

## NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

### REPORT OF INSPECTION PROJECT MANAGER

THE BOARD  
15 NOVEMBER 2007

#### PREPARATION FOR INSPECTION

#### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report advises the Board of the key actions required leading up to the Audit Commission re-inspection in June 2008.

#### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board:

- 2.1 Comment and advise on this report.
- 2.2 Nominate three Board members to join an Inspection Task and Finish Panel to oversee inspection preparations.

#### 3 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The Company's re-inspection of its services by the Audit Commission will take place in the 2 weeks commencing on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008.
- 3.2 Preparation for the inspection is well underway with a mock inspection of our services undertaken in October 2007, the results of which were reported to the last meeting of the Board and are currently being incorporated into revised service improvement plans.
- 3.3 Preparation for the re-inspection may be categorised into 6 key elements:
- Improvement action planning
  - Evidence and documentation
  - Self assessment
  - Engagement and communications
  - Operational preparations / improvements
  - Inspection logistics

A summary of the key milestones for inspection are highlighted in Appendix 1.

#### 4 INSPECTION PREPARATIONS

##### Improvement Action Planning

- 4.1 We are currently revising our service improvement plans to incorporate the recommendations arising from the mock inspection, the STATUS

survey results and HouseMark benchmarking report. We aim to have a set of detailed SMART improvement plans in place by the end of November 2007.

- 4.2 The critical issues for inspection success reflect weaknesses identified in the mock inspection and may be summarised as follows with key milestones included in Appendix 2:

Issue	Outcomes
Robust response to recommendations from previous inspections	Evidence of improvements embedded.
Customer care plan implemented	Clear vision understood by all staff and customers.
Access to services reviewed	Accommodation review complete, improved appearance and facilities, DDA compliance and efficiencies planned.
Repairs market testing	Robust demonstration of value for money and arrangements in place to drive continuous improvement.
Agreed asset management strategy	Strategic investment decisions made and transparent framework in place.
Improved estate services	Effective co-ordination of estate maintenance and solution to public realm issues.
Choice Based Lettings Review	Improved strategic approach, enhanced customer focus, improved approach to diversity, improved performance and quality control.
New voids delivered to top quartile	Improved, sustained performance to evidence shift to upper quartile.
Targeted recovery for rent arrears in place	Improved, sustained performance to evidence shift to upper quartile.
Tenant involvement embedded	Wider range of involvement opportunities in place and increased take up.
Top quartile performance on correspondence and enquiries	Improved performance on customer care.
Equality and diversity embedded	Greater emphasis on diversity and effective scrutiny and governance.
Effective budget and Vfm plan	Challenging efficiency targets in place and being met.
Fit for purpose organisation	Senior management team appointed. Company restructure complete.
NCC enabling plan	Integrated approach with NCC to successful re-inspection.

#### 4.3 Evidence and documentation

The inspectors will request a detailed list of information 8 weeks before the inspection. The scale of this exercise is considerable requiring the

review, production and collation of over 600 documents / pieces of information.

#### 4.4 Self assessment

We will undertake a further assessment of our position against the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) in Spring 2008. We intend to engage HQN to act as a critical friend to critique our approach, being familiar with our specific strengths and weaknesses, and advise on the best ways of presenting ourselves for re-inspection.

#### Engagement and communications

4.5 A communications plan involving staff, stakeholders and residents is being developed involving a range of consultation and communication exercises to ensure the inspection message is understood and received.

4.6 Staff across the company will be involved in preparing for inspection through service improvement teams, KLOE workshops, document review or through a new Inspection Working Group, consisting of staff who will 'champion' the inspection and drive forward improvements at a local level.

4.7 The Council has embraced its critical role in supporting the inspection and will be developing an integrated plan that will have compatibility with our services and activities in the run up to inspection. The Council's Deputy Chief Executive has established a monthly working group to oversee the development and monitoring of this plan.

4.8 Board and tenant representatives will be involved in overseeing the inspection planning through an Inspection Task and Finish Group that will meet every month.

#### Operation improvements / logistics

4.0 A programme of operational improvements and reality checking will be put in place to ensure consistency of service across all customer access points. Reality checking will be undertaken by our team of Tenant Services Inspectors, mystery shoppers we recruited for the mock inspection and the team of shadow tenant inspectors who shadowed HQN inspectors in the mock inspection.

4.10 We will develop ongoing liaison with the Audit Commission to build up as positive working relationship as possible during the next 8 months and beyond.

### **5 FINANCIAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The re-inspection of Nottingham City Homes is a critical event as regards the future of the ALMO. The actions proposed are specifically designed to minimise the risk of failing to achieve 2 stars at the next inspection.

5.2 A successful re-inspection and achievement of 2 stars will place Nottingham City Homes in a strong position to reach 3 stars at a future re-inspection and with that the potential financial freedoms and flexibilities not currently available, thereby contributing to the future sustainability of the HRA.

5.3 All proposed activities can be financed within current resources.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES**

6.1 A successful re-inspection in June 2008 will ensure the successful delivery of Nottingham City Homes mission and vision to deliver excellent services and homes and places people want to live in.

## **7 VALUE FOR MONEY & EFFICIENCY ISSUES**

7.1 Revised Service improvement plans contain efficiency measures to ensure all activity is undertaken within a value for money framework.

7.2 The assessment of our services against the Key Lines of Enquiry and actions arising out of that assessment should address any outstanding areas of value for money in our services.

## **8 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The assessment of our services against the Key Lines of Enquiry and actions arising out of that assessment should address any outstanding areas of inequality in our services

## **9 BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

Housing Quality Network Mock Inspection Feedback

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**Appendix 1****Key milestones**

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Improvement action planning	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2007
Communication plan	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2007
Inspection Working Group established	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2007
Inspection Task and Finish Group established	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2007
Mystery shopping and reality testing	November 2007 - June 2008
Staff / resident / stakeholder engagement	November 2007 - June 2008
Document review, production and collation	November 2007 - April 2008
Sign off previous recommendations	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2007
KLOE challenge events	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2008
Self assessment and supporting documentation to Audit Commission	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2008
Interview preparation	April – June 2008
On site timetable and programme finalised with Audit Commission	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2008
On site inspection	16-27 <sup>th</sup> June 2008
Production of final report	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2008 (estimated)

## Appendix 2

## Critical Issues Milestones

Issue	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Robust response to all recommendations from previous inspections	Previous recommendations revisited	Previous recommendations signed off	Spot checks	Spot checks	Spot checks	Spot checks	Spot checks	Spot checks
Customer care plan implemented	Culture change programme launched 3 C's process reviewed	Culture Change Programme commences			Consultation plan produced New service charter		Culture Change programme ends	
Access to services reviewed	Scoping document to be agreed with tenant reps	Area office review commences	Accommodation strategy finalised	Initial analysis and early decisions for discussion	Website improvements complete	Key procedures & documents reviewed	Leaflets revised	
Repairs market testing	Invitation to tender		Contract evaluation			Contract date TBC		
Agreed asset management strategy	Board confirm project plan	Tenant Conference NCC sign off 5 yr Decent Homes programme issued for consultation				2008/09 programme commences		
Improved estate services	Additional resources identified	Specification and service standards to be agreed Garage management strategy produced Project Plan agreed	Additional caretaking services introduced Estate standards launched Estate services protocol launched		Caretaking review complete	All estates reaching at least 2 star standard		
Choice Based Lettings Review	Review underway	Review underway	Review underway	Review underway	Review complete			
New voids delivered to top quartile	Project Plan in place	Target 500 properties void			Target 480 properties void			Top quartile performance
Targeted recovery for rent arrears in place	Area Panels re-launched	Project Plan signed off						
Tenant involvement embedded		6 month review of Compact Compact Action Plan updated						
Top quartile performance on correspondence and enquiries		2nd quartile performance	Top quartile performance	Ongoing monitoring	Ongoing monitoring	Ongoing monitoring	Ongoing monitoring	Ongoing monitoring
Equality and diversity embedded	Step up collection of diversity data	New Equality and Diversity Team recruitment underway Agree EIA timetable Culture Change Prog commences			60% of customer diversity information collected			
Effective budget and Vfm plan	Budget 08/09 and Medium Term Financial Plan drafted Housemark results analysed & reflected in the budget. Gershon savings targets developed and Annual Efficiency Statement data produced SLA Reviews continue	HRA resources for 08/09 known Revised Housemark data for 07/08 and 08/09 draft budget worked up Vfm Strategy review completed SLA Reviews continue	Financial management training programme to staff begins Procurement Strategy finalised Further update & analysis of Housemark data SLA Reviews continue	HRA budget and rent setting report approved by NCC NCH budget 08/09 finalised Financial management training programme continues SLA Reviews continue	Monitor and review progress and corrective action. Review of Gershon targets for 2008/09 Complete SLA Review programme and give notice as applicable	Monitor and review progress and corrective action	Calculate provisional Gershon savings for 2007/08	Evaluate performance against Gershon targets
Fit for purpose organisation	Company restructure consultation commences HR policies reviewed	Company restructure consultation complete and implementation commences Senior management posts advertised Culture Change Programme commences HR policies reviewed	IIP re-accreditation Re-alignment of training programmes to support new structures TU consultation on revised HR policies	Senior management post decisions made Restructure progressing	Implementation of revised HR policies	Culture change programme complete		
NCC enabling plan	Plan agreed							

