

Northwards Housing – Resource & Governance Sub-Committee Meeting

Hexagon Tower
Tuesday 24th October 2006 at 5.30pm

Chair: Martin McKevitt

Present: Ade Alao (AA) Board Member
Eric Hobin (EH) Board Member
Richard Lockwood (RCL) Board Member
Martin McKevitt (MM) Board Member
Harvey Norton (HN) Board Member

In Attendance: Steve Wood (SW) Director of Business Services
Alison Foster (AF) Head of Finance

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate. In the absence of Harvey Norton at the start of the meeting, Martin McKevitt took the Chair for the meeting.	
2	Apologies for Absence There were no apologies.	
3	Declaration of Interests / Confidential Matters / Equality & Diversity Matters Arising There were no matters for noting under this item. Equality & Diversity implications were noted on particular reports.	
4	Minutes of Last Meeting - 26th September 2006 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed by the Chair.	
5	Matters Arising a) Surpluses and Efficiencies Strategy SW reported that the revision to the strategy in relation to individual managers being able to retain 50% of their savings had been made to the report prior to it being approved by the Board.	

	<p>AF talked Sub-Committee through a number of the key points, outlining the work of the 17 members of staff in a challenging environment of high deprivation and high housing benefit take-up.</p> <p>With 70% of tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit, obtaining the correct information was a constant issue and AF explained Northwards' access to the Housing Benefit Images system.</p> <p>In respect of working pro-actively with tenants, AF explained the work of the Debt Advice Officer, links to the Corporate Debt Policy with the City Council and surgeries that were being held at Sheltered Schemes and libraries. It was hoped to widen the scope of some of these initiatives in the future.</p> <p>SW explained the thinking behind a piece of work to tackle financial inclusion and AF outlined the work she was doing in looking into appointing a Welfare Rights Officer. AF was also visiting Area Panels in the current round of October meetings.</p> <p>SW presented Sub-Committee with a detailed breakdown of the Rent Collection Percentage by area and the detail of the report was explained to Sub-Committee. A number of questions came out of the discussion, in particular, the level of void rent loss and SW agreed to come back to Sub-Committee with further information on the breakdown of these numbers at a subsequent meeting. It was explained to Sub-Committee that both Procurement & Property and Performance & Quality Services Sub-Committees were looking at this area in detail also.</p> <p>AF explained other work that was being considered, including a rent push during November that was being discussed with the team at present and benchmarking comparisons that were being carried out with others.</p> <p>Consideration was being given to an incentive scheme. AA asked that any such scheme be linked, not only to performance on rent accounts but to other tenancy issues also.</p> <p>After a full discussion, Sub-Committee noted the report and thanked the team for a number of the positive actions being undertaken.</p>	SW
8	<p>Service Level Agreements Review</p> <p>SW presented Sub-Committee with a Service Level Agreements Review that had been prepared for a discussion with the Council.</p> <p>HN asked about the priority agreements for review and SW confirmed that On Call and the Nuisance Strategy Group were</p>	

	<p>the key agreements that with the highest value and the largest impact on services. Sub-Committee acknowledge that it was not always necessary for the Service Agreement to be at the lowest price but that a balance needed to be struck between price and quality of service provided.</p> <p>SW explained how the agreements for Homefinder and the Common Housing Register were now tied up into the City Council's full allocations review.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the progress to date.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Accounts</p> <p>a) Monthly Budget Report</p> <p>SW presented the latest Monthly Budget Report and highlighted a few of the key issues. Further to a question at the previous meeting, he confirmed that the expenditure on gas servicing traditionally came through as one invoice at the back end of the year and consequently, budget profiling reflected this.</p> <p>AF explained the work that she and the team had done in order to get a better prediction of the outturn financial result and Sub-Committee noted this work.</p> <p>SW explained his concerns over the level of repairs expenditure to date and forecast and reported on discussions that were continuing with Property Services about where the true outturn position might be.</p> <p>Sub-Committee concurred with their concerns on the current overspend and confirmed that they will be keeping this matter under review.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the accounts to the end of September.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>Monitoring</p> <p>a) Performance Management</p> <p>The most recent performance information on rent collection and finance had been circulated with the agenda and Sub-Committee reviewed the performance to date.</p> <p>The key indicators in respect of rent collection had been discussed at the previous item and SW explained the reason for the slip in performance on payment of invoices.</p>	

	Sub-Committee noted the report.	
11	<p>Fraud Register</p> <p>SW reported on the case of a recent fraud, full details of which were recorded in the register. He outlined the content of the MCC investigation and management letter and confirmed the work that had been done to resolve internal procedures.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the report.</p>	
12	<p>Training Requirements</p> <p>There were no specific training issues identified as a result of the Sub-Committee meeting.</p>	
13	<p>AOUB</p> <p>See Confidential Minutes.</p>	
14	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Sub-Committee would take place on Tuesday 28th November - 5.30pm at Hexagon Tower.</p> <p>With thanks to everyone, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.00pm.</p>	