rise, also in rural areas. In an article in the Dutch newspaper NRC in July 2007, we read: 'The traditional country youth, innocent and naive, no longer exists. The urban youth culture of rap, pimps and ho's reached villages and hamlets long ago. Everything used to happen much earlier in the big city, but that time is past.'



In this brochure are pictures of the work of art that Beter Wonen Vechtdal has made by a local artist. It contains dreams of our tenants and is made of glass and stoneware. The work of art is presented in our headquarters.

**In short: We're off and running!**



3450 total stock	<b>Housing stock</b>
70% terraced houses	
30% apartments	
40% < € 349 <i>cheap</i>	<b>Rent per month</b>
55% € 349 - € 535 <i>affordable</i>	
5% > € 535 <i>expensive</i>	
350	<b>Average lettings a year</b>
25% solvency	<b>Finances</b>
€ 21,000,000 turnover	<i>average through years</i>
€ 5,000,000 invested in renovation	
€ 2,500,000 costs of maintenance	
€ 1,000,000 community activities	
€ 700,000 costs of repair	
€ 15,000,000 rent due	
€ 125,000 rent arrears	
66% appreciate the participation in our policy process	<b>Customer satisfaction</b>
60% appreciate the activities of our area managers	<i>surveys by Quintis / I&amp;O</i>
63% expects a role of us in raising care facilities	
43% expects a role of us in raising in child care	
tenants score the quality of our homes as: 7,3 (scale 1-10)	
tenants score the quality of our areas as: 7,2 (scale 1-10)	
79% is very satisfied on reliability	
85% is very / fairly satisfied on maintenance service	
94% is very / fairly satisfied on approachability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investments in community centres <i>incl. facilities as libraries, day nursery</i></li> <li>Goldservice: tenants rewards program</li> <li>Community meetings, neighbourhood BBQ's               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth activation program RUN                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area caretakers program</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>Experimenting on 'housing-welfare-care' concepts</li> <li>Facilitating tenants organisations / local initiatives               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organising gardencompetitions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Examples of focus on community activities</b>
40 staff members	<b>Organisation</b>



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