



Report to:

Northwards Housing Board
11th November 2008

Item No:

10a

Title:	Sub-Committee Review		
Date:	30 th September 2008		
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Confidential:	No		
For: (Please tick action required)	NOTING	DISCUSSION	APPROVAL ✓

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report sets out a review of the Sub-Committees including their terms of reference, and recommends changes to the present arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that:
 - i. Neighbourhood & Quality Services Sub-Committee be renamed Customers & Communities Sub-Committee
 - ii. Procurement & Property Sub-Committee be renamed Asset Management Sub-Committee
 - iii. Resource & Audit Sub-Committee and HR & Equality Sub-Committee be combined, renamed Resources Sub-Committee and give up the remit for Audit
 - iv. A new Audit Sub-Committee be created
 - v. The Board approves revised terms of reference for the Sub-Committees as set out in revisions to paragraphs 14.1 to 14.4 inclusive
 - vi. The Board sends the revised Terms of Reference to Sub-Committees for consultation before formally making the changes set out in i) to v) above
2. It is recommended that, subject to Sub-Committee consultations, all changes are effective from 1 January 2009.
3. It is recommended that following approval, the Governance Support Manager discusses with individuals their preferences as to which Sub-Committees they wish to serve on.

IMPLICATIONS	
Equality & Diversity:	It is a key part of the Governance arrangements that Equality & Diversity are embedded throughout.
Financial:	None directly
Staffing:	None directly
Decency Target:	None directly
Governance:	The review of the arrangements is a key part of the overall Governance framework.
Risk Assessment:	Not a primary risk area

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		
Forums:	No		
Ward Councillors:	N/A		

Sub-Committee Review

1. The last review of Governance took place in autumn 2006 and the current Sub-Committee structure was established with effect from January 2007.
2. As part of a continuing review of the way things are working, the Executive Team discussed some ideas for the future and these have come together to inform this report.

Background

3. The Board itself determined in February 2006 that four Sub-Committees should be established to assist with the detailed work required in the first year. In November 2006, reflecting the maturing of the Board, these Sub-Committees were amended to become:
 - Human Resources & Equality
 - Neighbourhood & Quality Services
 - Procurement & Property
 - Resource & Audit
4. As part of this review, responsibility for Governance was taken back by the Board and performance was made a focus of all four Sub-Committees.

5. The Sub-Committees have been highly effective in the past two years in driving performance and reviewing policies and strategies.
6. The delegated authorities given to Sub-Committees two years ago have been well used effectively and Members have been clear about decisions they could take and those that needed referral to the Board.
7. The establishment of the Governance Website with access for all Board Members to all Sub-Committee papers will further contribute to these Governance arrangements.

Case for Review

8. The first reason for the current review is a change in focus. For all Sub-Committees there is a reducing amount of work in relation to the review of policies and strategies and an increased role in scrutiny, monitoring and performance.
9. One particular focus for the review is procurement. For Procurement & Property Sub-Committee there is a changing focus as the Capital Programme reduces in size. For this reason, Asset Management is a better title for the work of this Sub-Committee going forward.
10. If name changes are taking place, it is suggested that Customers & Communities Sub-Committee better describes the work of the current Neighbourhood & Quality Services Sub-Committee.
11. Two Sub-Committees currently meet on the same evening which limits the time available to Resource & Audit and means that HR & Equality does not start until 7:00pm.
12. Combining these two Sub-Committees has the advantage of removing these issues as well as allowing the Director of Business Services to service the Sub-Committee. This would release the Chief Executive for a roving brief to attend particular Sub-Committees as required when important issues are under discussion.
13. In order to make the Resources Sub-Committee more effective it is suggested that the Audit responsibilities be hived off to a separate Audit Sub-Committee. This would meet less often, probably once a quarter and would lead on the review of the Internal Audit process. The Sub-Committee would be serviced by the Director of Business Services, but other Directors and Heads of Service would attend in relation to the areas under review.
14. Reducing the number of monthly meetings would remove some of the pressure on Board Members and allow for a little more flexibility for a few Members who have stated that they can only really serve on one Sub-Committee.
15. As part of the review, officers have looked at how Equality and Diversity fits within the current Board and Sub-Committee structure. It seems appropriate, and consistent with other work, that we ask all Sub-Committees to take responsibility for Equality and Diversity and take reports as appropriate for their area of responsibility. This is consistent with the Equality Standard.
16. It is proposed that three Sub-Committees continue to meet monthly throughout 2009 with Audit Sub-Committee meeting quarterly. This meeting cycle should be reviewed again in twelve months time.
17. The proposed revised Standing Orders in relation to Sub-Committees are attached.

Conclusion

18. The aim is to build upon the good Governance arrangements that have existed to date and to make further improvements. The key has been to work on what currently works well, rather than make wholesale changes.

Recommendations

19. It is recommended that:

- i. Neighbourhood & Quality Services Sub-Committee be renamed Customers & Communities Sub-Committee
- ii. Procurement & Property Sub-Committee be renamed Asset Management Sub-Committee
- iii. Resource & Audit Sub-Committee and HR & Equality Sub-Committee be combined, renamed Resources Sub-Committee and give up the remit for Audit
- iv. A new Audit Sub-Committee be created
- v. The Board approves revised terms of reference for the Sub-Committees as set out in revisions to paragraphs 14.1 to 14.4 inclusive
- vi. The Board sends the revised Terms of Reference to Sub-Committees for consultation before formally making the changes set out in i) to v) above

20. It is recommended that, subject to Sub-Committee consultations, all changes are effective from 1 January 2009.

21. It is recommended that following approval, the Governance Support Manager discusses with individuals their preferences as to which Sub-Committees they wish to serve on.

Extract from Standing Orders

Alterations to the Standing Orders on the Board's and Sub-Committees' responsibilities and terms of reference are noted in italics or are marked for deletion.

13 Board Responsibilities and Terms of Reference

13.3 The Board has established Standing Sub-Committees to deal with the detailed administration of:

- ~~Human Resources & Equality;~~
- ~~Customers & Communities Neighbourhood & Quality Services;~~
- ~~Asset Management Procurement & Property;~~
- ~~Resources & Audit.~~
- *Audit*

The Terms of Reference are out in Section 14 below.

13.4 The Board may create other Committees, Sub Committees or Working Groups to which it may delegate or refer business for detailed consideration.

13.5 The Board may refer any matter to a General Meeting of the Company.

13.6 Although the specific responsibilities are defined in these Standing Orders, the supreme governing body of the Company is the General Meeting and it may make decisions or direct the Board on any matter relating to the business of the Company.

14 Sub-Committees

~~14.1 Human Resources & Equality Sub Committee [14.4 below]~~

~~14.1 Customers & Communities Neighbourhood & Quality Services Sub-Committee~~

The Terms of Reference and membership for the Sub-Committee have been agreed by the Board. The areas of responsibility are set out below:

Value for Money Monitoring of Tenant Services

Communication with tenants, customers and stakeholders

Access to services

Customer and tenant involvement and liaison

Customer satisfaction

Neighbourhood Services – policies and priorities

Respect and Anti-Social Behaviour

Financial inclusion

Complaints and praise monitoring

Performance Monitoring (Customer Satisfaction; Rehousing; Neighbour Nuisance; Anti-Social Behaviour)

Equality and Diversity policies in relation to the Sub-Committee's remit

The Sub-Committee will contribute to the Business Plan in relation to the Neighbourhood and ~~Quality Services~~ section.

The Sub-Committee will consider other matters as directed from time to time by the Board. Any such matters will specify delegations.

The Sub-Committee has a duty to identify and address potential inequalities in the way Northwards employs *people* and delivers services; and to play a key role in promoting best practice in Equality & Diversity.

14.2 ~~Asset Management Procurement and Property~~ Sub-Committee

The Terms of Reference and membership for the Sub-Committee have been agreed by the Board. The areas of responsibility are set out below:

Responsive and planned maintenance policies and priorities
Tendering of contracts
Selection of contractors
Procurement Policy
Setting the improvement programme (Decent Homes)
Monitoring contracts and procurement procedures
Void property management
Health and Safety policies and practices including Asbestos Management
Value for Money Reviews of ~~Asset Management Procurement~~ and Property Services
Regeneration
Asset Management
Energy efficiency and fuel poverty
Local Social and Economic Advantage
Performance Monitoring (Decent Homes Work; Voids; Repairs; Energy Efficiency)
Equality and Diversity policies in relation to the Sub-Committee's remit

The Sub-Committee will contribute to the Business Plan in relation to the ~~Procurement and Property Services~~ section.

The Sub-Committee will consider other matters as directed from time to time by the Board. Any such matters will specify delegations.

The Sub Committee has a duty to identify and address potential inequalities in the way Northwards employs people and delivers services; and to play a key role in promoting best practice in Equality & Diversity.

14.3 ~~Resources & Audit~~ Sub-Committee

The Terms of Reference and membership for the Sub-Committee have been agreed by the Board. The areas of responsibility are set out below:

Financial policies and strategies (including Financial Regulations)
Financial procedures
Annual budgets and budget monitoring
~~Business planning (including Delivery Plan)~~
IT policy and strategy
~~Insurance arrangements~~
~~Risk Management policies~~
~~Internal Audit plan and Audit reports~~
External Audit
Value for Money
Performance Monitoring (Rents; Finance, Organisational Health)

Human Resources policies
Organisational structure
Remuneration
Changes to Terms and Conditions
Learning and Development Staff training
Appeals (e.g. on staffing matters)
Equality and Diversity policies *in relation to the Sub-Committee's remit*
~~Support for Board Directors and tenants (including training)~~
Health and Safety
~~Communication with Staff~~
~~Board Member Appraisal Methodology~~
Staff Appraisal Methodology

The Sub-Committee will contribute to the Business Plan in relation to the *Business Services Finance, Resource and Audit* sections.

The Sub-Committee will consider other matters as directed from time to time by the Board. Any such matters will specify delegations.

The Sub Committee has a duty to identify and address potential inequalities in the way Northwards Housing employs staff and delivers services; and to play a key role in promoting best practice in Equality & Diversity.

14.4 Audit Sub-Committee

The Terms of Reference and membership for the Sub-Committee have been agreed by the Board. The areas of responsibility are set out below:

*Insurance arrangements
Risk Management policies
Internal Audit plan and Audit reports*

The Sub-Committee will contribute to the Business Plan in relation to Audit matters.

The Sub-Committee will consider other matters as directed from time to time by the Board. Any such matters will specify delegations.

The Sub-Committee has a duty to identify and address potential inequalities in the way Northwards employs people and delivers services; and to play a key role in promoting best practice in Equality & Diversity.

- 14.5 Sub-Committees will consist of up to six Board Members, *with a cross over of at least two from each other Sub-Committee*. Members will be appointed by the Board following expression of preference ~~and will serve for a term of one year until the first Board meeting following the AGM.~~
- 14.6 Board Members and members of the public can be co-opted onto a Sub-Committee as and when required.
- 14.7 No more than two co-optees are allowed on a Sub-Committee at any time. Formal approval of the Board is required before co-opting members.
- 14.8 The Sub-Committee will appoint a Chair from amongst the current Members.

- 14.9 The Sub-Committee is authorised by the Board to seek information it requires to fulfil its terms of reference.
- 14.10 The Sub-Committee has delegated decision making authority on the items referred to in the terms of reference. Any decisions made shall be reported through to the Board via the minutes. Delegated functions to Sub-Committees are exercised in accordance with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (including financial authority limits).
- 14.11 In the event of any issues arising between meetings where action is required, and waiting for the next Sub-Committee meeting would result in unacceptable delay, the Standing Order in respect of the making of urgent decisions shall be used.