

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

**Hexagon Tower  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at 7.00pm**

**Chair: Martin McKevitt**

**Present:** Martin McKevitt (MM) Board Member & Chair  
Joan Fitzgerald (JF) Board Member

**In Attendance:** Robin Lawler (RL) Chief Executive  
Steve Wood (SW) Director of Business Services  
Tara Kelly (TK) Equality and Diversity Officer  
Lisa McBurnie (LMcB) Human Resource Manager

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>  The meeting was not quorate. Items for decision were therefore deferred to next Sub-Committee meeting.  .	
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>  Apologies had been received from Rachel Christie, June Hitchen, Fatima Adamjee & Sue Pemberton.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests / Confidential Matters / Equality &amp; Diversity Matters Arising</b>  There were no declarations of interest. Confidential reports were items 15 & 17. Equality & Diversity Matters were noted in particular reports on the agenda.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes of Last Meeting- 25th July 2007</b>  The minutes were agreed as a correct record.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>  <b>a) Smoke Free Workplace</b> SW advised that work is still in progress on this issue.  <b>b) Hexagon Tower Evacuation</b> SW advised that this matter is under discussion with the managing agent for Hexagon Tower.  <b>c) Commission on Integration &amp; Cohesion</b> TK advised that she had attended Area Panels in September to	  <b>SW</b>  <b>SW</b>  <b>TK</b>

	<p>introduce E&amp;D issues &amp; would follow this up with specific briefing on the Commission's Report.</p> <p><b>d) Absence Reporting</b> This is an agenda item for this meeting.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Equality Standard Level 3: Progress</b> TK introduced her report which outlined the issues to be addressed in progressing from Level 2 to Level 3 &amp; explained the indicative timetable, concluding with Evaluation in August 2008. Sub-Committee noted the report &amp; asked to receive monthly updates on progress. <b>The decision to seek accreditation in August 2008 was deferred to the next meeting.</b></p>	<b>TK</b>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Equality &amp; Diversity Action Plan 2007/8: Quarterly Update</b> TK summarised the progress with achieving actions in E&amp;D Action Plan for Quarter 1. Of 66 substantive actions in the Plan, 7 actions have been completed, 44 are ongoing, 12 are not yet due to be completed &amp; 3 are outstanding. TK agreed to bring a specific report to the next meeting on the Domestic Abuse partnership working. She outlined upcoming actions other the next Quarter. <b>Sub-Committee noted the progress made in Quarter 1 with the E&amp;D Action Plan &amp; noted the actions to be commenced in Quarter 2.</b></p>	<b>TK</b>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme</b> TK explained this programme &amp; the potential benefits for Northwards signing up to the programme, in particular the Workplace Equality Index which helps organisations to measure their progress for this equality strand. <b>Because Sub-Committee was not quorate, it was agreed that the Chief Executive would sign up to the Stonewall Diversity Champions using his delegated powers &amp; that ratification of this action would be sought at the next meeting.</b></p>	<b>RL/TK</b>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Discrimination Law Review</b> TK explained the Discrimination Law Review which is a Green Paper, for consultation, which is expected to result in a Single Equality Bill being laid before Parliament. The report explained the main proposals to be included in the Bill. Sub-Committee noted the proposals contained in the Discrimination Law Review &amp; possible changes to equality legislation.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Responsive Repairs Service: Equality Impact Assessment</b> TK advised Sub-Committee of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken as part of a programme of EIAs across all service areas. She outlined the main findings &amp; proposed actions to improve the responsiveness of repairs services to the needs of the whole community. MMcK asked about the potential to gather information on the needs of our tenants from Manchester Working Ltd &amp; other contractors. TK responded that this was under active consideration &amp; would support the tenant profiling exercise.</p>	

	<p>TK undertook to bring further EIAs to the Sub-Committee as they are completed.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the Equality Impact Assessment for the repairs service &amp; the proposed improvement actions. It endorsed the wider dissemination of the findings &amp; proposals from this EIA</p>	TK
11	<p><b>Tenant Profiling</b></p> <p>TK gave a brief verbal report upon the tenant profiling exercise which commenced in August to gather equality data &amp; communication requirements for all Northwards' tenants. To date, 2,000 questionnaires have been returned &amp; these will be input onto the tenancy field in Civica.</p> <p>A gap analysis will be undertaken in November &amp; further actions developed to achieve the fullest possible profiling data.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	
12	<p><b>Absence Performance</b></p> <p>LMcB presented the detailed analysis of short &amp; long term absence as requested by the Sub-Committee. This shows that sickness absence has increased significantly since last year, particularly long term sickness, which is projected to exceed 9.5 day absence target for 2007/8 if remedial action is not taken.</p> <p>She advised that since the report was written long term absence cases has reduced from 14 to 10. Whilst our performance in 2006/7 compared favourably with other ALMOs, we cannot be complacent &amp; must take urgent action to redress the situation.</p> <p>Managers, with the support of HR, need to work with the policies &amp; procedures to achieve sickness targets. There is a need to give Managers confidence in the process &amp; to get prompt &amp; effective support from Occupational Health. MMcK stated that he would wish to see an effective training programme with appropriate levels of support for Managers.</p> <p>The intention is to prepare a detailed absence action plan to be brought to the next Sub-Committee.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the report &amp; the proposed actions to redress sickness absence performance.</p>	LMcB
13	<p><b>Organisational Health Indicators 2007/8</b></p> <p>LMcB apologised for the delay in bringing the proposed indicators to the Sub-Committee. She explained outturn performance for these 8 indicators in 2006/7 &amp; Quarter 1, together with projected performance in Quarter 2. The report outlined the context for these indicators &amp; the constraints on achievement given the limited turnover of staff, particularly at senior levels.</p> <p><b>Sub-Committee noted progress against the indicators. Because the meeting was not quorate, Sub-Committee deferred approval of the organisational health indicators until the next meeting.</b></p>	LMcB
14	<p><b>Family Friendly Policy</b></p> <p><b>Sub-Committee deferred discussion of this item to the next</b></p>	LMcB

	<b>meeting.</b>	
<b>15</b>	<b>Job Evaluation Update: Confidential</b> See separate minute	
<b>16</b>	<b>Inspection Action Plan</b> SW introduced the report which outlined progress against actions in the Inspection Action Plan relevant to the Sub-Committee. There are 4 supplementary comments, of which 2 are completed, 1 is overdue & 1 is not yet due. Sub-Committee noted progress to date.	
<b>17</b>	<b>Money Advisor: Staffing Proposal- Confidential</b> <b>It was agreed to defer consideration of this report to the next meeting.</b>	<b>SW</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Training</b> There were no training issues identified from the meeting.	
<b>19</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> There was no other business.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Dates of Next Meeting:</b> <b>The next meeting is scheduled for 23rd October, but this is to be re-scheduled to 30th October because of Half Term Week.</b>	