

Welcome to our new version of the NFA update which aims to keep all members informed of NFA activities and developments in the sector. The update builds on the information regularly supplied to the regional chief officers and other groups, but will be a shorter version produced more regularly and for a wider audience. Together with our recently revamped website and *ALMOs in Action* magazine we hope this will help to improve communications with our members. Please do let us have comments on any of these changes.

## ALMO INSPECTION ROUND-UP

### Published results

There have been a number of inspections and re-inspections in recent months and we congratulate Homes in Havering, St George's Community Housing, H&F Homes, East Durham Homes, Enfield Homes and Stevenage Homes for having achieved 2\* ratings. Published ALMO inspection reports can be found on the NFA website under ALMOs – inspection reports <http://www.almos.org.uk/reports>

### Summary

There are 21x3\* 35x2\* 6x1\* ALMOs as at end November 2009 and three ALMOs await their recent inspection results. Eight ALMOs are yet to have their first full ALMO inspection. The next phase commences in February/March 2010 with 11 ALMOs due for inspection or re-inspection.

## NFA BOARD & ESG

### Board Chair and Vice Chairs

The new NFA Board convened in June 2009 and appointed Alison Inman, Colchester Borough Homes, as the new Chair and Juliet Rawlings, Kensington & Chelsea TMO, and Sue Roberts, Wolverhampton Homes, as Vice Chairs.

### NFA Executive Steering Group

The NFA Board is supported by the chief officer NFA Executive Steering Group (ESG). At the meeting of the Executive Steering Group in July Helen McHale of Stockport Homes was elected the new ESG co-ordinator.

To see biographies of the NFA Board and ESG members please access NFA website ([www.almos.org.uk](http://www.almos.org.uk)), About NFA – NFA Board [http://www.almos.org.uk/nfa\\_board](http://www.almos.org.uk/nfa_board) and NFA Executive Steering Group <http://www.almos.org.uk/steeringgroup>

## NFA EVENTS

### Recent events

On 3 November the NFA ran a conference on *Building ALMO homes* and on 1 December the NFA conference *ALMOs – a regulated sector?* looked at the impact of regulation on ALMOs. These events were well attended by ALMO Board members and senior officers as well as by councillors and officers from councils with ALMOs.

### NFA events and meetings in 2010

A schedule of standard meetings for 2010 is now available on the NFA website under Meetings <http://www.almos.org.uk/meetings>. Please remember to enter the relevant dates in your diary. In the meantime please also ensure you note the following dates of events:

- 18 January 2010 – Midlands ALMO Board members networking event hosted by Solihull Community Housing
- 11 and 12 March 2010 – HouseMark ALMO chief executives conference
- 23 and 25 March 2010 – NFA regional seminars in London and York
- 15 and 16 July 2010 – 2010 NFA annual conference, AGM and Awards to be held in a new venue, the Midland Hotel, Manchester.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITY

The next issue of the *ALMOs in Action* NFA newsletter will shortly be published and distributed to all ALMOs.

NFA press releases have been issued on the outcome of the subsidy review, the decent homes funding issue, the appointment of the new NFA Chair and the visit of the Housing Minister to Yorkshire ALMOs. See NFA website – News & publications for details: [http://www.almos.org.uk/news\\_docs.php?subtypeid=19](http://www.almos.org.uk/news_docs.php?subtypeid=19).

A number of feature articles have been produced for trade and national press and detailed briefings provided for national and trade media including the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 on the decent homes funding issue.

## PARLIAMENTARY WORK

The July meeting of the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) discussed the *A future for ALMOs – within local communities* publication and was well attended by tenants, ensuring a lively discussion. The December meeting discussed the impact of the deferral of decent homes funding for round 6 ALMOs. Tenants and officers from the ALMOs affected attended the meeting and made strong representations to the group who agreed to urgently request a meeting with the Housing Minister to discuss the issue.

Briefings have been produced for MPs and opposition leaders on the HRA subsidy review, the key recommendations of the *A future for ALMOs – within local communities* publication and on decent homes funding. A paper has also been sent to the Housing Minister on some of the issues relating to new build.

## REVIEW OF COUNCIL HOUSING FINANCE

The NFA responded to the CLG consultation paper *Reform of council housing finance* by broadly welcoming the proposals in the paper and urging the Government to ensure the level of debt re-distributed is fair and sustainable and to introduce the self financed model by April 2011. A copy of the NFA response can be found on the NFA website in Guidance & briefings – Finance and decent homes [http://www.almos.org.uk/guidance\\_docs.php?subtypeid=11](http://www.almos.org.uk/guidance_docs.php?subtypeid=11)

## TSA CONSULTATION PAPER ON STANDARDS

The NFA issued its response to the TSA discussion paper *Building a new regulatory framework* in September and, on 12 November, the TSA issued its formal statutory consultation paper *A new regulatory framework for social housing in England* which sets out in more detail its proposals for cross-domain regulation.

Copies of the NFA response to the discussion paper and a full and summary version of the TSA statutory consultation paper are available on the NFA website in Guidance & briefings – Regulation and performance monitoring: [http://www.almos.org.uk/guidance\\_docs.php?subtypeid=16](http://www.almos.org.uk/guidance_docs.php?subtypeid=16).

The consultation concludes on **5 February 2010** and **members are urged to let the NFA have their comments on the proposals as soon as possible** in order to inform the NFA's response.

## DECENT HOMES FUNDING CAMPAIGN

Following the HCA announcement to ALMOs in July advising them that it intended to defer the decent homes funding for those not yet at 2\*, the NFA Board and Executive Steering Group agreed to establish a campaign team to help drive forward the future of decent homes funding.

### Progress so far

The campaign team decided on a number of activities including:

- Seeking a meeting with the Housing Minister, which took place on 4 November
- Providing further briefings for MPs and submitting a number of parliamentary questions
- A petition to Number 10 has been placed on the website and **all ALMOs and their tenants are invited to sign the petition**, by visiting <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/DecentHomes/>
- Advice to the ALMOs concerned on guidelines for involving tenants has been produced
- The APPG meeting took place on 8 December and a number of meetings with individual MPs seeking their support have also taken place
- Early Day Motion 360 on decent homes funding has now been submitted **and ALMOs are asked to try and persuade their local MPs to sign up to the motion**
- Written evidence has been produced for the Select Committee and is available on the NFA website under Guidance & briefings – Finance and decent homes [http://www.almos.org.uk/guidance\\_docs.php?subtypeid=11](http://www.almos.org.uk/guidance_docs.php?subtypeid=11) The NFA Chair, Policy Director and chief executive of East Durham Homes gave evidence to the Committee at a visit to Stockport Homes on 23 November while Sheffield Homes and Sandwell Homes gave earlier evidence

- The NFA has also contributed to a National Audit Office study of the decent homes programme which is currently nearing completion
- Carrying out an audit of ALMOs gathering evidence of good practice examples based on decent homes work with the aim of delivering a paper to the Minister on the broader beneficial impact of the decent homes funding. **Any additional examples from ALMOs would be very welcome**
- Contacting major contractors who might be willing to offer support in the campaign
- The NFA has also been working closely with the council trade bodies (LGA, London councils and CWAG) and contributing to a joint lobbying strategy
- The NFA will also contribute to the CLG assessment of the decent homes programme that was announced on 8 December.

## NFA INCOME AND EXPENDITURE JANUARY – OCTOBER 2009

|  | Actual to<br>31/10/2009 | Budget<br>2009 |
|--|-------------------------|----------------|
| Income   | 499, 654                | 596, 250       |
| Expenditure                                    | 515, 159                | 634, 026       |
| Excess of Expenditure<br>over income after tax | -15, 505                | -37, 776       |
| Cumulative surplus b/f                         | 94, 218                 | 94, 218        |
| Cumulative surplus c/f                         | 78, 713                 | 56, 442        |

## ACTIVITY REPORT

### Website

**Visitor numbers:** 1414 and **number of visits:** 2360

**Most popular pages:** Home page; ALMOs page; News & publications home page; NFA core values and services; and NFA members page

**Most downloaded files:** Beyond Decent Homes: decent housing standards post 2010; Reform of council housing finance consultation; Homes in Havering re-inspection; £450m funding package to Kickstart housing projects (monitoring from 29 October); and Decent Homes and social housing answers, TSA consultation comments, new council powers (monitoring from 17 November).

### Queries

**Telephone:** 233 calls received to the general NFA telephone number.

In addition, on average the NFA office team received 1635 queries over the phone and by email.

# A Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year to all our members