

CCI Case Study No. 010

# Calico Housing: Building Foundations

## Sustainable Training & Local Employment

Working under the umbrella of the “Building Foundations” Project Calico Housing have developed a number of projects creating sustainable training and job opportunities. These opportunities are focused on young people in the Burnley area. Calico are supported by strong partners including Accent Community Partnerships, White Building Services, Emmanuel Whittakers, Green Apprentices and Vedas Services.

Over the coming decade Burnley will benefit from a great deal of investment. Calico want Burnley to maximise its benefit from this investment and key to this is ensuring local people can access the new jobs created.

This is a significant challenge; skilled tradespeople are in short supply. The challenge faced is to increase the number of young people seeing construction as a career aspiration.

A further issue for Burnley is the under representation of BME groups and female participants. The Project goal is to attract young females, and people from the BME community to the construction industry.

The Building Foundations Project has targeted these under represented groups and is offering training, work experience, and modern apprenticeships and Calico’s partners are doing the same.

The Project has already established twelve apprenticeships and sixty training placements. Over the next year Calico will employ a further twenty young people from a variety of backgrounds by setting up a Construction Social Enterprise Business.



Primary Demonstration:

**Sustainable Training & Local Employment**

Clients:

**Calico Housing Ltd**

Partners:

**Accent Community Partnerships  
White Building Services  
Emmanuel Whittakers  
Green Apprentices  
Vedas Services**



**calico**  
*Enterprise*

# Calico Housing - Building Foundations

## Why this Project was Undertaken

This Project was undertaken for many and varied reasons: -

- **Lack of trade skills and maximising the opportunities on offer** – Calico recognise that Burnley, has a general lack of trade skills. Burnley is due to see significant investment in forthcoming years through the Elevate-East Lancashire Housing Market Renewal Programme, Building Schools for the Future Project, the new University and the redevelopment of the town centre. Unless Burnley is able to offer skilled employees to building contractors then these opportunities will be lost to the town as they will buy in labour from elsewhere. Corporately, Calico and its Partners recognise an issue in terms of recruitment and retention. The training and apprenticeship programme helps them to stabilise their workforce and presents sustainable work opportunities to the residents of Burnley.
- **Ageing work force** – Calico's work force was identified as ageing. They wanted to introduce a wide spectrum of age for a variety of reasons. The apprenticeship programme allows us to introduce youth into the maintenance section. Their view is that this has made them more dynamic.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility** – As a leading registered social landlord, Calico's vision is focussed upon regenerating communities through not only good quality housing, but also through working with partners to regenerate the town and maximise training and employment opportunities for local people. Calico believe that they must take responsibility for helping people to achieve a higher quality of life and that sustainable employment is a key element of this.



planned for the town in forthcoming years and recognised the need to work with their partners to create opportunities for young people to access training and employment in the construction industry. Calico were well placed to do this due to their work with the local strategic partnership and their relationships with other partners.

At the same time, through a process of self evaluation, Calico identified that the their workforce, and the workforce of their contractors, was entirely constituted of white males. Compounding this was recognition that they also had an ageing workforce.

Working with Accent Community Partnerships, Calico took part in the "Youthbuild" Project. The Youthbuild team identified young people from a black and minority ethnic background and these individuals were matched to apprenticeships with Calico's maintenance team.

Calico then took this a stage further by placing contractual obligations on their partner contractors. This obliged the partners to recruit apprentices as part of their work with Calico. Using the contractual obligations, Calico have managed to place eight BME apprentices within their supply chain working across Burnley.

In addition to this we extended our apprenticeship provision by developing a relationship with Accrington and Rossendale College. Through this partnership we have been able to recruit an award winning female apprentice plumber.

After an initial successful period Calico again decided to move forward their initiative. In September 2006 Calico secured funding from SRB 6 and Urban II (ERDF) to deliver a 'pre-apprenticeship' programme. This programme, known as Re-construct Burnley, provides training and extended work experience for hard to reach individuals, including ex-offenders.

The programme recruits individuals, after referral from local support agencies, helping them to refocus their lives, whilst providing practical on site training. The individuals involved work in small gangs to develop trade skills in joinery, plastering, brick work or decoration. They undertake an intensive four week programme followed by twenty weeks paid work experience.

There is little doubt to Calico that training young people for construction has added significant value to otheir business. In 2007 this will be enshrined in the development of a social enterprise business.

Calico's aim, going forward, will be to develop sustainable opportunities for young people in Burnley to engage in the construction sector.

## Creating Opportunities for Young People

Calico realised that significant investment was

## Key Benefits of the Project

2

In 2005 Calico started working with Whites Building Services and Emmanuel Whittaker on partnership arrangements that will last until 2010. Calico wanted to be in a position to offer local people the opportunity to gain employment and achieve training/qualifications and they wanted to work with partners who were also committed to this. This was a significant criteria in the selection process that Calico went through in choosing Whites and Whittakers as partners.

Calico had experienced ineffective apprenticeship programme before, however, this time round, they enlisted the help of Accent Community Partnerships to help them to reach their desired goals. This process and partnership has evolved over 12

months helping Calico to increase their capacity and educating their staff.

A further advantage of partnering with Accent has been the access to groups of the community that Calico would not traditionally employ. Accent's knowledge, in relation to both geographical and cultural issues, has helped them to recruit young people from a range of backgrounds including female's and BME individuals.

Calico's Re-Construct Burnley project has also

allowed them to target more hard to reach groups. Often the young individuals involved in this project are offenders from our own neighbourhoods. Simply by involving them, and taking time to offer them an opportunity, helps to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in these neighbourhoods.

Calico are very pleased with their apprentices and their contribution. Young people's energy and enthusiasm shines through, and helps Calico to ensure that they remain an employer of choice. Calico consistently push to ensure their workforce is representative of the communities they serve; the Building Foundations programme continues to play a huge part in their future.

*Young people from Burnley who are struggling to find employment because of their troubled backgrounds are now being given an opportunity to improve their prospects and make a better future for themselves, and their families, thanks to a new scheme that has been launched*

## Key Lessons Learned

- By being innovative Calico have created opportunities for the hardest to reach young individuals to access training and employment in the construction industry.
- Working in partnerships with agencies and contractor brings unique skills and abilities to the table. This is the reason why the project has been such a success.
- Additional work is needed along the way to ensure that the barriers these young people face are taken down. This can be ridiculously simple things to us, but earth shattering to a trainee.
- Constant review and evaluation of the projects has been a requirement to ensure the initial success has been sustained.

## Comments for Participants

"Being on this programme really makes my day; I can see myself going somewhere now"

"Since I was took on I have dramatically changed my life for the better"

"I want to get a full time job in painting and decorating, and then I want to take my career further"

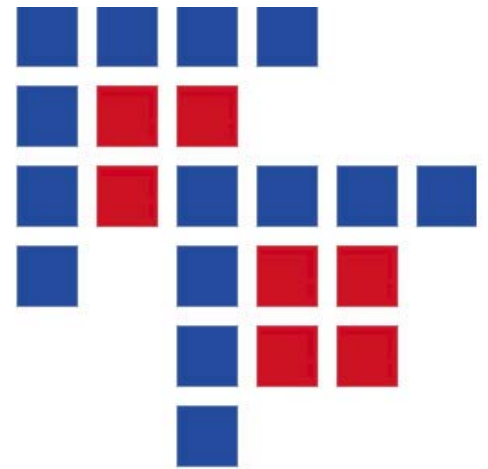
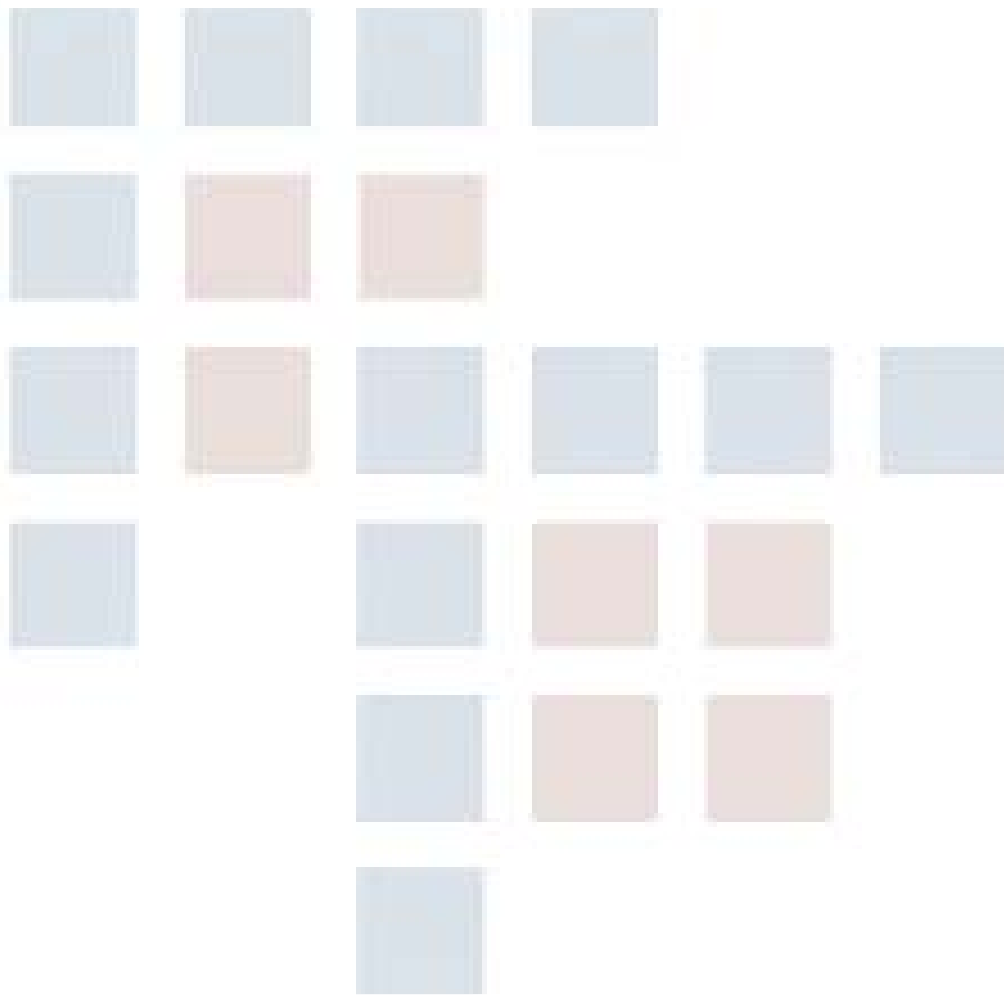
"I hope to gain full time employment with Calico and become a multi-skilled tradesman"

"I want to be successful; I want to get as many qualifications as possible"

"I hope to get a trade out of this so I will be sorted for life; this is the best opportunity I have had to succeed."

3

The Building Foundations programme from Calico is a Constructing Excellence Demonstration Project for the Housing Forum.



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