

## NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE BOARD  
20 NOVEMBER 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

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

#### 3. REPORT

##### 3.1 FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT PERIOD 6

A detailed report on the latest revenue and capital budget position was presented to Performance & Regulatory Committee on 11 November. The current position on the NCH Management Fee budget is that projected expenditure for the year is £33.247m which is £147k (0.4%) more than the budget of £33.1m. An Action Plan is in place to rectify this position by the end of this financial year. The current position on the delegated capital programme budget is that projected expenditure is £22.8m against a budget of £23.3m; the £500k variance will be rolled forward into 2009/10. This represents a delayed start to the digital aeriels programme as we are ensuring that we benefit from the most up-to-date technology and deliver value for money on this scheme.

##### 3.2 PERFORMANCE AS AT PERIOD 6

As reported to the Performance and Regulatory Committee meeting held on 11 November 2008, our operational performance indicates that overall, we are on schedule to deliver our annual Delivery Plan targets and outcomes.

Steady progress is being made to achieve the 08/09 Delivery Plan outcomes and progress is being closely monitored by the Executive Management Team.

On the 3 key performance areas:

- Lettable voids at the end of September were 418, having recovered from a slight increase during the summer period. This represents a significant improvement on 1 April 2007 (619 lettable voids) and on the position 12 months ago (545 at 31

September 2007).

- In month rent collection achieved 100.29% at the end of September. Unaudited figures for the end of October indicate that this will be exceeded for October, meaning that for the first time we have achieved 3 consecutive months in excess of 100%. The September 2008 figure compares with a September 2007 equivalent of 99.2%. Based on Benchmarking data from Housemark, NCH has achieved the fourth highest collection rate for the end of quarter two from the 27 ALMOs who have made returns, - ours is the highest of all metropolitan ALMOs. This underscores the considerable improvements we have achieved since centralising the Service as a part of our Foundation Plan in 2007.
- Customer satisfaction with the repairs service as measured through VMS (Vision Management System) is 8.13 which is the highest score since introduction and above the target of 8. As previously reported repairs performance has been impacted by the commencement of the new repairs contract on 7 July. The mobilisation plan for the new contract is progressing according to plan and performance should return to top quartile as anticipated by the end of the year. Repairs completed on target is 92.79% compared to an in year target of 97.75% and appointments made and kept was 95.39% compared to the target of 97%. Performance is being closely monitored and adjustments made to the mobilisation plan as necessary. P&R Committee and the Board will be kept advised of progress.

### **3.3 NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES WINDOW AND DOOR PROCUREMENT**

These works were the subject of a Contract Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union dispatched on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008 (reference number 2008/S 41-056844) Installation of Plastic Windows and Composite doors.

From the 28 contractors that submitted a Pre Qualification Questionnaire. There were 6 contractors who qualified to go forward to the tendering stage of the process. The Pre Qualification Questionnaires were assessed and the following successful contractors were invited to bid;

- Sovereign
- Yorkshire Windows Company
- Norfolk Frames
- Anglian Windows
- Nationwide Windows
- Radway Windows

Members of staff from NCH, NCC and Savill's were involved in the evaluation process as well as tenant representatives.

Tenders were evaluated by a 60% price 40% quality split.

The final combined Price and Quality scores identified that Yorkshire Windows and Nationwide Windows were the best placed to deliver the Window and Door contract for NCH's Nottingham Secure Programme.

Financial credit checks have shown that Yorkshire Windows and Nationwide Windows are low risk companies Installation of secure by design windows will increase household security and will reduce heat loss by 10% per property which will help occupants to keep an affordable and adequate level of warmth inside their homes and help reduce fuel poverty.

The tenders were evaluated against the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Equality Duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Gender Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2006, which were set out in the Invitation to Tender. The One in Million construction legacy training scheme applies to all partners delivering the Nottingham secure programme.

It is therefore recommended that the Board Note the appointment of Yorkshire Windows and Nationwide Windows to supply and install windows for the Nottingham Secure Scheme inline with the published Decent Homes Programme.

### **3.4 HOUSING SERVICES CENTRE AND TENANT RESOURCE CENTRE**

The new Housing Service Centre, based on the ground floor of Hounds Gate, was officially opened on 28<sup>th</sup> October by Paul Rowe, Chair of NCH Board, Councillor Alan Clarke, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Regeneration, and, Jean England, Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Congress. The new Centre provides a city centre location for tenants and leaseholders offering the following services:

- a HomeLink Property Shop where applicants can view and bid for properties
- a tenancy and estate management advice service with an appointment service for housing patch manager home visits
- full advice for rents, allocations, decent homes, supported housing and repairs
- a freephone to call other NCH and NCC services
- internet access to services
- support and advice from the tenant participation team

The formal opening was attended by tenant and leaseholders, city council officers, RSLs, partners and support agencies. Positive messages of support were received about the centre and the future of NCH. Further promotion is currently taking place to ensure that tenants and leaseholders are aware of this additional service in the city centre.

The Tenant Resource Centre is also located on the ground floor of Hounds Gate. This will provide a range of facilities for tenant groups, including a training facility, IT equipment and an information area. A tenant and leaseholder steering group has been set up so that tenants and leaseholders decide how best their centre will work. The steering group has been on a fact finding visit to another tenant resource centre in Derby. Tenants and leaseholders will initially be supported by the Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Team to run the centre. The aim is for tenants and leaseholders to run the centre themselves through a devolved budget.

### **3.5 ASB CONFERENCE 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2008**

NCH held its first annual ASB Conference on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at the Nottingham Ice Arena. The event was held in conjunction with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and was one of ten National events launched by the Home Office as part of the 'Not in My Neighbourhood week'. Positive media coverage from both BBC radio Nottingham and Trent FM resulted in 122 tenants and residents attending the event which was the highest number of attendees nationally out of the ten events.

Guest speakers included Chris Langstaff CEO of NCH, Alan Given CEO of the Crime and Drugs Partnership and Paul Cottee of Nottinghamshire Police. Tenants had specifically requested that we refrain from a workshop style approach as they wanted to try something innovative. Always up for a challenge we obtained actual CCTV footage of various ASB incidents and held a hand held voting interactive session, facilitated by Kim De Vergori Assistant Director of Tenancy & Estate Management and Kathy Mason ASB Co-ordinator. This style of engagement proved extremely popular. Feedback from the event included comments such as;

"Can't wait for next year", "Excellent Event", "Very informative", "Hope this event is one of many", Very well organised, lots of information and good speakers.

### **3.6 DELIVERING HOMES AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIP' CONFERENCE**

With One Nottingham's Housing Strategic Partnership and Nottingham City Council, Nottingham City Homes ran a major conference on 17 October. More than 150 representatives from across the city's public and private housing sectors came together with tenants and residents for the event.

The conference was chaired by Graham Allen MP, Chair of One Nottingham and was addressed by Sir Bob Kerlake, Chief Executive of the new Homes and Communities Agency, Cllr Alan Clark, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Regeneration, and myself.

The event enabled NCH to place itself at the heart of the city's housing

partnership, and to discuss with partners and residents the way NCH could actively contribute to the city's wider transformation and regeneration agenda.

Nottingham City Homes senior staff ran three of the six conference workshops. The workshops looked at our decent homes programme, community empowerment, creating cohesive communities, delivering homes through partnerships, early intervention and the private rented sector.

These sessions allowed us to place our work in a wider context, and to discuss in detail with partners how our activities could contribute to Nottingham's shared agenda. We will be working with the Housing Strategic Partnership to produce a full report of the event.

### **3.7 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.7.1 Recruitment**

A recent recruitment fair held in the council houses proved very successful in attracting individuals to join our call centre. Other initiatives include our new e recruitment which will have a corporate careers website and will enable us to effectively monitor all stages of recruitment.

#### **3.7.2 Sick Absence**

The target set for September 08 of 13 days has been exceeded with a reported average number of sick days at 12.58. The second pilot scheme where our employees contact a nurse contact centre to report absence also commenced in September.

#### **3.7.3 2007/08 Pay Award**

As you know the company sets its annual pay increase in line with the Local Government Pay increases. A final offer of 2.45% has been made which, after consultation, GMB agreed to accept but members of Unison and Unite voted for strike action. This was followed by a two day strike in July which had little impact to services being reported and therefore gave no rise to any pressure to improve on this offer. Unison and Unite, together with the GMB, have now decided to refer the pay dispute to arbitration through ACAS in line with the National Joint Council's (NJC) constitution. Further updates will be provided when available.

The JNC for Local Authority Craft and Associated Employees have agreed a pay settlement for 2008/09 applicable from 1 April 2008. The agreement is laid out below:

- To increase by 2.45% all pay rates and pay-related allowances
- To increase by 3% all tool allowances and storage of tools and clothing

If a higher settlement is reached after arbitration through ACAS in

relation to the NJC local government dispute then it may mean that a supplementary claim will be submitted by the Trade Union Side.

#### 3.7.4 Health & Safety

A fire evacuation practice was carried out at the Hounds Gate offices in October. This went exceptionally well, and the entire building was cleared in under three minutes. This was especially reassuring considering that many staff are new to the building and nobody was pre-warned that the drill was going to take place.

Two new health and safety courses have launched in October, namely fire safety awareness and health and safety for managers. These courses are especially significant because they are delivered using e-learning, which allows employees with access to a computer to complete the training at their own pace, and avoids losing working time attending traditional training courses. Each course is followed by test to demonstrate learning. A further course (using computers safely), which contains a statutory computer risk assessment, will be trialled in November and rolled out across the company in the New Year.

An employee health and safety survey was introduced in October, and 335 completed surveys were returned. The results of the survey will be collated in November. The survey was sponsored by the GMB union, who have provided complimentary tickets to the Nottingham Panthers ice hockey match on 23<sup>rd</sup> November for 5 lucky prize draw winners, and a signed ice hockey stick for the first entry drawn.

#### 3.7.5 Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Award

One of our gas engineers, Rae Crown, has been granted a top award by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE).

She has been named the Housing and Building Apprentice of the Year for 2008 (in the female mechanical and electrical category). Rae finished her apprenticeship in August this year and now works full time as a gas engineer for Nottingham City Homes. The APSE accolade was not her first award as she was granted the Master Plumbers Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire title in 2005. Throughout her apprenticeship she was supported by her mentor Ian Richardson, Learning Development Officer at Nottingham City Homes.

As an organisation, Nottingham City Homes is also not new to the APSE awards as it was successful in achieving other accolades in 2004 and 2005.

#### 3.7.6 The Forum – BME Management Development Programme

Dorothy Smith and Jenny Thompson have recently been selected to attend “The Forum” a Leadership Programme and Policy Network for Black and Asian Housing Professionals that has been launched in

partnership with the Housing Quality Network and supported by the Housing Corporation.

Both Dorothy and Jenny will have access to coaching, master classes, peer group support, briefings and newsletters, work shadowing opportunities and regional network events, all overseen by experienced leaders who are experts in their fields.

A fantastic opportunity for two of our employees to be involved in shaping future policies and procedures in the housing sector and transferring the knowledge gained through the programme back into the company.

### **3.8 BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

Annual Appraisals - Further to the Board Report of 18 September 2008, I can confirm that this year's Board Appraisals have been completed. The current overall training programme and personal development plans will be reviewed to accommodate training needs as appropriate.

Board Away Days – No further Board Away Days are currently scheduled, however the Equality and Diversity training will go ahead on 3 December 2008 as planned.

The remit of future Board Away days will include training on Corporate Manslaughter, Risk Management, Health and Safety, Procurement and Value For Money. It is proposed that this training be delivered in-house.

The Board is also requested to give consideration to a review of the Board Away day format (currently held over two half day sessions) to suit the needs and availability of the Board."

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