

**Northwards Housing – HR & Equality Sub-Committee Meeting**

**Hexagon Tower  
Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00pm**

**Chair: Martin McKevitt**

<b>Present:</b>	Martin McKevitt (MM)	Board Member
	Joan FitzGerald (JF)	Board Member
	June Hitchen (JH)	Board Member
	Robin Lawler (RL)	Chief Executive
	Olivia Stokes (OS)	Equality & Diversity Manager
	Lisa McBurnie (LMcB)	Human Resources Manager
	Hilary Devereux (HD)	Enlighten (part)
	John Evans (JE)	Enlighten (part)

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>  Quorate Confirmed	
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>  Apologies given by: Ade Alao (AA) Fionnuala Stringer (FS)	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of Last Meeting</b>  These were agreed as a correct record.	
<b>4 &amp; 5</b>	<b>Revised Terms of Reference &amp; Additional Responsibilities</b>  The revised Terms of Reference, having been approved by the Board on 14th March 2006, were noted, including the additional responsibility on all Sub-Committees for promoting Equality & Diversity.	
<b>6</b>	<b>HR Policies &amp; Procedures</b>  LMcB explained that the Board has already approved 3 HR Policies & Procedures & that the latest batch of 12 revised HR Policies & Procedures required approval. Further policies & procedures may require approval beyond the 15 approved or for	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
6 (cont)	<p>which approval was sought.</p> <p>The Board on 14th March delegated to the Sub-Committee responsibility for approving HR Policies &amp; Procedures on its behalf. The following HR Policies &amp; Procedures were approved by the Sub-Committee subject to a number of suggested amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Code of Conduct for Staff</b> Approved.</li> <li>- <b>Special Leave</b> Approved, subject to inclusion of a definition of "immediate family member or friend" to avoid confusion.</li> <li>- <b>Harassment &amp; Bullying at Work</b> Approved.</li> <li>- <b>Computer &amp; System Protection Policy</b> Approved.</li> <li>- <b>Drug &amp; Alcohol Abuse Policy</b> Approved, subject to clarification that the appointed medical adviser will be independent &amp; issuing advice to staff on the policy.</li> <li>- <b>Internet &amp; e-mail Policy</b> Approved.</li> <li>- <b>Work Related Stress</b> Approved, subject to paragraph 12 being consistent with paragraphs 11 &amp; 13 to state "their Manager and/or Human Resources".</li> <li>- <b>Lone Working</b> Approved, subject to clarifying criteria for provision of mobile phones &amp; offering training to relevant staff.</li> <li>- <b>Violence at Work</b> Approved, subject to clarifying call out arrangements to mitigate risk to staff &amp; providing training.</li> <li>- <b>Managing Attendance</b> Approved, but subject to investigating reward &amp; recognition of staff with good attendance. LMcB advised that this is a policy which will require early review.</li> <li>- <b>Grievance Policy</b> Approved.</li> </ul>	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
6 (cont)	<p><b>- Supported Learning</b> Approved, subject to introducing effective evaluation of courses &amp; the consideration of providing books/learning where this would create hardship.</p> <p>LMcB explained that all HR Policies &amp; Procedures are to be referenced, dated &amp; placed on the intranet. The attention of staff will be drawn to the revised Policies &amp; Procedures.</p> <p><b>Recommendation to Board: the Board is recommended to note the HR Policies &amp; Procedures approved by the Sub-Committee on its behalf.</b></p>	
7	<p><b>Equality &amp; Diversity Update</b></p> <p>OS presented a review of Equality &amp; Diversity matters &amp; made a number of recommendations. These recommendations were discussed &amp; are to be put to the Board.</p> <p><b>Recommendations to the Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i) that the Board should target recruiting a woman or an Asian person to the fill the Independent vacancy;</b></li> <li><b>ii) that a confidential Diversity monitoring form be completed by all Board Members;</b></li> <li><b>iii) that the Board considers the Comprehensive Equality Policy (attached as Appendix A);</b></li> <li><b>iv) that the Board nominates one of its Members to become Equality &amp; Diversity Champion;</b></li> <li><b>v) that the Board notes that Robin Lawler will be the Manager Champion for Equality &amp; Diversity;</b></li> <li><b>vi) that the Board approve the amended Board &amp; Sub-Committee report template which identifies diversity streams;</b></li> <li><b>vii) that the Board receives the draft Equality &amp; Diversity Action Plan in May 2006.</b></li> </ul>	
8	<p><b>Organisational Health Indicators</b></p> <p>LMcB presented a report setting out the indicators to be used to monitor the organisational health of Northwards Housing &amp; current sickness absence figures. It was agreed to defer this report for more detailed discussion at the next Sub-Committee meeting when targets for 2006/7 will be brought forward.</p>	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
9	<p><b>Board Member Appraisals</b></p> <p>Hilary Devereux &amp; John Evans from Enlighten attended for this item. They began with a presentation setting out the importance of Board Member appraisal &amp; training to facilitate good governance. They outlined their programme to appraise individual Board Members &amp; the Board as a whole. As a result of which individual &amp; collective training plans will be developed.</p> <p>HL &amp; JE then led a general discussion on what competencies were appropriate for Northwards Board to ensure its Members were properly equipped to direct the company &amp; to deliver its objectives. This discussion identified 7 broad competencies which it was felt that all Board Members should acquire &amp; develop. These need to be recommended to the Board for acceptance.</p> <p>HL &amp; JE undertook to write up the notes of the discussion by 7th April &amp; to provide their suggestions to RL. RL will then take these to the Board on 11th April with a recommendation of acceptance of the competencies &amp; the programme for Board Member appraisals.</p> <p>It was suggested that Board Members should receive a copy or summary of the Langlands Report on governance.</p> <p>HL &amp; JE were thanked for their presentation &amp; left the meeting.</p> <p><b>Recommendation to the Board: the Board is asked to receive a report on 11th April recommending core competencies which are required by all Board Members &amp; setting out the programme for Board Member appraisals which is to be facilitated by Enlighten.</b></p>	RL
10	<p><b>Preparation For Inspection</b></p> <p>RL is to provide a report to April Board. Discussion of this matter was therefore deferred.</p>	
11	<p><b>Equality &amp; Diversity Training</b></p> <p>The Sub-Committee endorsed the training which is to be provided to the Board on Saturday 1st April. Invitations &amp; the programme have been sent to all Board Members.</p>	
12	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
13	<b>Date of next meeting</b>  Tuesday 25th April - 7.00 pm at Hexagon Tower.	