

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

HUMAN RESOURCES
COMMITTEE
14 JULY 2009

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TACKLING WORKLESSNESS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide HR Committee with an update on key initiatives being delivered in response to the current economic recession via the Nottingham City Homes' Tackling Worklessness Strategy.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee make note of the information provided.

3 REPORT

The Tackling Worklessness strategy has been developed in partnership with tenants, leaseholders, Company managers and City partners. The strategy was recently discussed at the Housing Management Strategy Sub Group consisting of Board Members and is with the Executive Management Team for formal approval. **Appendix 1** (Strategy Map) provides a strategic overview of the various initiatives captured within the strategy. Please find below a brief progress report on some of the key initiatives:

Apprenticeships

The Company currently operates three schemes:

1. Construction – Trade
2. One In A Million – Trade and Business Administration
3. Pathway to Work – Business Administration

- 3.1 Following extensive outreach work the 2009/10 recruitment cycle is currently in progress with an ambitious target of 40% BME representation. All Apprentices will be inner city residents and members of the Employee Ethnic Minority Forum and Tenant Forum representatives form part of the interview panels. **Appendix 2** shows statistical data linked to the applications.

It is anticipated that NCH may extend the number of placements in line with recently promoted Government funding opportunities including for example, Future Jobs Fund. Details about this will be provided at the next Committee meeting.

3.2 Nottingham City Council, NCH and BEST Partnership – Social Enterprise Scheme

NCH is in the early stages of developing a partnership scheme which will enable local unemployed people to access training and employment opportunities with NCH, recruited in partnership with BEST for the refurbishment and potential sale of properties outside of the Decent Homes Programme. More recently CV's for Broxtowe residents have been forwarded to Construction Partners with arrangements being made for all to have an interview and receive feedback.

3.3 Bestwood Job Club

New tenants in the Bestwood area are referred to a job club operated by a local community organisation, Bestwood Directions. The initiative is designed to promote local job opportunities to unemployed tenants, to signpost unemployed tenants to training opportunities and to encourage sustainability of tenure by promoting local, community based support.

3.4 Work placements for single parents, BME and disabled people

NCH is working in partnership with Stephenson College to provide 50 inner city people with 13 week placements in Property Services over an 18 month period. The initiative is partly funded by the Learning and Skills Councils.

3.5 Work Experience or Schools and School Leavers

NCH supports a range of city schools with works experience. For example in the past 12 months 77 young people have benefited with placements from 2 to 4 weeks plus. Furthermore, NCH is working in partnership with Learning Works to provide train to gain students with work experience. **Appendix 3** provides more detail on work experience activity within NCH over the last 12 months.

3.6 Nottinghamshire Education Business Alliance

Three city schools are providing the new diploma in construction to their students. NCH will support NEBA by providing works experience to 48 young people each year.

3.7 Chartered Institute of Housing: Active Learning For Residents Scheme

The CIH (Chartered Institute of Housing) Active Learning for Residents accredited training is designed to give recognition to the achievements of tenants and leaseholders through a new range of accredited qualifications at level 2, 3 and 4 within the National Qualifications Framework. The project allows participants to achieve: CIH Level 2 Certificate in Community Action, CIH Level 3 National Certificate in Tenant Participation and Neighbourhood Renewal and CIH Level 4 Award in Governance. There is a direct progression route for candidates wishing to undertake each module that not only empowers and builds capacity within tenant and leaseholder participation but also contributes to addressing the Government's Worklessness Agenda. The

Company intends to undertake a targeted approach and has directed a 10% of placements to under 25s. The Company is supporting 10 tenants and leaseholders to undertake the training with a target completion date of January 2010 for the current pilot scheme.

3.8 Tenant and Leaseholder Resource Centre

A resource centre within NCH, which is operated by tenants and leaseholders was established in October 2008. The resource centre provides access to the worldwide web, Company information and training resources for development purposes.

3.9 NCH Tenant and Leaseholder Development Programme

NCH have an annual training programme compiled from requests for training opportunities identified by tenants and leaseholders. This forms part of NCH's commitment to empowering tenants and leaseholders to become more involved in the decision making process by providing training opportunities. Training opportunities have also been accessed through other providers and NCH has joined a Consortium facilitated by PEP (Priority Estates Project) in partnership with other social housing providers.

The programmes provided by the Company help increase confidence, capability and skills levels, thus increasing the opportunities for accessing further development and obtaining sustainable job opportunities.

3.10 Works Trials

This initiative is led by Job Centre Plus and provides the unemployed with opportunities to access work experience with local companies without any loss to their benefits. The Company will explore opportunities for developing a partnership with Job Centre Plus and a commitment to provide approximately five work placements per annum for the unemployed.

3.11 Jobs Pledge

The Pledge is facilitated by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and Job Centre Plus. Companies that commit to the Pledge agree to guarantee job interviews for unemployed people from socially excluded groups e.g. BME, disabled etc. In return the DWP will ensure that individuals receive fully funded pre-employment training to meet the needs of the Company.

3.12 Promoting Social Inclusion

NCH recognises the link between increased worklessness and financial exclusion. For this reason the Company has developed a Financial Inclusion Strategy. The strategy aims to empower customers by providing and extending choices, together with targeted support to enhance the quality of individual and community life.

Obviously there is a direct link between the Tackling Worklessness and

Financial Inclusion strategies. The intention is not to repeat or duplicate initiatives across the two strategies, but to ensure that synergies are identified for joint working. Below are some examples of where synergies exist:

3.13 Improving Financial Capability

NCH works with city partners to promote opportunities for customers to access essential skills in order to improve literacy, numeric, budgetary and financial skills. For example, developing a partnership arrangement with Castle College, Nottingham whereby customers can be signposted for vocational training. Where possible the Company will dovetail further opportunities with existing initiatives to provide a fully integrated approach to the development of our customers.

3.14 Financial Inclusion Events

NCH sponsors an annual financial inclusion seminar, involving key partners such as the Department of Works and Pensions, Housing Benefits, Welfare Rights, Nottingham Law Centre, Severn Trent, Nottinghamshire Constabulary and Connexions. The Company will also arrange an annual community event open to members of the public, to obtain financial advice and assistance.

3.15 Access to Financial Support

The Company is committed to promoting the use of Nottingham Credit Union by, for example, sign posting customers and the development of a protocol for working with the service. Furthermore, the Company is working with the Credit Union to develop a current bank account for tenants. NCH will also champion the 'Access To Work', Job Centre Plus scheme, which provides equipment to support people with disabilities who are entering employment.

3.16 NCH Learning Events for Pre-Tenants

NCH recognises the importance of supporting people well before they take on a tenancy. The Company will support pre-tenants by arranging for skills development in financial management, maximising income, utilities and tenancy conditions.

3.17 Using Procurement To Invest In The City

NCH is developing a procurement strategy with a strong focus on local jobs for local people. For example, a key objective in the strategy is to 'work within an ethos of partnership and co-operation to continually improve service standards and enhance the well being of residents, partners and the environment'. There are three key ways that this objective can help support the worklessness agenda.

3.18 Hiring of Local Contractors

The Company is committed to supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary groups by identifying opportunities for local suppliers and

contractors to compete for Company contracts through local promotion and joint partnership initiatives. For example, by linking the Company website to Source Nottingham where all Company contracts will be advertised. A table of all contracts will be posted on the website detailing current contracts, and tender review dates.

3.19 Creation of Supplier Led Training Opportunities

Encouraging suppliers to create training opportunities for local people e.g. train to gain, apprenticeship schemes etc. An example of where this approach has already been adopted is the 'One In A Million' scheme referred to above. The Company is committed to exploring further opportunities for promoting this type of scheme.

3.20 Public Sector Compact and Procurement Sub Group

NCH has a lead role in the procurement sub group. The group was established in April 2009 and includes a range of public and third sector partners all working to identify ways of increasing procurement opportunities for local suppliers as well as the creation of training and employment opportunities.

4 FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

Financial commitments and risks associated with the above initiatives are highlighted in individual project plans, developed by the relevant lead officer.

5 IMPLICATIONS FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES OBJECTIVES

The 'Achieving Excellence' ten year strategy refers to NCH aspiring to be an 'excellent organisation' by

- being an employer of choice

Key objectives are supported predominantly -

- To support the company's major push on equalities and diversity

6 VALUE FOR MONEY AND EFFICIENCY ISSUES

The team is committed to value for money by:

- Maximising funding opportunities to deliver initiatives cost effectively
- Generating income from initiatives – e.g. train to gain funding for NVQs
- Delivering training in-house wherever possible
- Working with partners to take advantage of economies of scale

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The inference is that many of these initiatives promote positive action e.g :-

- Community outreach work and work experience.
- Establishing ambitious targets around representation.
- Involving BME employees and tenants in the recruitment process.
- Training and educating individuals around financial inclusion.
- Working in partnership with business partners to encourage local opportunities for learning and development.

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

NCH Annual Delivery Plan 2009/10

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