

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

**Hexagon Tower  
Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April at 7.00pm**

**Chair: Martin McKevitt**

**Present:**

Martin McKevitt (MM)	Board Member
Joan FitzGerald (JF)	Board Member
June Hitchen (JH)	Board Member
Fionnuala Stringer (FS)	Board Member
Ade Alao (AA)	Board Member (part)

**In Attendance:**

Robin Lawler (RL)	Chief Executive
Olivia Stokes (OS)	Equality & Diversity Manager
Lisa McBurnie (LMcB)	Human Resources Manager

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	<p><b>Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>Quorum confirmed</p>	
2	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>None</p>	
3	<p><b>Minutes of Last Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2006</b></p> <p>These were agreed as a correct record and signed by MM as Chair.</p>	
4	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p>	
4a	<p>Board Member Training RL advised that a further Board Member Training session is to be arranged before May Board on Resident Involvement as this is a key issue for Inspection.</p>	
4b	<p>Recruitment Update RL circulated a schedule showing progress with recruitment to vacant posts. <b>Progress was noted.</b></p>	

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4c	<p>Equality and Diversity Champion</p> <p>It was agreed that June Hitchen should become Equality and Diversity Champion, June accepted this nomination.</p> <p><b>Recommendation to the Board</b>  <b>June Hitchen to become Equality and Diversity Champion</b></p>	
5	<p><b>Performance Management Framework: Setting HR &amp; Equality Targets for 2006/7</b></p>	
5a	<p><b>Equality Targets</b></p> <p>OS explained her report which set out those Best Value &amp; Local KPI's covering E&amp;D.</p> <p><b>These targets were discussed and agreed:</b></p> <p><b>BV 164</b> Does the ALMO follow the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Rented Housing and follow Good Practice Standards for social landlords on tackling harassment?  <b>Yes</b></p> <p><b>BV 174</b> The number of racial incidents recorded by Northwards Housing.  <b>80</b></p> <p><b>BV 175</b> Racial incidents that resulted in further action.  <b>100%</b></p> <p><b>BV 2a</b> The Level of Equality Standard for Local Government to which Northwards Housing conforms.  <b>Level 3</b></p> <p><b>BV 2b</b> The duty to promote Race Equality (measured against 19 point Race Equality Scheme).  <b>68% compliance</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation to the Board:</b>  <b>That the following E&amp;D targets to be adopted for 2006/7:</b></p>	
5b	<p><b>Setting HR Targets for 2006/7</b></p> <p>LMcB explained that it was possible only to make one recommendation to the Sub-Committee because year end figures for 2005/6 are not yet available from the Council's HR system. The other targets will be brought to the Board in May. The Sub-Committee agreed a target of 10 days for sickness absence (average per employee), but asked for an explanation of how this target has been set.</p>	<p><b>LMcB</b></p>

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	<p><b>Recommendation to Board:</b>  <b>That the HR target of 10 days sickness absence (average per employee) be agreed for 2006/7.</b>  <b>That the Board receive recommendations on other HR targets at it's meetings in May.</b></p>	
6	<b>Equality &amp; Diversity Matters</b>	
6a	<p><b>E&amp;D Update</b></p> <p>OS gave a verbal report on progress with developing the E&amp;D agenda. In addition to items on this agenda, OS reported work is progressing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity Workbook and training</li> <li>• Induction Training for new staff now includes E&amp;D briefing;</li> <li>• Diversity Survey for tenants to be piloted in 2 neighbourhoods in May;</li> <li>• Renew of Hate Crime undertaken &amp; publicity material has been produced specifically for Northwards Housing.</li> <li>• Meeting with Police and CRC arranged to discuss joint working on Racial Harassment;</li> <li>• Domestic Violence strategy and procedures are being developed from the Council's arrangements;</li> <li>• Promotion of involvement of NH's staff in the Disabled Officer Network;</li> <li>• Equality Working Group established for NH staff with the first meeting in May;</li> <li>• Briefing on Hate Crime and Language Line to be organised for staff;</li> <li>• OS involved in review of the Council's BME Housing Strategy;</li> <li>• OS is reviewing all Council E&amp;D policies &amp; procedures to adapt for NH.</li> </ul>	
6b	<p><b>Draft E&amp;D Action Plan</b></p> <p>OS explained the work involved in developing the latest draft of the E&amp;D action Plan which it is intended to take to the Board in May for approval.</p> <p><b>The Sub-Committee noted the draft E&amp;D Action Plan on which Members made comment and agreed that the draft be released to Area Panels and focus groups for their comments which will be incorporated into the final draft plan to be presented to the Board.</b>  <b>The report was approved.</b></p>	

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	AA left the meeting.	
6c	<p><b>Compliance with Revised CRE Code of Practice</b></p> <p>OS explained her report with attached schedule which advised the Sub-Committee of Northwards Housing's compliance with the revised CRE Code of Practice which is to be introduced shortly. The report identified areas where improvement in Northwards Housing's current practice is required.</p> <p><b>The Sub-Committee noted compliance with the revised CRE Code and accepted the areas for improvement.</b></p>	
6d	<p><b>Racial Harassment Policy &amp; Procedure</b></p> <p>OS presented a draft Racial Harassment Policy &amp; Procedures for NH which has been developed from the Council's policy and sought the Sub-Committee's endorsement. This is a statutory requirement and will be developed into Hate Crime policy &amp; procedures embracing the other equality strands. After discussion the Sub-Committee agreed the policy &amp; procedures for recommendation to the Board.</p> <p><b>Recommendation to the Board: That the Racial Harassment Policy &amp; Procedures for NH be approved.</b></p>	
7	<b>HR Matters</b>	
7a	<p><b>Absence Indicator</b></p> <p>LMcB presented performance statistics for sickness absence since December 2005. These were <b>noted, together with actions to improve attendance.</b></p>	
7b	<p><b>Employee Satisfaction Survey Results</b></p> <p>LMcB presented a report on the results from the first Staff Satisfaction Survey undertaken in March to establish a "baseline position". There had been a 53% response rate. LMcB explained that these were initial results which require further analysis and development, but the majority of the responses were very encouraging. The Survey will be completed by a new staff Appraisal Scheme to be brought the Board for approval.</p> <p><b>The Sub-Committee noted the results of the Staff Survey, particularly the SWOT analysis.</b></p>	

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7c	<p><b>Training Update</b></p> <p>LMcB gave a verbal update on training and development for staff, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing core competencies for staff and managers</li> <li>• training needs analysis to be undertaken</li> <li>• development of training modules</li> <li>• mentoring</li> <li>• e-learning</li> </ul> <p>The Sub-Committee noted the progress</p>	
8	<p><b>Late Item: Procurement &amp; Asset Management Staffing</b></p> <p>RL explained his late report which was for the Sub-Committee's information. He advised that he had put temporary staffing arrangements in place using his delegated powers in accordance with the wishes of Property &amp; Procurement Sub-Committee.</p> <p><b>The report was noted.</b></p>	
9	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>a) MM asked Members' views on changing the timing of future meetings to 5.30. JH advised that this was not possible for her.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> that to seek the views of all Members of this Sub-Committee and Resources &amp; Governance Sub-Committee about future timings of such meetings.</p>	<b>DR</b>
10	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May at Hexagon Tower. Time to be confirmed.</p>	