

 <p><b>Northwards Housing</b> North Manchester's Council Homes</p>		<b>Report to:</b> Northwards Housing Board 11 November 2014		<b>Item No:</b> <h1>8d</h1>	
<b>Title:</b>		Northwards Housing Communications Plan 2015-16			
<b>Date:</b>		31 <sup>st</sup> October 2014			
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<b>Confidential:</b>		<b>No</b>			
<b>For:</b> (Please tick action required)		<b>NOTING</b>		<b>DISCUSSION</b>	
				<b>APPROVAL</b> ✓	
<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>					
The Northwards Housing Communications Plan sets out the key priorities for communication for the next year. We've produced this plan to ensure that all teams and directorates are aware of the communications goals for the organisation, to better serve our collective aims.					
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>					
For the board to approve the Northwards Housing Communications Plan 2015-16					
<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>					
<b>Risk Management</b>		Managing the reputation of Northwards Housing is a major risk			
<b>Regulatory &amp; legal compliance</b>		None Directly			

**Consultation/Consideration:**

	Yes, No or N/A:	Name:	Date:
<b>Sub-Committee:</b>	N/A		
<b>Area Panel:</b>	N/A		
<b>Task Groups:</b>	N/A		
<b>Ward Councillors:</b>	N/A		

## Northwards Housing Communications plan 2015/16

### Introduction

The Northwards Housing Communications Plan sets out the key priorities for communication for the next year. We've produced this plan to ensure that all teams and directorates are aware of the communications goals for the organisation in order to better serve our collective aims.

Good planning and collaboration will help us clearly identify opportunities to communicate what Northwards and its partners are intending to do to make life better for our tenants and to uphold our values: **Putting People First, Spending Money Wisely** and **Supporting Communities to be Successful**.

Planning also helps us to **evaluate** the success of communications campaigns, to ensure best use of resources and ensure value for money. Evaluation will be built into every campaign.

In putting together this plan, we've met all heads of service to ascertain what the key drivers in their work are. They have all agreed the plan and will help the organisation deliver their priorities..

### Key priorities

We will continue to deliver excellent communications to promote the good work Northwards is doing in north Manchester.

These communications priorities tie very closely with the Northwards Business Plan 2013-2018 and its annual update.

The plan reflects anticipated levels of resources for the year, both in terms of capacity in the communications team and also in terms of the extent to which other parts of the business are resourced to undertake the scale and breadth of activities listed in the plan.

The plan will be revised, should the level of resources change.

Our campaigns will support the responsive nature of the work that we do as a housing provider, but will also seek to implement communications designed to assist behavioural change. We will also improve our digital offering, helping to get our tenants online and use the vast resources technology has to offer us.

We will be ready to deliver responsive and informative communications in times of emergency and crisis, and we will support efforts to enhance Northwards' reputation.

Northwards will be developing a new website with a responsive design and will also be undertaking a review of the Northwards Natter - the quarterly magazine distributed to all tenants.

Our priorities are listed as gold, silver and bronze – in order to ensure that resources are concentrated where they are most needed.

**Gold** represents anything which is crucial to the smooth running of the business; **silver** refers to tasks which are in line with our business objectives and **bronze** are less critical and often have another lead partner, who we are supporting. The lead directorate responsible for delivery will be highlighted in each case.

Although some of the work done across the business is inevitably reactive, it is still important to forward plan as much as possible.

## **Gold**

### **(Not in any priority order)**

- Promote successful ASB court cases as appropriate
- Support a programme of behaviour change which encourages appropriate waste disposal and attempts to reduce the level of litter in north Manchester.
- Promote equality and community cohesion
- Use a range of communication methods to support a reduction in the number of rehousing offers refused by 15 per cent by July 2015
- Support the responsive repairs teams with urgent communications, particularly around access for appointments and gas servicing
- Review letters sent out by the home improvement teams informing tenants about upcoming work to their homes
- Actively promote work to be done under the capital programme, using the Northwards Natter and social media, as well as other communications channels. The investment and strategic asset management team will inform the communications team when an order for a project has been placed with the contractor
- Communicate the new build programme in Riverdale and Collyhurst
- Support the NRG group meetings in order to understand and promote green priorities
- Design and support a programme around energy efficiency and behaviour change, taking into account fuel poverty rates and other associated factors.
- Support the roll-out of carbon literacy training to all employees
- Continue to support communications around the NEDO project
- Review letters from the rent team to encourage behavioural change, as well as reviewing communications to reduce the number of letters sent
- Review the annual rent letters and statements sent out by Manchester City Council
- Support the rent and money advice teams with the promotion of the changes to benefits
- Highlight annual performance figures in the Northwards Natter
- Continue to maintain and update the Northwards website
- Launch a new website for Northwards Housing
- Deliver an annual staff conference and awards ceremony

- Produce an annual report for Northwards Housing in time for the Annual General Meeting, including performance information
- Work with HR to design a Total Rewards Statement for 2015, which promotes all the benefits of working at Northwards, in order to increase employee engagement.
- Promote the annual Personal Review process in 2015 to encourage maximum completion
- Support the event management of the Northwards AGM
- Routinely publicise and promote board activity, ensuring papers and minutes are up-to-date and accessible on the Northwards website
- Produce an annual update to the Northwards business plan
- Revamp money advice literature to bring it up to date

## Silver

- Actively promote our approach to domestic abuse, using key dates in the communications calendar to highlight the issues.
- Actively promote the work done on capital environmental schemes delivered by Your Environmental Team, particularly to tenants' and residents' groups
- Actively promote the work done by resident involvement officers, using social media and traditional communications methods to highlight the resident involvement strategy and explain changes in the way we involve residents
- Support the delivery of Northwards Housing's digital strategy by motivating tenants to explore the benefits of online services.
- Support the retirement housing teams in their attempts to reduce loneliness in older tenants
- Use the Northwards Natter, alongside other communication methods, to promote regular boiler maintenance and repairs information.
- Work on the launch of the **yes** expansion project in Higher Blackley
- Work with Manchester City Council and the home improvements team on the implementation of the Collyhurst masterplan
- Promote the micro-finance small business loans initiative to Northwards' tenants
- Promote and develop branding for the Irk Valley Hydro scheme
- Support a roll-out of a large scale PV installation programme to suitable homes
- Use internal communications to promote sustainable methods of transport to and from work, including car sharing, public transport and cycling
- Support with a relaunch/review of the green office champions
- Continue to promote health and safety issues across the organisation, using Yammer to encourage debate.
- Promote the work of Tenants' View, with the aim of raising awareness of the group both internally and externally, and also assisting with recruitment to the group
- Produce an updated version of the Tenant Handbook annually

- Working in partnership with other agencies, support the delivery of digital inclusion projects in the area consistent with Northwards' business objectives, such as increasing access to the internet for those tenants who are excluded from the benefits of being online
- Support the production of materials to support the organisation's approach to Value for Money
- Continue to support communications with leaseholders, producing one Leaseholder Living newsletter every year
- Promote the biennial Best Companies and customer satisfaction surveys to encourage the maximum number of responses
- Continue to work with HR team to promote the health and wellbeing agenda.
- Support HR team in promoting development opportunities across the organisation
- Regularly support recruitment of board members, using innovative communication techniques
- Highlight and promote the position of chair, fostering an understanding of what is involved in the position.
- Design a communications plan to recruit apprentices from the north Manchester area

## **Bronze**

- Promote the launch of the newly installed digital cctv system
- Work with Greater Manchester Police and the GMFRS to highlight various initiatives
- Promote the Eric Hobin Fund, both internally and externally, and include at least one story a year about the fund in the Northwards Natter.
- Support the High Rise Living Forum with their communication, including at least one article in the Northwards Natter every year
- Update retirement housing literature, both online and in print
- Support the publicity around the SHIFT assessment
- Continue to promote the Smarterbuys initiative
- Promote employees' compliance with the Data Protection Act by highlighting the planned e-learning courses.
- Encourage line managers to update the Our People group on Yammer with news and information about employees and moves within teams.
- Continue to support the HR team on the Charity of the Year
- Explore the use of the campaigns feature on Locata to promote relevant, targeted rehousing campaigns on Manchester Move
- Publishing equalities data in line with the Equality Act.

## **2015/16 Calendar**

Starred items (\*) refer to internal communications campaigns only

### **January**

Hate Crime Awareness Week

New build starts on site

Apprentice recruitment – starts in January 2015 with apprentices to start in June 2015

Irk Valley Hydro community shares

\*Staff party

### **February**

One Billion Rising

Best Companies Results

Leaseholder Living

### **March**

Annual business plan update

Climate Week

International Women's Day

### **April**

Capital programme gets signed off by MCC

Rents letters sent out by Manchester City Council

World Book Night

\*Carbon Literacy programme starts

Complete review of retirement housing literature

New tenant handbook issued

### **May**

Mental Health Awareness Week

International Day Against Homophobia

\*Long Service Awards

\*Annual Rewards Statement

### **June**

Gardening competition

\*Customer service excellence assessment

\*Annual conference and awards ceremony

## **July/August**

Resident involvement summer events  
Urban Crew awards  
\*Investors In People assessment  
Neighbours Day

## **September**

Charity of the Year launched  
World Car Free Day  
Gas safety week  
Cheetham Festival

## **October**

Northwards Housing annual report  
Annual General Meeting  
Safe, sound and off the ground  
\*Safeguarding training  
\*Flu vaccinations – October/November  
SHIFT results announced - October/November

## **November**

Operation Treacle  
Yes 2 project  
\*Data protection training  
Northwards' Christmas card  
\*Northwards Calendar  
Anti-bullying Week

## **December**

Northwards' birthday  
Office closures