

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE BOARD
10 JANUARY 2008

UPDATE REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a brief update on some of the key issues currently on going in the organisation. This includes information on Asset Management Strategy, Appointment of Company Secretary, Tenant and Leaseholder Conference, ICT Strategy, Lettable Standard and the Casual Board Vacancy.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that

- 2.1 The Board note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 To approve the appointment of Julie Crook, the Director of Finance as Interim Company Secretary from 21 January 2008 with support, guidance and advice from Trowers & Hamblins Solicitors.

3 ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND DECENT HOMES

- 3.1 The City's Executive Board considered and adopted the Asset Management Strategy that we had developed with resident involvement and accepted the recommendations which support our recommendations to achieve the Decent Homes standard by 2013. We have begun implementation of the recommendations and will be discussing with tenants proposals for next years programme and more broadly on subsequent years programme. I will keep the Board advised of progress.

- 3.2 Actions now underway include:-

- Meetings with the current Decent Homes contractors are arranged for January 8th 2008 to outline the proposals including the reduction to one contractor for 2008/09.
- Notices to the European Journal have been prepared for both the Windows and Heating elements of the Decent Homes programme and will be sent out in January 2008.
- Project Management software has been ordered to support effective management of the programmes.
- The 5 year programme of works showing where and when work will be done is now in draft for consultation, and will be

considered by Councillors, Customer Groups and Area Panels over the next two months.

- The OJEU procurement for Expressions of Interest for Construction Delivery Partnership (specialist technical support including cost management) closed on January 4th.
- A mini competition through the Office of Government and Commerce is being procured to complete financial accounts and to set up efficient financial processes for Decent Homes
- Work is now underway on specifying and sourcing Composite doors in collaboration with residents groups.

4. APPOINTMENT OF COMPANY SECRETARY

- 4.1 Jo Wileman the current Company Secretary is to leave the Company at the end of January. Pending the commencement of employment of the permanent Company Secretary, it is necessary, in order to comply with Company law, to appoint a Company Secretary for the time being. It is proposed to appoint Julie Crook our new Director of Finance as an interim arrangement.

5 TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER CONFERENCE, 8 DECEMBER 07

- 5.1 The event entitled “Have We Got News for You” was attended by over 80 delegates, supported by members of staff from NCH who were on hand to staff the various information stands on the Forums and Area Panels. Introductions from Chris Langstaff and Jean England the current Chair of the Tenants and Leaseholders Congress were followed by guest speakers Councillor Jon Collins, Leader of Nottingham City Council and Dorian Leatham, Chair of the Housing Strategic Partnership who spoke about tenants and leaseholders impact on the Housing Strategic Partnership.
- 5.2 The Conference covered themes on service priorities and investment in homes using the themes of popular television game shows. Tenants provide a very clear and positive direction for the 5 year Decent Homes programme. Following lunch, tenants and leaseholders took part in a “Points of View” questions and answers discussion with a panel of tenants and leaseholders. The focus of the discussions was about getting involved and having your say.
- 5.3 Awards were presented to Rufford Tenants and Residents Association as the Association of the Year, Philip England for Area Panel Member of the Year and Cynthia James for Forum Member of the Year.
- 5.4 Feedback from the Event is currently being collated and the indication is that the event proved to be an informative, “fun” experience where the content and the pace was right for those attending and the level of information provided met expectations.

6 ICT STRATEGY

6.1 A review of Information Systems / ICT Strategy by NCC Group which was commissioned in the autumn has now been completed. The study focused on identifying NCH's current information and systems needs; shedding light on the levels of ICT service received by staff and on the adequacy of the equipment provided for their use. The recommendations are still being finalised, including the order and timescales for implementation and the production of an 'IS Roadmap'. However, some main themes and specific projects commend themselves to earlier attention (subject to budget availability) during the remainder of this financial year and during 2008/09:

- Set up a framework agreement to enable a strategic partner to help the continued development and implementation of the IS strategy.
- Implementation of standardised corporate reporting & business intelligence tools
- Implementation of 'workflow' tools in the Northgate Housing Management System, to facilitate business process efficiency improvements across the housing management functions.
- Implementation of an Electronic Document and Records Management System capability within NCH, integrated in the first instance with Northgate to allow scanning and electronic storage and presentation of Applications documents to operators at different sites.
- Extend access to NCC's GIS (Mapping) system and develop further facilities.
- Refresh of desktop and other office based ICT equipment.
- Take advantage of the opportunities for SMS Messaging to support the emphasis on 'appointment based services' in housing management functions.
- Establish and adopt a Home/Remote Working policy.
- Conduct ICT Skills Audit across all NCH staff
- Commencement of data cleansing initiative covering Northgate and consolidation of locally held databases.
- Review / market test of 'corporate' ICT systems.
- Upgrade / replace the main Finance and Human Resources systems
- Support Marketing and Communications' review of NCH web-sites by reviewing /market testing the technology for managing the site and the hosting service.
- Introduction of hand-held devices to provide mobile and location independent access to Northgate for Rents, Voids and

Allocations and other staff visiting tenants and properties.

- 6.2 With the IS/ICT Strategy Review due to report in January, the up-to-date view of business needs it provides will be used to improve the rewriting of our ICT Service Level Agreement (SLA). It is our intention, that any new SLA will need to be much more customer focused, clearer in its definition of the services on offer, and transparent in the performance management and charging for each service.

7. LETTABLE STANDARD

- 7.1 A series of viewings were set up with key stakeholders to view the three void 'show' homes which were prepared to the new proposed Lettable standard. Extensive feedback was received, such as changing the toilet seat to all properties and painting the front doors. There was positive feedback regarding the introduction of a 'welcome pack' which contains basic essentials such as light bulbs and cleaning materials. Feedback received from HQN Inspectors during the mock inspection has also led to further changes.

- 7.2 The full cost implications of the new Standard are still being analysed although some savings have been identified such as the use of vinyl floor coverings which is more attractive and hygienic as well as being cheaper than thermoplastic tiles, this saving will offset the additional costs of the Symphony kitchens. The average cost of a void property is £1786 in November, compared to £2533 in July when the team was set up.

- 7.3 The thorough cleaning of void properties is a key factor in the Lettable standard and in improving customer satisfaction. Both crafts and cleansing operatives have visited the show homes and have been trained to the standard required. A strong performance culture and more rigorous post inspection procedure has been introduced, and underperformance issues are being dealt with accordingly. More rigorous pre-termination and transfer visits, are helping to reduce costs incurred in rectifying tenant damage and rubbish clearance.

- 7.4 The key improvements are

- 83.8% pre termination visits in November compared to 47.4% in July
- 87.3% of transfer visits in November compared to 51.5% in July, resulting in tenant damage being rectified prior to moves going ahead.
- 87.3% of tenants were satisfied with the condition of their new property.

8. RENT COLLECTION AND ARREARS MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Improved rent collection was one of the 6 key service improvements identified in our Foundation Plan at the beginning of this financial year. Performance has improved since April, supported by the creation of a specialist team to focus on this area of activity.
- 8.2 However, as the Delivery Plan proposals for 2008/09 indicate, there is a need for a significant step change in performance if we are to achieve top quartile. I have therefore appointed Tom Moloney to work with us on a 2 day a week basis for the next 3 months to ensure that the service becomes fit for purpose with robust operating procedures in place. Tom has previously worked as a Director of Housing, and as a Deputy Chief Executive with responsibility for performance improvement. He begins work for us on 8 January 2008.

9. CASUAL BOARD VACANCY

- 9.1 Four Tenants and one Leaseholder expressed an interest in becoming a Board Member. The Company's Articles of association provide that the Tenants & Leaseholders Congress (TLC) nominate a suitable candidate to the Board. A ballot paper was issued on 14 December 2007.
- 9.2 The closing date for the receipt of the ballot paper was 12 noon 17 December 2007. At that time, only two ballot papers had been received. An extension of the time was agreed in consultation with the Chair of the TLC. The new closing date is 12 noon 11 January 2008.
- 9.3 It is proposed that a written resolution be prepared by the Company Secretary, after 11 January 2008, to ratify the appointment of the new Board Member, the term of office which will be until 31 July 2008.

CONTACT OFFICER: Chris Langstaff,
Chief Executive
14 Hounds Gate
Nottingham
NG1 7BA
Tel: 0115 9157351
E-mail: chris.langstaff@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk

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