

Northwards Housing – HR and Equality Sub-Committee Meeting

Hexagon Tower
Tuesday 27th November 2007 at 7.00pm

Chair: Martin McKevitt

Present: Fatima Adamjee (FA) Board Member
Joan Fitzgerald (JF) Board Member
Martin McKevitt (MM) Board Member

In Attendance: Steve Wood (SW) Director of Business Services
Lisa McBurnie Head of Human Resources

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
2	Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from Rachel Christie and June Hitchen.	
3	Declaration of Interests / Confidential Matters / Equality & Diversity Matters Arising There were no matters for noting under this item. Equality and Diversity implications were noted on particular reports.	
4	Minutes of the Last Meeting – 30th October 2007 The minutes of the last meeting held on 30 th October were approved and signed by the Chair.	
5	Matters Arising a) Report on Domestic Abuse In Tara Kelly's absence, SW reported that a paper on this would be brought to Sub-Committee in the New Year. Other matters arising were covered elsewhere on the agenda.	
6	Revision of Policy and Procedures LMcB presented a report on the progress with reviewing a number of policies and procedures and how this was tied up with the overarching strategy. The emphasis was on the communication of policies and procedures within categories and with guides for employees, managers and the HR Team.	

	<p>It was felt that this would be a more joined up approach for the future, better presented and more accessible. LMcB showed Sub-Committee an example of some of the work that had been done already.</p> <p>Communication of the revised policies and procedures, after agreement, would be by way of the Intranet, a handbook and a pack for the Managers. The whole process to review and consult on everything was seen as a two year time frame.</p> <p>FA suggested that a CD might be a good way to present some of the information and the officers agreed to look at this.</p> <p>Sub-Committee agreed to receive reports on revision to policies by exception with changes highlighted. The full policies would be available to anyone who wanted them and SW explained work on the Governance website which should allow Board Members to have access to all policies and procedures.</p> <p>Sub-Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Acknowledged the initiative of heightening employee and manager awareness of policy and procedure with the creation of a policy employee and manager handbook that will help policies and procedures to become standardised with a consistent message, accessible and understandable, transparent, demonstrate high regard for employee welfare and support and promote Northwards branding. b) Recognised the projected timescales and implementation of the creation of new policies with complimentary handbook. c) Acknowledged the implementation and learning and development opportunities that arise due to the project. 	LMcB
7	<p>Inspection Action Plan</p> <p>SW presented an update report on the Inspection Action Plan.</p> <p>Two items were outstanding which fell within the remit of Sub-Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Equality Standard Level 3 where Sub-Committee had already agreed a revised timescale for 2008. ii) Implementation of the HR Strategy. This was discussed by Sub-Committee and a revised timescale of January 2008 was agreed. <p>Sub-Committee noted progress to date.</p>	LMcB
8	Absence Performance	

	<p>LMcB presented the latest performance report on absence and commented on some of the key features of the paper. On the projected figures, Northwards would exit the year at 12 days absence (target 9.5 days).</p> <p>Long-term absence was reduced on previous periods with only nine employees in this category. MM asked what figures looked like for November and LMcB confirmed that the indications were that performance was tracking the same.</p> <p>Short-term absence had increased month on month and LMcB confirmed that this would continue in November. The Absence Action Plan was now taking effect but it would take time to move the figures.</p> <p>LMcB confirmed that since the last meeting there had been one dismissal.</p> <p>In looking at the comparison of absence for each team/section, Sub-Committee asked next time for there to be drill down into the figures for the six highest absence figures.</p> <p>As there was no meeting in December it was agreed that the report would be produced and emailed out to keep Sub-Committee up to date on performance.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted current absence performance.</p>	<p>LMcB</p> <p>LMcB</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>CRE Code of Practice: Update</p> <p>In Tara Kelly's absence, SW presented a report updating Sub-Committee on the Good Practice Guidance and the Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing issued by the Commission for Racial Equality.</p> <p>It was agreed by Sub-Committee that this was a timely refresher of some of the issues that Northwards needed to address.</p> <p>Part of the implementation plan for Northwards was the development of Single Equality Scheme to encompass all the equality strands, including race. MM asked for an update on progress with this piece of work and SW asked that the Officers report back next time.</p> <p>It was agreed that Northwards needed to push on with its initiatives in this area but that work done to date still met the agenda that was set out.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the guidance and the good practice already introduced by Northwards as well as actions that can be developed further.</p>	<p>TK</p>

10	<p>Training</p> <p>Board training and discussions in December on Regeneration and in February 2008 on Companies Act 2006 were noted.</p>	
11	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Health and Safety Fire Doors</p> <p>JF raised the issue of fire doors at White Moss Road which had not opened correctly the previous night. SW agreed to look into this although Officers had already been made aware.</p>	SW
12	<p>Dates of Next Meeting</p> <p>With no meeting in December, the next meeting of the Sub-Committee would be on Tuesday 5th February at 7.00pm at Hexagon Tower.</p>	
	<p>With thanks to everyone, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.40pm.</p>	