

NOTTINGHAM CITY HOMES

PERFORMANCE & REGULATORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held on **13 MAY 2008** at Hounds Gate from 5.00pm to 6.40pm

Attendance

Committee Members

Ade Aderogba
Tim Bell (arrived at 5.25pm)
Peter Linford
Janet Storar (Chair)
Malcolm Wood (arrived at 5.15 left at 6.20)

Also In Attendance

Steve Everson - Interim Director of Finance
Janet Glass - Head of Business Improvement & Development
Mark Lawson - Rents Manager (left 6 40pm)
Sue Lomax - Allocations Manager
Lorraine Hayes - Governance Officer
Tom Welch - Customer Relations Manager
Kate Watret - Service Manager Repairs Contact Centre

07/28 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS FROM THE CHAIR & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair opened the meeting.

07/29 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Paul Rowe.

07/30 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

No declarations were made.

07/31 MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE & REGULATORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2008

The Minutes were agreed and adopted as a true and accurate record of the Meeting.

07/32 MATTERS ARISING

The Head of Performance & Best Value (HPBV) informed the Committee that the problem with telephone monitoring had been resolved.

07/33 SLA REVIEW PROGRESS UPDATE

The Interim Director of Finance (IDF) introduced the update report and advised that discussions had been held with NCC about how to achieve savings from future budgets.

The Committee was informed that the Company had formally withdrawn from Four SLAs.

There had been limited progress on a number of SLA reviews; Nottingham City Council (NCC) had been unable to provide the agreed support to NCH to complete the reviews. The Company was committed to completing the reviews as soon as possible to ensure that cost reduction targets included in the 2008/09 financial year budget are achieved.

The Committee was of the opinion that the Audit Commission was likely to focus on the SLA arrangements and the Company needed to demonstrate Value for Money.

Malcolm Wood queried whether the Company had looked at consortia arrangements in the procurement of Fleet Management so as to be confident that it had achieved value for money. It was confirmed that the procurement process had been put out to EU tender and the terms agreed included repair costs and replacement vehicles within the annual rental.

RESOLUTIONS:

The Committee:

- 1. Noted the withdrawal from the four Service Level Agreements Design & Property Services, Human resources, SX3 Support Services, Fleet Management and Fleet Management administration.**
- 2. Agreed to note the remainder of the report.**

07/34 PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN

The Interim Director of Finance (IDF) presented the outturn position for the financial year 2007/08 this was expected to be the final position, subject to agreement of the outstanding balances with NCC and audit.

It was reported that there was a deficit of Two hundred and sixty eight thousand pounds (£268k).

For NCC'S Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as a whole, the position was likely to be better than anticipated at the time the budget was set.

The Committee noted that within Capital expenditure 2007/08 there was an underspend of Four hundred thousand nine hundred and sixty eight pounds (£400.968K)

Malcolm Wood queried if any of the employees that had left the Company had challenged the Company on the terms of their departure. The Interim Director of Finance confirmed that no legal costs had been paid during 2007/08. He further advised that there was a budget for Legal costs arising in 2008/09.

Malcolm Wood requested further details in relation to fire damaged properties. It was agreed a report would be presented at the next meeting.

Within the Capital Expenditure budget it was noted that there was no budget provision in 2006/07 for the preferred partners. The variances stated may be substantially reduced on settlement of the final accounts.

Ade Aderogba queried the Tender process for the preferred partner for Decent Homes. It was confirmed that for 2008/09 the Company was working with Keepmoat the preferred partner. It was noted that re-procurement may occur later this year.

The Committee noted the report.

07/35 RENT COLLECTION PERFORMANCE

The Rents Manager presented the rent collection performance for the year to 5 April 2008 progress against targets, trend analysis and how performance would be improved. The projections and targets for 2008/09 were circulated at the meeting.

The Committee was informed that performance had fallen below target during 2007/08 which had resulted in a shortfall of around Five hundred thirty two thousand pounds (£532k). Steps had been taken to address performance and a specialist rents team had been created in July 2007 which consisted of three area teams and one central team, this had culminated in a 1.09% rise that was worth a significant Eight hundred and Eighty Seven thousand four hundred and seventy eight pounds (£887,478).

Malcolm Wood queried the number of Suspended Possession Orders (SPO) granted and was the Company happy with the granting of them. The Rents Manager informed the Committee that he was not universally happy with the number of SPO's granted as this impacted on the debt owed to the Company. He further advised that court costs were approx Three hundred and one pounds (£301.00) and were shown on a separate account to the tenants rent account. The Court had implemented an online issue fee for registering cases with the Court; this would have potential costs savings to the Company in the longer term.

Malcolm Wood queried the process for Housing Benefit Appeals and was there a fair arbitration process in place. The Rent Manager informed the Committee of the process and highlighted the importance of joint working with Housing Benefits.

Ade Aderogba queried the former tenancy arrears and details of the write offs. He also queried the high number of evictions from BME groups and Customers with Mental Health problems. The Rent Manager confirmed a report will be presented to the next Committee meeting on write offs and further advised that The Company needs to explore further our links with support agencies to support our customers in sustaining their tenancy.

The Chair sought clarity on former arrears from deceased tenants. The Rent Manager advised that sensitivity in dealing with the next of kin was needed and it was unlikely that arrears were recovered.

The Committee supported the plans to improve performance and found the report to be very informative.

The Committee noted the report.

07/36 REGISTER OF DISPENSATIONS

The Governance Officer presented a report which advised the Committee of the dispensations from Financial Regulations agreed since the last meeting.

The Committee noted the report and register of dispensations subject to further clarification at the next meeting on the Extension of Deed of Variation of the Decent Homes Partnering Contracts to 31 August 2007.

07/37 COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS PROGRESS

The Customer Relations Manager presented a report which advised the Committee on the performance and outcomes for 2007/08. In April 2007 a new policy and procedure for managing customer feedback through compliments, comments and complaints was introduced.

The new policy had reduced the target time to respond to customer complaints from 14 days in 2006/07 to 10 working days. In February 99% and March 98% of responses had been achieved within target.

Tim Bell queried if there was any Benchmarking data with other ALMO'S. The Customer Relations Manager informed the Committee that this was an area that needed to be explored in more detail.

The Chair informed the Committee that the majority of repair complaints had been addressed at stage one of the Complaints process.

Ade Aderogba informed the Committee he had received a number of complaints regarding the Homelink Scheme. The Allocations Manager informed the Committee on the process that customers can follow if they are dissatisfied with the banding they have been placed in.

The Committee noted the report.

07/38 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 1 APRIL 2007- 31 MARCH 2008

The Head of Performance & Best Value (HPBV) presented the annual performance report which measured the Company's performance against national and local primary performance indicators. The HPBV welcomed feedback on the style of the report from the Committee.

Access & Customer Care

The Committee was informed that the timescale to respond to Elected Members and Board Members correspondence had been reduced to five working days creating a two tier system. It was reported that performance had steadily improved since the review of the system in August 2007.

Vacant Property Management

The HPBV advised that despite some good success the Company would be concentrating on making further improvements.

The successes included:

- Reduced the number of lettable properties that are empty from 638 to 425 during the year to date.
- Reduced the number of voids empty for more than six months from 173 to 182;
- Average void time 39.7 days this is well within our target of 45 days.

Repairs

It was noted that cumulative repairs performance had demonstrated an improving trend.

Estate Management

The Tenants Services Inspection Team had rated 24 estates as 2 star standard. The exercise had positive outturns in that the Company was able to better engage with NCC departments and highlighted the areas within the city where the caretaking service was non-existent.

Attendance Management

The HPBV informed the Committee that level of employee attendance was still a serious area of concern with the proportion of absence due to long term sickness. The average number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee on a rolling 12 month programme was 15.5 days. The Committee was informed that a pilot scheme within Housing Operations Directorate would include initial medical support contact.

The Committee queried was there any area that showed particular cause for concern. The HPBV informed the Committee that PI 10 will come into judgement within areas one and two of the Inspection. PI 20 was also highlighted as an area of concern following the review of procedures and a more robust approach to arrears management.

The Committee noted the report and it was agreed that the Performance Indicators numbers to be included within the main body of the report.

07/39 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

07/40 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

The Meeting ended at 6.40pm

SIGNED DATED