

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE BOARD
18 SEPTEMBER 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.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board:

- 2.1 Agree to the additional day's holiday on Friday, 2nd January 2009.
- 2.2 Note the contents of the remainder of the report.

3. REPORT

3.1 REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The contract commenced successfully on July 7th. Customer satisfaction through the VMS system has risen since the start of the contract. At the same time as the change of contract, a new IT system ROCC UE, was implemented to improve the reporting procedures. As may be expected, the implementation of this system and the change to Schedules of Rates caused a drop in reported performance within the first weeks of the contract. This has now however been recovered and we are analysing the latest performance and financial figures.

The Council has yet to sign the formal JCT contract having been in discussions regarding items of detail with our Solicitors, Trowers and Hamlin who are responsible for the revised contract. It is expected that the Council will sign off the document this month.

The fleet vehicle roll out is continuing successfully and you should be aware of the new NCH vehicles driving around Nottingham. Over 60% of vehicles have now been changed.

3.2 NOTTINGHAM ON CALL

NOC have been awarded Telecare Services Associations (TSA) parts I – III for the second year running. This is a quality award which denotes excellence in the call handling industry. Employees within the service have worked hard to achieve this re accreditation.

3.3 ARREARS ARE THE LOWEST LEVEL FOR 15 YEARS

At the end of August the level of arrears reached a 15 year low. Arrears stood at £3,170,128 a reduction of £458,197 on the same time last year. By comparison the movement to FTA's has been an increase of £80,000 on the previous year. The in year collection rate is currently running at 100.75% compared to 99.62% last year, this equates to an additional £378,000 income.

3.4 ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY UPDATE

Hounds Gate

The Executive Management Team and the Directorates for Finance, Organisational Development, Housing Operations and Strategy & Partnerships have now been relocated within the 2nd & 3rd floors of the building.

The following teams have now been moved into Hounds Gate from other locations across the city:

- Central Rents Team
- Rents Call Centre
- Asset Management Team
- Homelink

The new ICT Team transferred to the Company following the cancellation of the SLA with the Council has been moved in.

Nottingham on Call is scheduled to move into the building in early October 2008 and the Repairs Call Centre in December 2008.

Negotiations regarding leasing 17-21 Hounds Gate have commenced with a view to opening up the bridge and creating additional space that will enable the area rents teams to move into the building.

Housing Services Centre

Work to create the new Housing Services Centre will be completed on Sunday 28th September 2008. The closing date for applicants to form the new team staffing the Centre was Friday 12th September 2008 and interviews are scheduled for 15th, 16th and 17th September 2008. At the time of writing this report in excess of 45 applications had been received and 19 applicants have been shortlisted and confirmed their attendance for interview. Subject to systems testing and training it is anticipated that the Centre will open on Monday 13th October 2008.

New signage and an upgrading of information in reception areas will be completed by 22nd September 2008

3.5 PRESS/MEDIA MONITORING

The Chief Executive would like to present the Press and Media Monitoring report for June/July and August. Over the past three months we have had some positive press articles on our One in a Million apprenticeship scheme, the plans for our Secure Warm Modern programme and our successful evictions through our involvement with Nottinghamshire Police's Operation Mojave. These have all resulted from positive press releases, organised interviews or planned features. We have also worked hard to deflect potential negative press by using a more open and honest approach with the media. By presenting reporters with the facts about particular situations, we have been able to 'dampen' stories and even prevent the article being published or broadcast.

3.6 BOARD DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

- A rolling training programme is now in place which is complemented by Board away days, briefings and attendance at events and seminars.
- Diversity training is being scheduled for December.
- Board members have been supplied with a draft personal development folder to record and a more detailed record is held by ODL.
- The annual appraisal of Board members is currently being undertaken by the Chair and the training programme will be updated to reflect the outcome of those appraisals as appropriate.
- A review of the Board handbook is currently under way and will be circulated to members for comments prior to the next Board away day in October.
- A resource centre for the Board is also being developed adjacent to the Board room.

3.7 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY 2008

The final report has just been received and will be circulated to the Board and Managers on 12th September.

We received a total of 334 responses which equates to a return rate of 31% and falls within the expected rate for surveys of this nature. The results from this survey have been benchmarked (wherever comparative data was available) against 5 other ALMOs and other public sector organisations.

The outcome is encouraging for the organisation at this stage in our development with strong indicators around our vision, proposed leadership and staff roles and responsibilities. The Survey does give us clear pointers to staff concerns, most of which we have already anticipated in our forward plan and training plan. We are finalising a clear response to issues raised and will consider the survey more fully at the H.R. Committee

3.8 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The company's draft health and safety strategy for 2008-2011 has been prepared by the health and safety team, and has been circulated to board for approval as a separate agenda item. This strategy includes a three year workplan.

Part of the health and safety workplan is to introduce a schedule of health and safety inspections for workplaces and communal areas of sheltered schemes and high rise buildings. Although we anticipate that the bulk of these inspections will be carried out by health and safety team members and service managers, board members and directors will be invited and encouraged to check their diaries and participate once the schedule has been published.

An inspection of Harvey Road was carried out on 2 September by myself and Mark Johnson along with members of the health and safety team and management and employee representatives. Although items for action were identified on this inspection, the work that has already taken place to improve health and safety was noted.

3.9 APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES

H.R. Committee agreed 3 apprenticeship schemes at its July Committees. These are briefly summarised below.

- Construction Based Scheme

This is an award winning scheme which employs 10 people per annum over a 3 to 4 year period. The scheme is operated in partnership with Stephenson College. NCH has recently completed a recruitment exercise with 10 trainees appointed who are all from within City boundaries.

- Pathway To Work

This is a brand new scheme which is to be launched in October 2008. It will employ up to 10 people on a 2 year rolling scheme for non construction areas of the service. All those appointed will be from within the City boundaries. The scheme will be operated in partnership with New College Nottingham and will allow trainees to gain an NVQ 3 qualification in Administration (equivalent to A level).

- One In A Million

For every £1 million pounds invested in the Decent Homes Partnership an agreement has been established with the Decent Home Partners to create one traineeship post. This equates to approximately 243 trainees in total over a 4 year period. The trainees will be recruited, employed and managed directly by the Decent Home Partners. NCH will be responsible for monitoring the scheme. All trainees to be within City boundaries and this will be part of the agreement with City partners. The scheme will be operated through Stephenson College. We have recently recruited 3 trainees.

3.10 ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

The levels of absence continues to fall and if the current trend is maintained we should reach our year end target of 12 days per employee. Noticeable significant improvements have been made with weekly paid staff, from 3.88 days in November 2008 to just 1.42 days in June this year. Long term sick absence is still the main area of concern, but with increased support and training for managers we hope to see further improvements in the future.

3.11 CHRISTMAS LEAVE

Current terms and conditions of employment mean that NCH gives employees a 'concessionary' day's leave on Christmas Eve, Wednesday, 24th December. The Office will reopen on Monday, 29th through to Wednesday, 31st December. We then close for New Year Bank Holiday on Thursday, 1st January 2009. We would normally open on January 2nd, however, as this is a Friday it is unlikely that there will be significant demand for our services and also opening for one day before the weekend is cost inefficient when considering the heating of all of our buildings.

Many of our staff have, over the last 6/12 months, put in considerable effort to improve immeasurably the services we provide to our customers, whilst at the same time enduring the uncertainties of organisational restructure and preparing for the Inspection.

It is therefore proposed that we offer, to all of our workforce Friday, 2nd January as an additional days leave. There will, of course, still be a need for a number of staff to be either on call or directly providing services as they would do on any other Bank Holiday. For those staff we would propose to offer an additional day's leave at some other time during their leave period. An extra day's leave at this time is likely to have minimum impact on service delivery particularly if we ensure that normal out of hours service is provided. There may, however, be some direct cost/income implications for the Repairs DLO Trading account which may require us to make compensatory financing adjustment at the

end of the financial year.

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