

## NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE BOARD  
20 SEPTEMBER 2007

#### UPDATE REPORT

#### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an outline of progress made against a number of key issues since the last meeting of the Board. This includes updates on the restructuring, preparations for the Mock Inspection, Ten Year Strategy, Asset Management Strategy and the Status Survey.

#### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board note the content of this report.

#### 3 RESTRUCTURING

- 3.1 At previous Board meetings I have updated you on the implementation of our foundation plan restructure. This structure was implemented on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and focused on the key operational areas of Tenancy and Estate Management, Voids and Lettings and Rents and Leaseholder Management. These services have moved to specialist functions and central teams have been created for Rents and Leaseholder management and Voids and Lettings. The structure now needs to be underpinned by new procedures and working practices which ensure consistency in service delivery across all the different offices and teams. A project to implement ISO 9001:2000 compliant procedures is being established, this will form part of the wider performance management framework and quality assurance systems.

Specific developments in the new specialist areas are as follows:

#### 3.2 Voids and Lettings

In the first month, the Voids and Lettings Team have achieved an 8.7% reduction in void properties. The average relet time has fallen slightly from 72.8 days from 2006/07 to 68.2 days as at July 2007. A Lettable Standard has been developed and three pilot properties are being prepared to enable consultation on the Standard and also to act as a training standard for staff. In addition a Void Standard is being developed which will set standards for the way we monitor and maintain the exterior of properties whilst they are void. A new Tenant Information Pack and Welcome Pack are also being developed.

A new procedure for screening void properties has been introduced which will reduce the number of properties which are screened and will result in savings. There has already been a reduction in the cost of void property repairs from £2,658 in April 2007 to £2,250 in August 2007, this has partly been achieved by the introduction of a new variation process which has led to stricter financial controls.

In addition, the Team was established there was a backlog of over 800 Homelink applications, by the end of August this was reduced to 378.

### 3.3 Tenancy and Estate Management

The Tenancy and Estate Management (TEM) Service is now able to focus on estate services and management of ASB. The Housing Patch Managers (HPM) having increased patch sizes to reflect their new more specialist roles, from the previous generic housing role and on average each HPM now manages approximately 550 properties. Targets have been set for TEM staff regarding the completion of visits; the handling of complaints and member enquiries; estate maintenance and ASB management.

Key areas for focus now include:

- Work is being undertaken to improve standards on the estates. A pilot project on the three estates has been undertaken in partnership with the City Council. The evaluation of this will result in a new Estate Standard, working protocols and a review of the Service Level Agreements that affect the Public Realm.
- A review of the Caretaking Service is being carried out and a new post of Estates and Caretaking Services Manager has recently been advertised.
- Good partnership working continues in relation to anti-social behaviour, and we are currently working to develop a unified computerised ASB reporting system. We have been actively involved in the weeks of actions delivered through the Crime and Drugs Partnership.
- Housing Managers are ensuring that all Area Panels are formed and have had their first meetings by the end of September. Some Area Panels are proving to be more effective and have a wider range and number of participants.
- Complaints and members enquiries – following the introduction of the 3CS a review of the handling of compliments, comments and complaints is now being carried out.

### 3.4 Rents and Leasehold Management

Following the establishment of the new specialist service, a focus on clear performance targets for rent collection has been a priority. At week 22 (31 August 2007) rental income was at 98.76% which is a significant improvement on week 13 when it was at 95.1%. The new Financial Inclusion Officers are developing positive working relationships with the Voids and Lettings Team ensuring that all new tenants have been contacted and offered help to ensure they are maximising their income and completing Housing Benefit forms accurately. Contacts are being made with external agencies to ensure that debt advice is joined up and not duplicated. We are aiming to extend the opening hours of the Call Centre in order to make more contacts with people who work during the day.

We have now established a new Leaseholder Team and key positions were filled in mid September. The Team is now working with the

Leaseholder Forum to develop the aims of the service, service standards and a new Leaseholder Newsletter.

- 3.5 The longer term Company restructure will be finalised following the Mock Inspection and budget preparations in order we develop structures that are fit for purpose to deliver 2 stars at the Inspection in 2008.

#### **4 PREPARING FOR MOCK INSPECTION**

- 4.1 Preparations for the mock inspection are now in the final stages. The Self Assessment (Appendix 1) and over 600 documents were submitted to HQN in the first week of September.

The final work on our self assessment was a presentation to our External Challenge event on 21<sup>st</sup> August, where colleagues from Derby, Sheffield and Kirklees ALMOs and the City Council gave us extremely useful advice and feedback which is reflected in the final version.

We advertised for and have had a fantastic response from tenants expressing an interest in shadowing the HQN Team during the Mock Inspection. Such was the quality of applicants that HQN have offered six shadow tenant inspector positions compared with the usual two or three and the full team has now been appointed.

HQN will be providing their initial feedback on our self-assessment and documents in their presentation to Board tonight. HQN will commence their on-site inspection on 1 October 2007.

#### **5 10 YEAR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

- 5.1 Last month we presented the draft strategy with our new Mission, Vision, Values and Objectives. These have now been launched at our Company Managers conference with a very positive response and engagement from managers.
- 5.2 The City Council and One Nottingham are currently working on the development of a 2030 Vision and Sustainable Community Strategy for Nottingham. In addition a new Chair of the Housing Strategic Partnership has been appointed and a review of the Housing Strategy has commenced.
- 5.3 At the last Board we highlighted the publication of the new Housing Green Paper: Homes for the future; more affordable, more sustainable. The Green paper sets out the Governments agenda on Housing including their desire for more homes to meet growing demand; "better homes", homes which are built to a better standard, both in terms of design and environmental impact and homes that are part of mixed communities; and more affordable homes to buy or rent. As mentioned in the Green paper, Nottingham City Council is actively working with English partnerships on the development of a local housing company as the means for delivering more affordable housing. Nottingham City Homes will be a key partner in this.
- 5.4 In light of the above we will be further consulting and developing our Ten Year Strategy to reflect this wider context.

## **6 ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

We continue to develop the Asset Management Strategy and the Decent Homes Investment plan. The Asset Management Strategy is due to be completed at the end of September 2007. Early discussions have taken place with Nottingham City Council on the Decent Homes Investment Plan and we will produce a report for NCC and NCH to gain joint approval.

## **7 STATUS SURVEY**

We have recently surveyed 14 966 tenants (50% of our tenants) and received a 32% response rate which was a 3% increase on our 2005 survey.

On the headline BVPIs

BVPI 074 62% satisfaction with the overall service we provide (no change since 2005) but should be considered against a national trend of a 2% reduction in this indicator.

BVPI075 56% of tenants are satisfied with the opportunities to take part in our management and decision making processes. This is an increase of 17% which ranks us as second best improving organisation in the country against this indicator.

Broadly satisfaction rates have increased across all services: of the 59 questions asked only 3 showed a drop in satisfaction.

The full result will be reported at the Performance & Regulatory Committee on 30 October 2007.

## **8 BUDGET UPDATE**

The 2007/2008 expenditure is currently inline with budget and full details will be available the Performance & Regulatory committee. The 08/09 budget will be presented to P&R on 30 October 2007 and the Board in November 2007.

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