

 <b>Northwards Housing</b> North Manchester's Council Homes		<b>Report to:</b> Northwards Housing Board 14 June 2006		<b>Item No:</b> <h1>7b</h1>	
<b>Title:</b>		Board Training/Appraisals - Enlighten Report			
<b>Date:</b>		31 May 2006			
<b>Author:</b>		Robin Lawler		<b>Tel No:</b> 0161 227 3020	
<b>E mail:</b>		r.lawler@northwardshousing.co.uk			
<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>					
Update Board Members on the outcome of Board Member Appraisals conducted by Enlighten.					
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>					
The Board are asked to note the contents of the report and to approve the training and development programme for 2006-07. A revised Governance Improvement Plan will be presented to Human Resources and Equality Sub-Committee meeting on 20 <sup>th</sup> June for recommendation to the Board in due course.					
<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>					
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity:</b>		None directly			
<b>Financial:</b>		Associated consultancy/training and venue costs			
<b>Staffing:</b>		None directly			
<b>Decency Target:</b>		None directly			
<b>Governance:</b>		Demonstrates commitment to continuously improve governance arrangements.			

**Equality & Diversity Implications (Please tick where relevant):**

BME	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young	<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Violence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol / Drug Mis-users	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Consultation/Consideration:**

	<b>Yes, No or N/A:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Sub-Committee:</b>	Yes	Human Resources and Equality	23 May 2006
<b>Area Panel:</b>	N/A		
<b>Ward Councillors:</b>	N/A		

# **Northwards Housing**

## **Review of Board Member appraisals and personal development plans**

**May 2006**

## **Introduction**

This report updates Board Members on the progress of appraisals and competency assessments (undertaken in April & May 2006), which have led to the training and development plan for 2006 – 2007 and contributed to the Governance Improvement Plan.

## **Summary**

The report sets out the methodology used in the self assessment process, gives a flavour of Board Members' views about the competencies process and shows how the training plan was developed.

## **Recommendation**

The Board are asked to note the contents of the report and to approve the training and development programme for 2006-2007. The additions highlighted in the issues or areas for improvement section should be added to the Governance Improvement Plan

## **Information**

Northwards Board approved the development of performance and competency assessments and annual appraisals on 14 March 2006. Following Board approval, the Human Resources and Equality Sub-Committee was tasked to develop competencies for Board members. The group met on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2006 and facilitated by Enlighten, developed outline competencies for Northwards' Board.

Nine competencies were highlighted, as follows;

- Leadership
- Accountability
- Roles and responsibilities
- Equality and Diversity
- Partnership working
- Customers and communities
- Finance
- Performance and quality
- Risks

These were categorised into three headings,

- Core competencies
- Business competencies, and
- Specialist competencies

These outline competencies were then further refined with Northwards and Enlighten, benchmarking with other ALMOs.

The final competency framework was agreed after sharing for comments with all Board Members. No comments were received and the framework was duly adopted.

Appointments were made for Board Members to have one to one sessions with Enlighten consultancy. In total, all 11 current Board Members have had their one to ones and agreed an individual development plan. This is a high attendance and commitment rate and Northwards Housing should be congratulated in valuing this process as a key element towards personal development and the overall improvement of the Board.

The one-to-ones were conducted as informal interviews where Board Members had the opportunity to discuss training and development needs and also to provide feedback on:

- Their role as a Board Member,
- Any issues or areas for improvement,
- The relationship with Board colleagues and the senior management team, and
- The level of support and training they had received

### **Feedback on the self-assessment process**

The process was overwhelmingly supported by Board Members. Positively, Board Members felt the process was helpful and found the questionnaire simple to complete. Board Members used the one to ones to explain their role, how they felt their contribution to the Board was of benefit to the company's business and how they felt the Board was performing.

### **Role of board members**

Board Members expressed positive attitudes about being a Board Member, with enthusiasm and commitment. Some key areas Board Members felt confident about are;

- Many highly skilled and experienced Members with a good balance

- The Board were beginning to work more effectively as a team
- Relationships within the team were good and continually improving
- Board papers were well presented
- Board Members feel well supported and respected by staff who are caring, friendly and helpful
- Training sessions are good
- There has been a seamless and successful transition during the organisation's short life

A number of Board Members also felt that they had already developed in the short time they had been Board Members and that the Board was moving together with purpose. Over all, the commitment to Northwards and the desire to be successful came over strongly in all interviews.

### **Issues or areas for improvement**

Board Members expressed a number of issues and, not uncommon for most Board Members, was balancing their time with other commitments. Some specific issues expressed were;

- IT could be developed further to improve the Boards effectiveness, eg less paper, smaller downloads
- Greater co-ordination of meetings to avoid clashes, particularly for Elected Members
- Specific training, where requested needs to be delivered, eg chairing skills
- The delivery of some training sessions may have been more effective if they had been more interactive
- Papers sometimes arrive late
- Some Board Members need to 'get up to speed' with the area and the customer base
- More team building events should be planned
- Some Members were involved in too much in the day to day detail
- The relationship with the Council particularly at Board meetings needs clarity
- Communication and the relationship with Area Panels needs to improve

### **Relationship with board colleagues and the senior management team**

Board Members felt that Board meetings were well run and chaired. The relationship with the senior management team

was positive and they are viewed as a good team who give strong support to Board Members. It was strongly felt that the Board was heading in the right direction. Team building events were welcomed and it was acknowledged that a lot of hard work had taken place to get Northwards fit for purpose and ready for Inspection. Members expressed their views that the Chair was extremely effective in his role with a style that made people feel included, and was supported by the Chief Executive, providing effective leadership.

## **Training**

The view on training was generally positive. There was a consensus that training sessions were good for team building. Some Members said that they would benefit from more specific, targeted training. The completion of the personal development plans should now lead to a more balanced approach to Member's individual development needs, targeting resources more effectively and allowing board members to better manage their time commitments.

## **Training and Development needs**

Board members discussed their development needs against their current skills in their one-to-ones with Enlighten. They recognised how important it was for skills to be updated in line with national and local priorities. The analysis has shown that there are different levels of training required for all Board Members. There are some common themes which have been captured in the core training programme.

To support the core training programme, individual Board Members will be provided with further opportunities to learn specific skills or update their knowledge, for example providing a tour around the area which a number of members have specifically requested or one to ones or coaching with managers or the senior management team to gain a greater understanding of core business.

The analysis was completed using the headings in the self-assessment form with an additional opportunity for expressing personal development needs.

Board Members may not be required to attend every training session. They should individually decide which sessions to attend in line with their personal development plan to make best use of their time. However, all Board Members may

choose to attend any session as this is an opportunity for team building and to refresh existing skills. In future, officers will highlight to Board Members any development sessions where they have identified a development need and organise additional personal development.

In addition, it is suggested to introduce a performance target for attendance of training sessions, perhaps 3-4 sessions per year.

The development programme is attached.

## **Board Group Assessment**

Northwards Housing's Board has not undertaken a group assessment of progress of the Board, its relative performance, areas of achievement and plans for improvement. This is not essential in terms of the Board's development, but good practice suggests,

*'The governing body should review its performance as a body on a regular basis. This should include an assessment of its ways of working and achievements and the agreement of an action plan to put in place any necessary improvements.'*<sup>1</sup>

Enlighten would recommend this is undertaken and is featured within the Governance Improvement Plan.

## **The Governance Improvement Plan**

This is the prime document for improving governance for Northwards Housing's Board. It will be populated from the comments and issues which have been raised throughout this process and will be a key driver over the coming months to take the company forward. It is recommended that the Board reviews progress against the plan on a quarterly basis to ensure it is being delivered effectively.

---

<sup>1</sup> Good governance standard for public services; - September 2004