

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY OF PARTNERSHIPS

THE BOARD
15 MAY 2008

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING STRATEGY 2008-2011

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces the new communications and marketing strategy for NCH. The strategy will last for three years and will be reviewed annually. It is based on best practice from a number of 3* ALMOs and analysis of Audit Commission reports.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board endorse the strategy and identify any areas it wants to prioritise and develop over the remainder of 2008/09.

3 REPORT

- 3.1 The communications and marketing strategy has been developed to support the mission, vision, values and strategic objectives of the company. It identifies key audiences and communications channels, and establishes a series of key themes around which our communication and marketing activities will be structured.
- 3.2 The strategy is based on analysis of the 2005 inspection, 2007 mock inspection, 2007 STATUS survey and Audit Commission reports on other ALMOs. It represents a pooling of best practice from across the country and is therefore designed to meet the requirements of a 3* ALMO.
- 3.2 The strategy seeks to embed the principles of tenant participation across the whole company, and makes specific reference to the key areas where customer and stakeholder perceptions can be improved.
- 3.3 Some elements of the strategy are already in place – for example the refreshed branding now coming into effect. Other developments, including a new website and internal communications strategy, will be launched over the next six months.
- 3.4 We will develop a standard style, format and layout for all NCH strategies to help improve understanding of how each one supports the mission, vision, values and strategic objectives of the company.
- 3.5 The communications and marketing team has been restructured to meet the challenges of delivering this strategy. A full time public relations

officer has been appointed and will start on June 23 2008. Permanent recruitment to the marketing team assistant post has also begun, with an expected start date of early July. Both posts will allow for increases in workload while saving the cost of the SLA with the city council for PR support.

3.6 A series of protocols have been identified to support the implementation of the strategy. These include media relations, marketing campaign development, and e-communications. These are now in development, and will set out the roles and responsibilities of employees, plus the processes for those employees to follow.

3.7 Development process

In addition to studying other ALMOs, directors and heads of service have been consulted during the writing of this strategy. Through a series of meetings a core set of key messages have been developed to sit under the key themes. The Customer Communications Panel has also been consulted, and will consider the strategy at its meeting on May 13.

3.8 Action plan 2008/09

A detailed action plan setting out the company's marketing activities will be developed during May 2008. Where necessary individual schemes will be re-phased or changed to achieve greater impact and not clash with other initiatives. Through a co-ordinated approach, the company can improve its reputation while improving value for money.

4 OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 No other options were considered – a communications and marketing strategy is a vital element of a successful ALMO.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The communications strategy has been developed in line with the objectives of the 2008/09 delivery plan. No commitments or objectives within the strategy depend on increases in the existing budget.

6 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES

6.1 The strategy is designed around the mission, vision, values and strategic objectives of Nottingham City Homes, with a commitment to review it annually to make sure it continues to reflect the wider priorities of the company.

7 VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCY ISSUES

7.1 A key company objective is: "To be an excellent, efficient organisation which has high quality leadership and management and delivers value for money."

7.2 The communications and marketing strategy makes explicit reference to

achieving greater value for money, including through better procurement, use of IT and more customer focussed marketing materials. The communications strategy therefore assumes an increase in quality and extent of service provision, within the context of a 3% saving in overall budgets.

8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 NCH provides services to a wide range of customers with different needs. A key objective is: "To value the diversity of our customers and ensure our services are accessible."
- 8.2 The strategy has been developed to make sure all communications are designed to meet the needs of our diverse customer base. It recognises that previous provision was not as good as it could be and identifies how to develop services based on individual customer need, and has a specific section on how NCH will work towards this objective.

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

- 9.1 Areas for development identified through analysis of 2005 Audit Commission report and 2007 mock inspection. Study of 3* ALMO communications strategies and related Audit Commission reports to identify best practice.

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