

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**THE BOARD
29 JULY 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 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that

- 2.1 the Board note the report; and
- 2.2 note that up to 20% of the decent homes environmental budget is set aside for delivery by locally lead social enterprise organisations (see section 5 below).

3 UPDATE ON ACCOMMODATION PLAN

- 3.1 Following the update to our accommodation plan at the last Board meeting, Fisher Hargreaves and Protector (FHP) have been commissioned to undertake survey work in relation to a property which has the potential to bring together in one single location all NCH staff (except those based in local service centres). This would generate both economies of scale and opportunities for productivity gains. The information from this survey work will be used to populate the 10 year financial business assessment. If the outcome of that work demonstrates a sound business case for a move, a special Board meeting will be called to fully consider the Accommodation Plan and to robustly challenge the assumptions of the 10 year financial business plan.
- 3.2 Authority to consider the business case was delegated to the Business Development Committee, but Board will be kept involved and engaged as necessary.

4 CIH ACTIVE LEARNING FOR RESIDENTS

- 4.1 I am pleased to inform the Board of Janet Storar's success in passing the Chartered Institute of Housing, Active Learning for Residents (ALfR) qualification. Janet has completed the equivalent of an NVQ Level 4 'Award in Governance'.

'The learning outcomes are well met; there is clear evidence of

development and added value. I hope that she is able to use these credits and carry on with the learning as she is clearly very capable, very reflective. Janet should be congratulated for her achievement.'

- 4.2 The CIH have used Janet's experience to publicise and promote the ALfR. This inevitably has a positive impact upon the work and the reputation of the NCH Board

5 DECENT HOMES ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS – DELIVERY THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting Nottingham's communities Nottingham City Homes (NCH) aims to help develop organisations that contribute to developing the social capital of the communities that it serves
- 5.2 NCH has explored a number of ways in which it can contribute to the objectives set out in Nottingham's Sustainable Community Strategy. One of the 2020 Strategic Priorities is to 'tackle poverty and deprivation by getting more people into good jobs'. Many of the properties NCH maintains are located in Nottingham's deprived communities and these same areas have disproportionate numbers of people disadvantaged by lack of training, qualifications and skills. This limits their work opportunities.
- 5.3 The Decent Homes programme has, as one of its key performance indicators and desired outcomes, the need to maximise the community benefits from the central government funding including training, employment and promoting community involvement and initiatives. This concept has echoes of support in the new Governments recently announced "Big Society" programme which includes supporting co-operatives, charities and social enterprises to give them greater involvement in the delivery of public funded schemes.
- 5.4 NCH have already made good progress on this agenda through the Nottingham "Secure, Warm, Modern" programme in terms of employment, including over 600 new jobs, over 60 new apprentices through the award winning "One in a Million" scheme, reduction in fuel poverty and improved health and security of the tenants. The Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) and CLG have recognised these achievements on these large scale schemes; however, this does not apply the environmental works programme on which 5% of the Decent Homes money that Nottingham receives can be spent. These works are a collection of small jobs within the curt ledge of NCC properties such as fences, paths, and environmental improvements.
- 5.5 It is therefore felt important to examine ways in which smaller value Decent Homes contracts can contribute to the agenda detailed above, helping local people improve their skills and training prospects and maximising community benefits.

- 5.6 NCH is aware that there are a number of not for profit social enterprise organisations working with Nottingham communities to help tackle skills and training deficiencies.
- 5.7 NCH wishes to identify and ring fence a proportion of the 2010/11 Decent Homes environmental budget for delivery by locally based social enterprise organisations on a number of pilot schemes and to work with such organisations to support them in establishing sustainable work for the communities they represent. These pilot schemes would sit outside financial regulations and standing orders.
- 5.8 NCH recommend that no more than 20% of the £1.7million budget for 2010/11 be ring fenced, as delivery of the city wide programme by the end of the financial year must be achieved, and that these works should cost a maximum of £50K more than if they were delivered through the normal procurement route/contractors.
- 5.9 These pilots will allow NCH to assess the viability of this approach, and the wider benefits anticipated in terms of training and skills development, pathways into permanent employment for local people accessing the Social Enterprise vacancies or training positions. They will also help to inform how NCH procure such work in future years to meet the requirements and desired outcomes of the Decent Homes funding through the HCA/CLG, the Governments "Big Society" programme and Nottingham's Sustainable Communities Strategy. An informing document for this approach will be the NCC/One Nottingham Commissioning Framework- March 2010.

6. HIGHCROSS COURT

- 6.1 The Council has agreed to decommission High Cross Court by March 2011 and meetings are being held with residents to discuss the timetable for decanting. NCH is in the process of completing the remaining fire safety work in the building which consists of fitting alarms in residents' properties. All of the communal work has now been undertaken.
- 6.2 The Fire Brigade is aware of the deadline for decommissioning and is satisfied with the Fire Safety work currently being carried out.

7 MEADOWS PFI

- 7.1 Board members will be aware that the NCC was successful in their round 6 PFI (Private Finance Initiative) bid for the Meadows which will bring £200 million worth of spending credits to the area. NCH have recently been approached with a view to them undertaking the housing management of the social housing in the area. NCC is keen to have NCH as a preferred supplier of this service and senior officers from NCH are currently working with the NCC PFI team to this end. The work

however does bring a number of risks to the Company which could have a financial and reputational cost. In any event the PFI will have some impact upon the Company's business, a projected £1million worth of rental income is generated by the Meadows. It has already been indicated that NCH will not be providing build/maintenance services to the PFI. If NCH is no longer providing services within the Meadows there will be a negative impact upon the management fee the Company receive. It is also anticipated that the PFI will increase management and maintenance charges to the HRA which will impact upon the available income to deliver services across the City. A future report will be brought to the Board once work on this issue is progressed.

8 MOZES (Meadows Ozone Energy Services Limited) Part of Meadows Partnership Trust

Mozes is the Meadows Community Owned Energy Company
"Taking responsibility for future Energy Needs of the Meadows"

- 81 NCH has nominated Chris Langstaff to sit on the Mozes Board along with Cllr Katrina Bull who has been nominated by the Council in her capacity as Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change.

9 QUALITY & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ACCREDITATION

- 9.1 In July the company was visited by SGS, an independent organisation that monitors how well we meet the International quality Standard ISO9001 and the environmental Standard 14001. It is pleasing to report that during this visit, SGS were happy with the progress being made, and raised no non-conformances to either standard. A further assessment will be undertaken in December 2010

10 COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING ACTIVITY

- 10.1 In the last month we have launched our social housing fraud campaign. It features a series of striking 'referee' adverts with the tagline 'blow the whistle on housing cheats'. Literature and branding materials has been placed in every housing office, and posters have been distributed to newsagents etc.
- 10.2 The new HomeLink website goes live this week. The new site contains a wealth of information about housing options, as well as step by step instructions on how to use the HomeLink system. It has been built using freely available content management software, to ensure maximum value for money.
- 10.3 There have been a number of significant reputational management issues to handle in recent weeks. These include the Stockhill Lane explosion, Highcross Court closure and the Victoria Centre lift improvement works.

- 10.4 We organised the official launch ceremony for the new build council housing in Clifton. This was covered in detail by BBC East Midlands Today, and carried interviews with Chris Langstaff and Cllr Dave Liversidge.
- 10.5 Monday July 19 saw the launch of Efficiency East Midlands. We have supported the initiative through a series of press releases and other work, securing good coverage in the trade Press.
- 10.6 Issue 33 of NCH News has now been sent to all tenants. This is significant because it's the first to be combined with quarterly rent statements. This will save the company more than £25,000 a year.

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