

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE BOARD
25 MARCH 2010

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a brief update on some of the key issues currently ongoing in the organisation

2 COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING – UPDATE

2.1 Media coverage

It was a relatively quiet month for media enquiries. Notable coverage included our support of Radio Nottingham's annual energy experiment, where people are encouraged to turn off electrical items overnight. This resulted in a prime time slot to promote our involvement on February 19th – boosting the company's reputation for quality services and value for money (the two biggest drivers of public sector customer satisfaction).

2.2 NCH News

The March edition of our newsletter focused on Equality and Diversity.

A significant development this month is the inclusion, for the first time, of contact information for every tenant's housing patch manager (HPM). This information will be included with every edition, to raise the profile of HPMs and improve customer relations.

As a pilot, the south edition of the newsletter also includes contact details of every tenant's local police officer.

2.3 Award entries

2.3.1 Housing Heroes Awards (organised by CIH and Inside Housing)

The Procurement Team is a finalist in the annual awards, for their innovate approach to procurement – including reverse e-auctions for Secure Warm Modern and working with customers. The awards ceremony in London on May 14th

2.3.2 TPAS Connecting People Awards (Midlands)

The Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement Team have been shortlisted for the Best Practice in Youth Involvement award. The awards ceremony is in Solihull on March 18th.

2.3.3 Chartered Institute of Building Awards

We were shortlisted in the Training and Sustainability categories, for the One in a Million scheme and Secure Warm Modern programme. The

awards ceremony was in Leicester on Friday 12th March and we were selected as winner for the “Committed to Training” Award. We also co-sponsored one of the awards.

2.3.4 **NFA Awards**

We have submitted entries in the following categories:

- Board Member of the Year – Janet Storar
- Most Innovative Project – E-auctions – Procurement Team
- Most Outstanding Resident – Ruth Haywood, Tenant Services Inspector and heavily involved tenant
- Most Effective Partnership – One in a Million scheme
- ALMO Team Member of the Year – Sheila Gennard, Windows Team

These awards are being judged this month and the finalists will be announced by March 29th. The awards ceremony will take place on July 15th July at the Midland Hotel in Manchester, when the winners will be announced.

We are currently considering entries for the CIH East Midlands good practice awards and ASB Action Net.

2.4 **HomeLink**

2.4.1 **HomeLink inclusion event**

The latest event was held at the Days Inn on March 4th. Organised by the Communications team on behalf of HomeLink, around 70 people from support organisations across the city attended.

2.4.2 **New website**

The new HomeLink website will go live at the end of March. This will provide a much improved and wider housing options service for customers, as well as a completely transformed look and feel. The new site is based on the opinions of customers and RSL partners, obtained through a survey conducted at the end of 2009.

2.4.3 The Homelink advert in the Nottingham Evening Post has been given a new look, to make it easier to read and understand. This has coincided with the introduction of a new production process for the advert. This process reduces the time it takes to create the advert, as well as reducing the cost to the partnership.

3. **WARM HOMES, GREENER HOMES**

3.1 The Government have announced that they will develop a **new “Warm Homes” standard for social housing**, to supplement the Decent Homes standard. This would cover both insulation and connection where feasible to low carbon district heating or renewable heating. The strategy set out an aim of cutting emissions from fossil fuels in homes by 29% by 2020.

- 3.2 This radical document will have a major impact for both NCC and NCH and it is imperative that NCH are in a position to ensure that these new opportunities are taken both for our tenants and the company
- 3.3 The initial estimate is that the total cost of delivering this programme for standard and solid wall insulation to 2020 is **£18.6 billion**. The costs fall over the period 2013-2020. The finance for this roll-out will come from two main routes, The new energy company obligation. This will provide approximately two-thirds of the overall financing, the final third will be delivered by a new form of 'Green Finance' based on a Pay as You Save model.
- 3.4 The Strategy spans the period to 2020. In the first part of the decade (through to 2015) there will be two priorities. The first is to complete the installation of standard energy saving measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation in all homes where it is practical to do so. This will happen initially under the existing CERT scheme as extended to 2012, with the Strategy set out in this document coming into effect at the start of 2013. The second aim is to kick-start the installation of more ambitious eco-upgrades, with social housing providing particular leadership to stimulate the industry and reduce costs.
- 3.5 During the period, the Government see local authorities developing plans to support installation of district heating measures in the most economic and feasible communities. From 2015 there will be an accelerated roll out of more significant measures such as solid wall insulation and heat pumps. At this point there will be more developed supply chains, a more developed Pay As You Save finance market and the embedding of partnerships with local authorities
- 3.6 Capacity will be required to install the measures at the scale needed. District heating developers will also be looking to expand their networks to balance heat loads across mixed use properties, installing increasingly renewable generating plant.

4. TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

- 4.1 We are progressing the development of Tenant and Leaseholder involvement in Nottingham City Homes. A small working group with Board members and tenants have been steering the work on this, informed by the developments from Tenant Services Agency. The culmination of this work was presented at the TLC/Board meeting on 24 February
- 4.2 It was proposed at this meeting that we have a refreshed vision for Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement. Our new vision is:
- “Excellent Services driven by empowered and involved communities”*
- 4.3 We also developed a set of principles for involvement:

- To make customers and communities at the heart of our business
- To have conversations that matter and that make a difference
- To promote and embrace equality and value diversity
- To embed involvement into all functions and activities
- To ensure transparency

4.4 There is a broad recognition that tenant involvement in NCH has some key strengths, not least our Tenant Board members and team of 40 tenant inspectors. The business planning process demonstrated that many of the involved tenants and leaseholders have a really good understanding of the business. However, the focus now has to shift from a “meetings based culture” to real engagement at the local level.

4.5 In order to move this forward, we will be piloting the development of a local standard as part of NCH’s engagement in the Aspley pilot. The learning from this pilot will then be used to inform the development of tenant involvement in local areas which will in turn inform our statement on our approach to local standards due to be submitted to the Tenant Services Agency in October 2010.

4.6 The annual Tenant Conference is being held on Saturday, 20th March. Board members should have received invites and will be given a verbal update on key issues arising.

5. FIRE SAFETY

5.1 Board is aware that Nottingham City Homes is carrying out a major fire safety programme in the City’s high rise properties. A senior management group is working with the Fire Brigade to ensure an effective programme is designed and implemented. Board also agreed a new Fire Safety policy in January.

5.2 Detailed fire risk assessments have been carried out on all of the city’s high rise properties. Fire safety improvement work is well under way at Highcross Court. Work at Highhurst and Clifford Courts is nearing completion. NCH and the Fire Brigade will be on site at both buildings to promote the new fire safety arrangements. An initial assessment has now been carried out at Kingston Court in Sneinton and work will also commence there shortly.

5.3 Fire Safety improvement work has been completed at Belconnen Road and Kingsthorpe Close following recent fire related incidents at these properties. Major incidents have been reported at either site in the past three months.

5.4 Related Health and Safety training has been designed for Repairs Operatives so that they can undertake their work in line with fire safety regulations. Training is now being designed in conjunction with the Fire Brigade for other NCH employees with Fire Safety responsibilities.

6. INDICATIVE END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE

6.1 As we approach the end of our reporting year I am pleased to report an overall improvement in company performance when compared to the start of the year. Overall, out of the top 41 indicators:

- 27 Indicators show improved performance (66%)
- 9 Indicators remained static (22%)
- 5 Indicators show deteriorated performance (12%)

A full analysis of outturn performance will be provided at the next Board meeting.

6.2 Key strengths have been:-

- Customer satisfaction
- Lettable voids
- Rent arrears collection
- Caretaking and estate services
- Managing ASB
- Gas servicing

The five falls in performance have been:-

- Rent loss (from non lettable voids)
- Slight increase in the number of offers required to let a property
- Slight fall in the percentage of properties let at first offer
- Percentage of tenants evicted for rent arrears has risen slightly
- A percentage point increase in the annual tenant turnover rate

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DATE: 15 March 2010