

Northwards Housing – HR and Equality Sub-Committee Meeting

Hexagon Tower
Tuesday 27th May 2008 at 7.00pm

Chair: Fatima Adamjee

Present:
Fatima Adamjee (FA) Board Member
Joan Fitzgerald (JF) Board Member
Harvey Norton (HN) Board Member

In Attendance:
Robin Lawler (RL) Chief Executive
Steve Wood (SW) Director of Business Services
Tara Kelly (TK) Equality and Diversity Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions The meeting was confirmed as quorate. In the absence of Martin McKeivitt, it was agreed that FA would chair the meeting.	
2	Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from Rachel Christie June Hitchen Martin McKeivitt and Lisa McBurnie.	
3	Declaration of Interests / Confidential Matters / Equality & Diversity Matters Arising There were no declarations of interest. Item 9 was a confidential report. In addition there was a Late Item which was also confidential. E&D issues to be picked up under the relevant agenda items.	
4	Minutes of the Last Meeting – 22 April 2008 The minutes of the last meeting held on 22 April were approved and signed by the Chair.	
5	Matters Arising a) Equality & Diversity Action Plan 2008/09 (Item 6) This is the subject of a specific report to Sub-Committee.	

	<p>b) Annual Absence Performance (Item 9)</p> <p>SW advised that rewarding attendance is the subject of a separate report to Sub-Committee.</p>	
6	<p>Equality & Diversity action Plan 2007/08</p> <p>TK summarised progress against the E&D Action Plan to 31st March 2008. Overall, 81.8% of planned actions have been achieved.</p> <p>Section 3 of the report set out specific achievements during the year. Section 4 identified actions to be carried forward into the E&D Action Plan for 2008/09.</p> <p>HN welcomed progress, but asked if there has been an analysis of impact of actions. TK advised that good work has been undertaken on Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) & that this experience will inform further EIAs.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the achievements in E&D Action Plan 2007/08 & noted actions being carried forward into E&D Action Plan for 2008/09.</p>	
7	<p>Equality & Diversity Action Plan 2008/09</p> <p>TK advised that she has reviewed the Draft E&D Plan following discussion at the last Sub-Committee & that there has been consultation on the Plan with E&D staff group & Area Panels. Subject to the Plan being approved, the intention is to bring quarterly progress reports to the Sub-Committee.</p> <p>RL commented that this Pan builds on solid achievements in E&D Action Plan 2007/08.</p> <p>Sub-Committee approved the E&D Action Plan for 2008/09 & asked to receive quarterly progress reports.</p>	
8	<p>Interpretation & Translations Policy</p> <p>TK explained that there was a need to review our Interpretation & Translations Policy & practice in the light of recommendations from the Commission on Integration & Cohesion which reported to Government in December 2007. The report outlined the key recommendations. As a result of which more explicit guidance has been prepared on when to translate documents in order not to duplicate work & to improve consistency.</p>	

	<p>TK advised that the policy changes have been consulted upon with BME & Disabled Tenants Fora & that an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the Government's new guidelines on translation & approved amendments to Northwards' Interpretation & Translations Policy in accordance with this guidance.</p>	
9	<p>Health & Safety Staffing- Confidential</p> <p>See attached CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES</p>	
10	<p>a) Attendance Reward Proposal</p> <p>SW outlined a proposal to recognise & reward good attendance. This is intended to complement sickness absence management. The impact will be assessed.</p> <p>HN welcomed the proposal & agreed that there is a need to incentivise the right behaviour. Some RSLs had positive experience of such initiatives.</p> <p>TK advised that disability issues need to be recognised in any scheme.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the proposals to recognise & reward good attendance.</p> <p>b) Absence Performance: April 2008</p> <p>SW presented the absence report in a new simplified format which he said the Sub-Committee would find easier to interpret. It is also more easily produced from HR system.</p> <p>He advised that there had been a major improvement in Property Services' absence & return to work for long term absence. However, the indications are that there has been an increase in long term sickness in May which will be reflected in next month's report.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted sickness absence performance in April 2008.</p>	
11	<p>Inspection Action Plan</p> <p>SW gave a progress report which shows that there has been no change in the action plan outcomes since the previous report. There are no Inspection Recommendations included & the</p>	

	<p>overdue item (Equality Standard Level 3) is a Supplementary Comment from the Inspection Report.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted progress to date.</p>	
12	<p>Employee Satisfaction Survey</p> <p>SW explained the need to undertake an employee survey in 2008, having not surveyed staff attitudes in 2007 because of Job Evaluation. The style, format & content of the staff survey has been developed in consultation with the Performance Improvement Group (PIG) & is linked to our People Strategy. To give assurance on confidentiality the survey is going to be paper-based.</p> <p>The survey, which is to be undertaken in June, will be analysed by team, directorate, office & equality strand. There is a target of 85% completion of surveys which PIG will help to achieve.</p> <p>Sub-Committee noted the employee satisfaction survey & supported the business benefits of the initiative.</p>	
13	<p>Joint Void Management Inspection & Repair Proposal-Confidential Late Item</p> <p>See attached CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES</p>	
14	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business.</p> <p>Date & Time of Next Meeting:</p> <p>Tuesday 24th June 2008 @ 7.00 pm in Boardroom</p>	