

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HOUSING OPERATIONS

THE BOARD
15 NOVEMBER 2007

PROGRESS ON TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Report seeks to inform Board Members on the progress to date of establishing effective tenant and leaseholder involvement within the Company.
- 1.2 The Report also provides an update on the progress that has been made in establishing the fora and groups as set out in the Tenant Participation Framework.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board:

- 2.1 Note progress made to date
- 2.2 To nominate a Tenant Involvement Champion from the Board as recommended by the Mock Inspection

3 REPORT

3.1 Mock Inspection

The recommendations and weaknesses provided by HQN following the Mock Inspection, indicate that there is much to do in delivering wider tenant and leaseholder involvement within NCH. Work is now underway to revise the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) so that key actions identified are co-ordinated and implemented within target across the organisation. The revised SIP will be completed by 30 November and will be made available to the Board.

3.2 Menu of Involvement

Following feedback from the Mock Inspection, the "Getting Involved" leaflet is to be reviewed and produced in a shorter easy to read format. The leaflet will provide a simple message of opportunities for tenant involvement and how participation can make a difference. It will be promoted to a wide customer audience. Other ways of capturing "grass roots" involvement will also be developed and events arranged on a rolling programme engaging local officers so that the profile of involvement is heightened.

3.3 Connecting People – Midlands Regional Awards

On 6th November Doreen Gretton, one of our active tenant representatives won the “Tenant of the Year” Award. Doreen is the Chairperson of Nobel Road TARA and works closely with local agencies to resolve problems on her estate. She works tirelessly for her community and many local children would never have seen the sea if it wasn't for her commitment. Her home is an open house day and night to local residents and due to her hard work the estate is now somewhere where people want to live. The Manager for NCH Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement attended the Awards Event with Doreen and other nominees for awards: Ennis Peck and Margaret Pugsley. Paul Rowe represented the Board to support our nominees and Sandra Johal from Marketing was on hand with her camera to take photos for future publicity for the Company.

3.4 Midlands Housing Article on NCH Tenant Participation

This month's Midlands Housing journal features a two page spread on Tenant Participation within NCH and together with photographs provides an interesting and inspiring article promoting good practice on tenant participation and involvement, demonstrating that we are a high profile organisation with a very active programme of involvement for our tenants and leaseholders. The article was sponsored by some of the Contractor Partners NCH are currently working with.

3.5 Tenant Involvement – Performance Indicators

Work is underway to develop a suite of performance indicators (PIs) that we are able to benchmark with other comparable organisations. The purpose of the PIs will be to set targets and to demonstrate that we are measuring involvement and its impact. These PIs will be shared with the frontline staff for wider awareness and understanding and they will include Equality and Diversity targets.

3.6 Tenant Participation for Staff

The Customer Care Culture Change Development Programme taking place between December 2007 and March 2008 will support the culture change needed so that frontline employees understand their role in delivering and increasing tenant participation and involvement. The Manager for Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement is currently attending all Area Housing Office staff briefing sessions to raise awareness with staff about the Compact, as well as the structure of participation for the TARA's, Area Panels, Forums and the Tenants and Leaseholders Congress. There will also be awareness sessions with Voids and Allocations, Rents, the Caretaking Service and with staff who work for the Sheltered Service. Area Housing Offices weekly briefings include tenant participation focus as a regular agenda item. The aim is to ensure that 'growing' tenant involvement is a key priority for all frontline staff and that we are sharing good practice across areas, and, to ensure that staff are kept up to date on new tenant participation initiatives.

The Development Programme, referred to earlier will also empower and involve local staff in finding innovative ways of encouraging participation as part of their every day role.

3.7 Area Panels

A review of the progress with Area Panels has taken place and will be ongoing with regular updates to Board and the Tenant and Leaseholder Congress. Members of the Panels will be setting their own agenda items in addition to standard items including; estate inspections, performance in the local area, success stories, customer care, value for money, local area round up, feedback from NCH Board, Tenants & Leaseholders Congress and Forums and a “You Said and We Did” item to show the impact on the service as a result of consultation.

3.7.1 From November Chris Langstaff and Gill Moy will be attending all of the Area Panel meetings.

3.7.2 As Area Panels become more established, key actions and how these have been resolved will be tracked and reported to the TLC and Board.

3.8 Forums

3.8.1 Repairs Forum

The recent meeting of the Repairs Forum had a much better attendance than the previous meeting and the membership is increasing towards 20 tenants and leaseholders. A forward plan was established and dates for future meetings agreed. The Forum are meeting monthly due to the amount of work involved with the Repairs Tender. One suggestion being looked at to widen the membership and see new faces was to promote attendance on “repairs tickets”. This may also be used to advertise “You Said”, “We Did” where changes suggested by tenants have made a difference and improvement to service delivery.

The 3 C’s will also be reviewed so that tenants complaining about the repairs service are asked if they want to be part of scrutinising the service.

3.8.2 Sheltered Housing and Telecare Users Forum (Older Persons Forum)

The Sheltered Housing and Telecare Users Forum, renamed by the members received feedback from the Mock Inspection on the sheltered and supported housing service and also information on performance figures for the sheltered service including Nottingham On Call. The Forum also received a report on the proposed decommissioning of Welland Court. Consultation has taken place with the Forum on the Sheltered Handbook and some further proposed changes to the Handbook were put forward by the Forum for consideration by NCH.

3.8.3 Tenancy and Estate Management Forum

The Forum were provided with an update on the development and introduction of hand held technology for the company and the implementation of victim support plans. There was discussion about Vision Management Surveys which have been carried out on 3 pilot estates and for new tenants who were let properties during August 2007, the results will be shared with the Area Panels shortly. Comments were also received from the Forum on the Tenancy and Estate Management Service Improvement Plan (SIP). This work is being taken forward by a sub group of the Forum looking at the SIP with NCH officers. The Tenants Rents Panel and the Reference Group on ASB have also met and reported to the Forum.

3.8.4 Leaseholders Forum

The Leaseholder Forum is currently enjoying an upturn in attendance, with several new faces now involved. The latest business included plans for the forthcoming Leaseholder newsletter, feedback on how ideas have shaped our service and plans for the leaseholder repairs service. Above all, the most important difference is that leaseholders can now get involved in improving the service in a number of ways, including telephone consultation, postal and email information and single issue focus groups. Focus groups have been held at Newark Crescent, Victoria Centre and Southchurch Court.

3.8.5 BME Forum

The BME Forum has been setting their forward plan and key features include bi monthly updates on the Diversity Service improvement plan and scrutiny of services. The Forum is reviewing its approach to scrutiny and will consider priority areas for the forward plan following feedback from the Mock Inspection. Discussion on how to encourage greater involvement across NCH and in particular the health of the Forum took place at the last meeting.

The Forum has requested that NCH undertake benchmarking with other ALMOs in relation to advertising and recruitment. Members of the BME Forum are aware of the recent BME staff survey and wish to meet with representatives of the Staff Forum at a future meeting and also talk to PATRA.

3.8.6 Homes 4 Us Disability Forum

The launch of the "Homes 4 Us" disability focus group took place at an event in September. The event launched a Forum that will examine how Nottingham City Homes can improve its service to disabled customers and carers, and get more disabled people involved in the work of Nottingham City Homes. The Forum will also look at the best ways to make NCH services more accessible for disabled tenants and leaseholders and carers', ensuring that the information NCH sends to its customers meets the needs of disabled tenants and leaseholders and

looking at ways NCH can improve its repairs and adaptations services.

The first meeting of the new Forum is taking place on 29th November at the Denewood Centre following the launch event in September

3.8.7 **Supported Housing Forum**

A meeting is being arranged and the Manager for Sheltered Housing will be setting a meeting date during November inviting NCH service users who live in temporary or supported housing with support needs to attend the meeting.

3.9 **Tenants and Leaseholder Congress**

The second meeting of the TLC covered approval of amendments to the Constitution and the signing of the Code of Conduct. Members of the TLC are meeting with the Board on 7 November for the first of three meetings as agreed in the Tenant and Leaseholder Participation Compact and will be discussing: Board Member Attendance at Forums, the Boards' six month plan, what the Board is doing to encourage involvement from younger and economically inactive people. The TLC decided on the option for electing the Chair and Vice Chair and received a presentation on the outcome of the Mock Inspection from Laurie McCormack, an Inspector for the HQN Inspection Team and also a presentation on Decent Homes from Mark Johnson, Assistant Director for Property Services.

3.9.1 In December there will be a review of the Compact by the Compact Review Group who will be members of the Tenants & Leaseholders Congress. They would normally carry out an annual review but this will be an interim 6 month monitoring and reviewing of the Compact. This group will be formed at the next meeting of the TLC.

3.10 **Local Contacts**

Work is underway to identify local contacts and compile a database which will cover formally recognised contacts as well as volunteer contacts who are any individual tenants or leaseholders who volunteer to be the contact point for NCH and NCC for other residents.

3.11 **VICTRA – update**

Following the successful application for a tenant empowerment grant to enable an Option Study to take place for the residents of the Victoria Centre complex, a meeting of VICTRA and COMPAS@TPAS has taken place and a draft of the first newsletter is attached in **Appendix 1** which will be sent to all residents who live in the Victoria Centre complex. There have been anti social behaviour problems happening as a result of the Option Study commencing and it is proposed to hold a meeting inviting all tenants and leaseholders who live in the Victoria flats to attend with COMPAS@TPAS associates who are working with VICTRA

and officers of NCH and NCC to try and alleviate some of the concerns and clarify what the options are that are being considered within the Option Study.

3.12 **Editorial Panel**

The Editorial Panel has been re-launched and had a meeting in September with some new members joining the Panel bringing the membership to 9 plus two officer from NCH. There are intentions to try and encourage some younger tenants to get involved on the Panel. Training on producing and writing articles for newsletters will be made available to all members of the Panel. Sandra Johal is facilitating the Panel and will be promoting the Panel and advertising to increase the membership through the Tenants' Newsletter and on the website. The TROs will be promoting the increase the membership at meetings of TARAs.

3.13 **Website**

The development of the website to provide an efficient and effective Tenant Participation service which meets the aspirations of tenants has a target date of April 2008. It is intended to involve tenants in the development of the website including specialist pages for TARAs, Tenant Panels, Forums and the Tenant & Leaseholder Congress. There are two Tenants and Resident Associations who have developed their own websites and links to the NCH website will be available in the future.

3.14 **Tenants and Leaseholders Annual Conference**

On the 8th December the Tenants Conference is taking place at the Ice Arena. The aim of the conference is to provide a consultative event on: feedback from the Mock Inspection, the Budget for the next financial year, information around the Respect Standard for Housing Management and NCH's responsibilities in implementing it. Draft of programme is attached as **Appendix 2**.

We have an Events Panel working with Claire Reeves from the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Team to organise the conference. The membership on the Events Panel is representatives from the Forums and also some of the Tenant and Resident Officers.

3.15 **Database for Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Structure**

A database of contact details from the structure of involvement is being established to show how many of our customers are involved. This will involve profiling those who are involved to establish whether there is any under representation of certain groups of the community, particularly those in hard to reach groups. The target date for completion of the database is November 2007 however this will require regular and on-going updating.

The database will include tenants who may only wish to support with telephone surveys or on specific services. The database needs to increase and the Events Programme and “grass roots” involvement opportunities will be targeted so that our “new faces” increase including equality and diversity representation.

3.16 **Benchmarking**

NCH has joined the East Midlands Tenant Participation Forum (EMPTF) regional benchmarking club and will be taking part in a survey that is designed to assist organisations to compare costs and the effectiveness of tenant participation with similar organisations in the region.

3.17 **Training**

Following the analysis of the training skills audit of tenants and leaseholders involved in the Participation Structure have been asked to complete, a programme of training is being compiled and arrangements made to ensure the opportunities for development are provided. A bid for development funding has secured £40K for training on IT and the provision of laptop computers and printers for a number of the Tenants and Residents Associations. Training for the newly appointed Tenant Inspectors is planned. Current training being delivered includes: the Decent Homes Customer Care Group training on working with contractors and new Chairs of TARAs attending training on chairing meetings.

4 FINANCIAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Grant funding from the Housing Corporation has been made available to support the process of the VICTRA Option Study

4.2 If the Tenant Management Organisation application was successful, management fees currently paid to NCH would need to be paid to the TMO. The level of fee would depend on the extent of responsibility taken on by the TMO.

5 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES

5.1 Nottingham City Homes have stated in the Tenant and Leaseholder Participation Compact that they will: “support tenants and leaseholders who wish to manage themselves either wholly through a Tenant Management Organisation or partly through Local Management Agreements

6 VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCY ISSUES

- 6.1 The benefits and outcomes assessed against the aims and objectives in the Tenant and Leaseholder Participation Compact will be reported annually to the Board.
- 6.2 Value for money of different approaches to involvement will be monitored and evaluated by the Tenants and Leaseholders Congress.

7 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Monitoring of the implementation of the equalities and diversity policy to measure the levels of input and involvement from under-represented sections of the community will be reported quarterly to Area Panels, the Forums, the TLC and the Board.

8 BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

Tenant and Leaseholder Participation Compact
Minutes of Meetings for Panels, Forums and TLC

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