



Report to:

Northwards Housing Board
13th November 2007

Item No:

8a

Title: Re-Inspection Project Plan (2008)

Date: 23rd October 2007

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Confidential: No

For: (Please tick action required)	NOTING	DISCUSSION	APPROVAL ✓
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

The preparation for inspection project is built into Northwards overall approach to embed continuous improvement and performance across the organisation.

This report is to inform the Board of the proposed arrangements and preparation for Re-Inspection in November 2008.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to consider the arrangements for Re-Inspection and approve the Project Plan.

IMPLICATIONS

Equality & Diversity:	The work around the inspection KLOEs will feed into the existing equality and diversity action plan.
Financial:	None
Staffing:	None
Decency Target:	None
Governance:	The Board need to ensure robust arrangements are in place to deliver the best result on re-inspection.
Risk Assessment:	In order to secure future funding to meet the Decent Homes target Northwards must, as a minimum, retain its current 2 stars on Re-Inspection.

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:

	Yes, No or N/A:	Name:	Date:
Sub-Committee:	No		
Area Panel:	No		
Task Groups:	No		
Ward Councillors:	N/A		

1. The re-inspection scheduled for 17th to 21st November 2008 provides Northwards with a year to prepare. Realistically however, if we deduct 3 weeks for the Christmas holiday and assume less productivity during July and August 2008 because of annual leave, this is reduced to 10 months. Furthermore if we are to allow a reasonable time (at least several months) in which to assess the impact of any new initiatives and developments to the service; some that will be introduced as a direct result of our pre inspection work; we're probably looking at no more than 8 months of core preparation time.
2. The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of the proposed project plan and how the preparation for inspection will be planned and coordinated, thereby reducing the risk of failing to achieve at least 2 stars on re-inspection or to deliver on our excellent prospects for improvement. This plan is aimed at achieving the best possible outcome i.e. 3 stars.
3. The attached Gantt chart illustrates the key products and milestones between October 2007 and November 2008, as well as the post inspection period.

Revised Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs)

4. Since the last inspection there has been a change to the KLOEs. The Audit Commission (AC) is keen to ensure organisations "*address the key questions from their own unique perspective and arrive at their own solutions.*" They were concerned previously that many organisations were using the descriptors as a checklist, stifling innovation. Now the emphasis is to "*encourage housing organisations to find their own routes to providing excellent services.*" It is intended that the KLOEs will assist organisations to carry out in-depth service reviews outside of the inspection regime, assess services and develop improvement plans.
5. The AC is also keen for organisations to learn from others, and explore good practice. The restructured KLOEs on the AC website include electronic links to publications and websites containing examples of good practice, including the notable practice part of the AC site.
6. Last time Northwards was inspected there were:

- 11 separate KLOEs and the 3 overarching KLOEs (access and customer care, diversity and value for money) to consider.
 - For our next inspection this will reduce to 7 (including 2 specialist functions Supported Housing and Management of Leasehold Housing);
 - the 3 generic cross cutting KLOEs remain, as do the cross cutting themes in each of the service specific KLOEs.
 - In addition there will be a need to consider elements within the Housing Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal KLOE and the contribution Northwards makes to Manchester City Council's strategic housing approach.
7. The KLOEs help organisations understand the 'high level' questions that inspectors want to have an answer to. They are now grouped to make it clear which KLOEs apply to which organisations as follows: (those indicated in **red text** apply to Northwards as well as elements, by way of contribution, to those shown with an asterix*)

Grouping of KLOEs

a. Landlord Services

- i. Stock Investment and Asset Management
- ii. Tenancy and Estate Management
- iii. Housing Income Management
- iv. Resident Involvement
- v. Allocations and Lettings (as appropriate)

b. Local Authority Strategic Housing Role

- i. Strategic Approach to Housing *
- ii. Homelessness and Housing Needs
- iii. Private Sector Housing
- iv. Allocations and Lettings (as appropriate)
- v. Supporting People (as overseen by administering authorities)

c. Specialist Functions

- i. Supported Housing
- ii. Management of leasehold and shared ownership housing
- iii. Management of Right to Buy to Acquire Schemes
- iv. Housing Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal *

d. Cross-Cutting Areas

- i. Access and Customer Care
- ii. Diversity
- iii. Value for Money

e. What are the prospects for Improvement?

(applicable to all areas)

- i. Prospects for Improvement

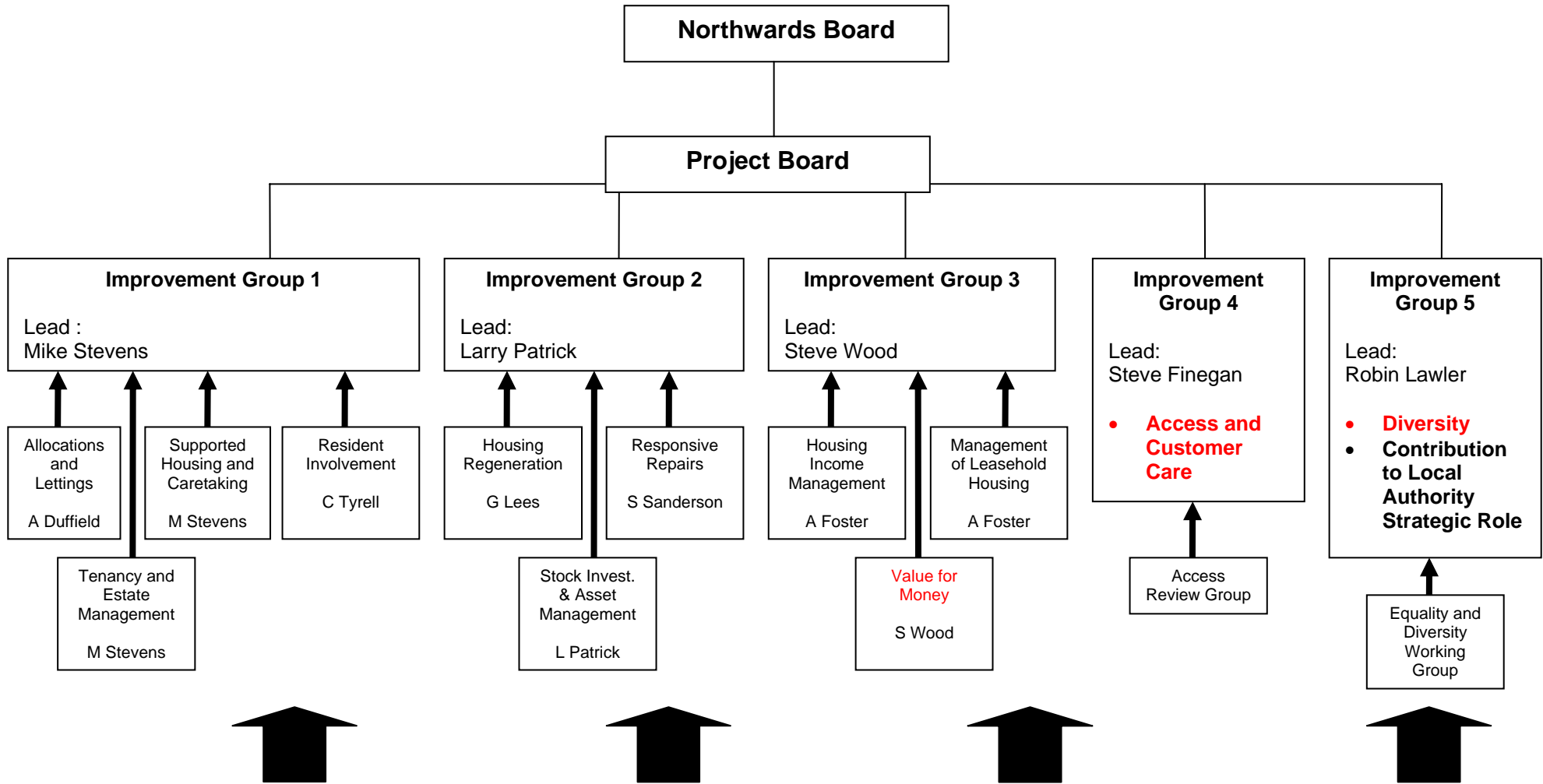
8. In the above list of KLOEs Landlord Services and several KLOEs in the Specialist Functions apply to Northwards. The AC will still agree the scope of each inspection, including which KLOEs will be covered, although the 3 cross cutting ones and the prospects for improvement are automatically included.
9. As well as these changes the AC is already reviewing the Allocations and Lettings KLOE following earlier consultation. A revised version of the KLOE will be published in the future, and there will be a four month period from publication before the new KLOE is applied to inspections. Even if the revised KLOE is published as late as June 2008 it will probably apply to Northward's inspection.

Project Plan

10. The Re-Inspection Project will support the organisation by taking some of the pain out of the preparation process such as:
 - Coordinating and supporting the completion of most of the work well in advance of the 'pre inspection' period.
 - Identifying and embedding improvements via established mechanisms wherever possible and avoid creating a separate structure for implementing improvements.
 - Reducing duplication and ensuring the efficient targeting of resources.
11. The setting up of Improvement groups will be the main mechanism for preparing for inspection and will in most cases utilise existing groups within Northwards. This reflects Northwards approach to embedding improvement across the organisation, irrespective of the future re-inspection and reaching its own solutions for prioritising and improving services. Actions and improvements will be a part of existing improvement and action plans.
12. The possibility of a mock inspection has been considered and ruled out on the basis that Northwards already has a high level of self awareness, and because of the potential risk that it would deflect resources away from implementation of improvements and existing service reviews. The value of using a critical friend(s) to focus on particular areas of the business that are not performing as well as others will be considered by each of the improvement groups.
13. The Inspection Project Board is comprised of the Executive Management Team who will oversee progress against the plan, including outstanding actions from the last inspection action plan. Inspection preparation will become an integral part of these meetings. The Head of Business Support would be co-opted to the board and lead on the co-ordination of the project.
14. There would be 5 specific Improvement Groups (see appendix 1) established whose remit is to:
 - review the respective KLOEs against current service standards and performance
 - explore and consider good practice elsewhere
 - consider innovative actions to deliver excellent improvements
 - identify priorities and ensure implementation of the improvements with the approval of the project board

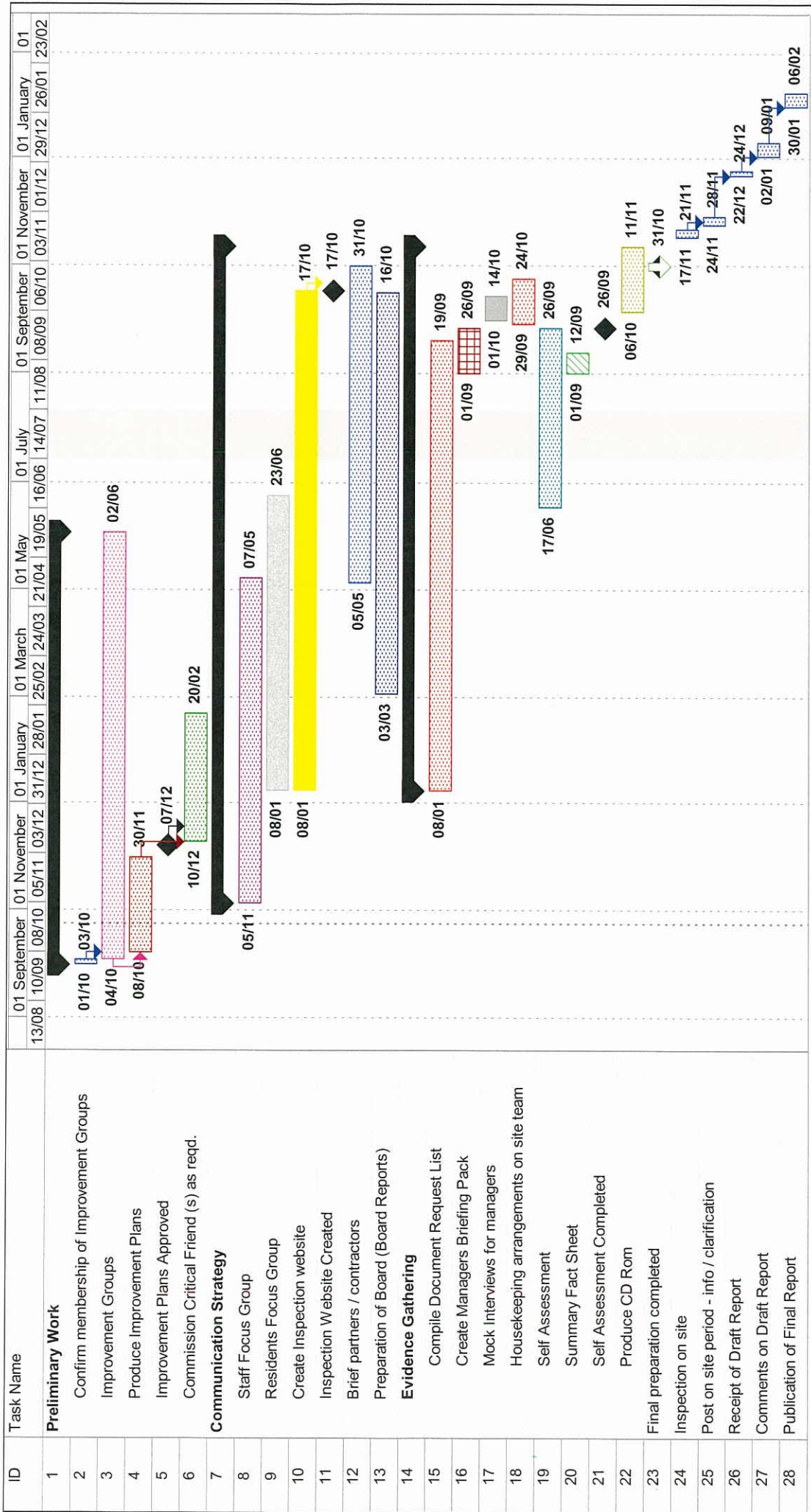
In the majority of cases this work will not be done in isolation for existing improvement plans and any new actions will be combined into existing improvement plans, including those due in 2008/9.

15. As the 5 Improvement Groups reflect in the main the current management arrangements, the work required can be incorporated into established groups/meetings. The groups will meet monthly and report progress on their actions to the Project Board.
16. Membership of the improvement groups is made up of existing managers in each of the service areas, including middle managers and front line officers where appropriate. Existing task / focus groups would feed into each of the improvement groups, ensuring both front line staff and customers are involved in reviewing and improving services.
17. As per the project timetable each Improvement Group is to complete the assessment of their respective KLOEs by the end of November 2007. Actions would then be incorporated into the relevant service improvement plans or new ones created, and the timescale for delivering and assessing the impact of any improvements agreed by the Project Board.
18. There is likely to be some cross cutting issues arising out of improvement group 4 which will involve discussion around the best method of implementation and possibly incorporation into the improvement plans of other groups. This final decision will be made by the Project Board.
19. Progress reports on the preparation for inspection will be provided at all meetings of the Board throughout 2008.



■ Cross Cutting KLOEs

- Performance Improvement Group (Staff Focus Group)
- Specialist Task and Focus Groups
- Area Panels
- Resident Focus Group
- MWL & Contractors
- Complaints Panel



Project: Inspection Project Plan
Date: Wed 24/10/07

Task		Rolled Up Task		External Tasks	
Progress		Rolled Up Milestone		Project Summary	
Milestone		Rolled Up Progress		Group By Summary	
Summary		Split		Deadline	