

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER****BOARD
17 MAY 2007****UPDATE REPORT****1 SUMMARY**

This report provides an outline of progress made against a number of key issues since the last meeting of the Strategic Board.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Strategic Board consider the content of this report and my supporting presentation and comment accordingly in respect of the issues covered.

3 PREPARING FOR INSPECTION**3.1 Audit Commission**

I met with the Audit Commission's Head of the ALMO Inspection Service, Head of the Central Region Inspection Service and the Lead Housing Inspector for the East Midlands on 2nd May 2007 to discuss our current position and the timing of our next Inspection. Subject to agreement with the Board and the City Council we have agreed that the on site element of the Inspection will take place in the two week period of 16th – 27th June 2008.

- 3.2 The key milestones for the Inspection are highlighted in Appendix One.

3.3 Mock Inspection

A key element of our Inspection preparations will be to undertake a 'mock inspection' of our services following the methodology of the Audit Commission. Following a tender exercise I am pleased to report that on 1st May 2007 I appointed Housing Quality Network (HQN) to carry out this work. HQN is the largest consultancy devoted exclusively to housing and specialises in services for ALMO's. It also manages the National Federation of ALMO's which gives it a strong appreciation of the issues we face, now and in the future.

- 3.4 The key milestones for the mock inspection are highlighted in Appendix Two.

3.5 Board Engagement

It is absolutely critical to our success that Board members are fully confident in their understanding of the Inspection process and are well informed in respect of the key documentation and self assessment that support it. Members of the Board are likely to be interviewed either individually or as part of a focus group and in order to prepare yourselves and give you an opportunity to find out more I intend to hold a series of special Board events and comprehensive briefings over the next few months.

3.6 Informing residents, staff and stakeholders

It is similarly important that all residents, staff and stakeholders are aware of the mock inspection and understand the reasons for it. We will undertake a consultation and communication exercise to ensure that the message is understood and received by all necessary.

4 **OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS**

4.1 Customer Care

My managers have been working with the City Council to address the recommendations made by the Audit Commission in relation to access and a lack of facilities at some of our housing offices. The proposed improvements are designed to ensure DDA compliance for customers and to standardise the office receptions to create a corporate image in terms of furniture, signage and colour schemes. Plans have been submitted for building regulations approval and following a tender process work is scheduled to start on site in September 2007 and be completed by 31st December 2007.

4.2 A programme of operational improvements and reality checking is being put in place to ensure a consistency of service across all customer access points.

5 **FOUNDATION PLAN**

5.1 Following consultation events with managers and tenants and leaseholders thirty five front line staff from across the Company came together during the last week of April to discuss the Foundation Plan.

5.2 There were lots of really good ideas to be incorporated amongst the actions that will make a real difference to the services we provide and some of the suggestions from the event included:

- setting up a staff care group
- having a special 'Rents week' to promote rent recovery and debt advice services
- sending 'thank you' letters to tenants who clear arrears or pay their rent on time
- setting up a 'Best Neighbourhood' competition
- undertaking internal painting to voids.

- 5.3 Staff who attended the focus group were asked to volunteer to participate in a Staff Sounding Board whose role will be to monitor and check on progress against the Plan. The group will meet on a monthly basis.

6 TEN YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

- 6.1 The development of NCH's ten year strategy is progressing and I am pleased to report we have now got a short secondment from the City Council to support this.

An initial stakeholder event to involve partners, tenants and leaseholders and City council representatives in a discussion to develop the key themes for the strategy, will be held on the 15th May.

The staff Sounding Board for the development of the Strategy met for the first time on 18th April 2007 and gave some extremely useful feedback on staff perceptions on "Where are we now". The Sounding Board will reconvene on 7th June 2007 to focus on the outcomes of the staff roadshows.

A draft strategy document will be prepared for full consultation during June and early July. This consultation process will also allow Board member involvement. The final document will be presented for approval in July.

7 STAFF ROADSHOWS

- 7.1 I have arranged a series of twelve staff roadshows to take place between 14th and 24th May 2007. These events are aimed at providing all staff with the opportunity of meeting me and my colleagues from the Executive Management Team and allowing me to update them on our progress whilst enabling them to have the opportunity to contribute to our plans. If any Board members would like to attend any of the events please let me know.

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DATE: 4th MAY 2007

Appendix One – Audit Commission Inspection Key Milestones

Task	Target for completion
Self assessment and supporting documentation to Audit Commission	25 th April 2008
On site Inspection timetable and programme finalised with Audit Commission	4 th June 2008
On site Inspection	16 th – 27 th June 2008
Production of final report	1 st September 2008*
	* Estimated date

Appendix Two - Mock Inspection Key Milestones

Task	Method	Target for completion
KLOE self assessments	KLOE Project Teams (including tenants and front line staff) undertake an assessment of strengths and weaknesses against the 3 star standard. Gap analysis of current improvement work.	31 st May 2007
Housekeeping and mystery shopping	Back and front offices routinely checked. Best Value Team and Tenant Inspectors undertake mystery shopping to test the quality of customer care and services.	Ongoing May – September 2007
KLOE challenge events	Internal and external challenge of self assessment	30 th June 2007
Board briefings	Board Away Days	June / July 2007
Staff / resident / stakeholder engagement	Regular newsletters and communications, briefing sessions, roadshows and conferences.	May – September 2007
Self assessment and supporting documentation to HQN	Self assessment completed using results of KLOE project team assessments, benchmarking and challenge events.	3 rd September 2007
Prepare facilities for mock inspection team	On site arrangements in place	24 th September 2007
On site mock inspection	HQN carry out mock inspection of all services	1 st - 12 th October 2007
Production of final report	HQN produce report	19 th October 2007
Production of improvement plan	HQN/NCH produce SMART action plan	1 st November 2007