



Report to:

Northwards Housing Board
11 November 2008

Item No:

10b

Title:	Board Learning 2008-2009		
Date:	29 October 2008		
Author:	Diane Roberts	Tel No:	0161 227 3033
E mail:	d.roberts@northwardshousing.co.uk		
Confidential:	no		
For: (Please tick action required)	NOTING	DISCUSSION	APPROVAL ✓

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Board about the progress of the 360 degree Appraisal Process, the learning points from the Away Day 2008 and the recent Skills Audit. As agreed at previous Board Meetings the learning points from all three processes have been amalgamated and developed to suggest a Learning Plan for the Board.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve the Learning Plan 2008/09 including carrying out the 360 degree appraisal process again in June 2009.

IMPLICATIONS

Equality & Diversity:	The Board Learning Plan includes awareness of Equality & Diversity
Financial:	Training Budgets are provided for Board
Staffing:	None
Decency Target:	n/a
Governance:	Good governance relies on a well trained and informed Board
Risk Assessment:	None

Equality & Diversity Implications (Please tick where relevant):

BME	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<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:	n/a		
Area Panel:	n/a		
Task Groups:	n/a		
Ward Councillors:	n/a		

Board Learning 2008/09

The Board 360 degree appraisal process has now reached the report stage. Board Members have been sent their personal report with a covering letter from the Chair inviting Board Members to meet with her to discuss their Personal Development Plan. All plans should be completed by the end of November 2008.

A summary of all the reports is below. This has identified a few areas for improvement across the whole Board. This coupled with the learning requirements identified through the Board Skills Analysis and Board Away Day has informed the proposed Board Learning Programme for 2008/2009.

Board Appraisal Analysis 2008

KEY **Green – area of strength** **Red – area for improvement** **Orange – area to be aware**
Measured against the average score for all areas.

Area	self	others	contra
1. Staying Ahead of the Game			
Thinking Strategically	3.6	3.8	21.0
Guiding Strategic Action	3.5	3.8	16.1
2. Setting the framework for action			
Critical Information Seeking	3.7	3.7	19.6
Problem Solving and Decision Making	3.6	3.8	11.3
3. Achieving Things Through Others			
Sensitivity to Others	3.9	3.7	11.1
Influencing	3.5	3.4	11.0
Working with others	3.7	3.6	16.6
4. Managing the Heart and the Head			
Confidence and Self Control	3.4	3.6	13.9
Corporate Citizenship	3.8	3.9	5.1
5. Being a Learning Board			
	3.4	3.6	6.9
Average	3.6	3.7	13.3

The scoring is based on the Summary Profiles in each individual report. Assuming that the mid-line is 3 and the range is from 1 to 5. For “self” this is only one figure, as this is the individual being assessment in this area. This will reflect strongly individuals general scoring, which may be high or low. The “others” is a combination of chair, peers, execs and stakeholders scores. This tends to balance out high and low scorers.

In order to understand the reports as a whole, it is necessary to bring the information together in a numeric way.

Contra-Indicators identify those issues others indicated may be constraints to individual’s impact. The higher the percentage the more likely others reported this issue as a potential drawback to effectiveness. These were gathered by feedbackers answering a series of statements which reflect the “negatives” of leadership life.

On initial analysis this report may appear to be negative. The purpose of this report is to identify areas for improvement and therefore this is the focus. However, the Board should be reassured about their overall assessment. The following gives an overall picture.

57% of all results are good or excellent.

20% of all results are just below average of these results and an awareness is required

23% of all results are identified as requiring improvement.

Of the results requiring improvement 4 are from the Contra-Indicator area. The three other scores are two self assessments and one other assessment.

All scores are above the median of 3. Therefore the Board are at least average or above in all results on this basis.

Key Areas from the Board 360 degree Reports

1. Staying Ahead of the Game			
Thinking Strategically	3.6	3.8	21.0
Guiding Strategic Action	3.5	3.8	16.1

Whilst it is positive that the scores are above average, there is a high level of Contra-Indicators. This is an indicator of potential constraints to the Board’s effectiveness. This was noted in 7 out of the 9 Board members in the analysis and a key area for 6 of these Members.

Effectiveness and impact is about the display of positive and negative behaviours. The recommendation in 2 below will improve this area. The Board need time to reflect and discuss strategy. Good use of Board Away Days and the Strategic meetings will have an impact. The Board may wish to consider having an Away Day on a six monthly basis. The Board may decide that attendance at this is compulsory.

A new toolkit is available that enables the Board to answer a few searching questions. It is suggested that the Board completes this questionnaire.

2. Setting the framework for action			
Critical Information Seeking	3.7	3.7	19.6
Problem Solving and Decision Making	3.6	3.8	11.3

Again the Board are strong in this area. It is the contra-indicators that are of concern. It is recommended that the Board have some positive thinking coaching to improve this area. This would also improve other areas. A focus on strategic issues and being aware of digressing from the subject being discussed may also help with this area. The Board may wish that we appoint a consultant to act as a “critical friend” who would observe a Board Meeting and point out where the Board are being less focussed.

It is also good practice that the Board carry out a self-assessment immediately after each Board meeting. This usually last for 10 minutes and is led by the Chair. It is an open discussion about how the meeting went, how the Board performed as a whole and if any individuals had any particular difficulties with the meeting.

3. Achieving Things Through Others			
Sensitivity to Others	3.9	3.7	11.1
Influencing	3.5	3.4	11.0
Working with others	3.7	3.6	16.6

The main area for concern is the influencing and Working with others. Many of the questions were around communications within in the Board. This is partly tied to section 4 below; a lack of confidence can prevent good communication. The 3.4 figure was particularly related to 4 Board Members and this will be picked up in Personal Development Plans. The Contra-Indicator score is slightly high but is linked to the previous statements. It is recommended that the Board review this after Personal Development Plans have been implemented.

4. Managing the Heart and the Head			
Confidence and Self Control	3.4	3.6	13.9
Corporate Citizenship	3.8	3.9	5.1

The individual (self) score for Confidence and Self Control is affected by a low score from three Board Members; this will be part of their Personal Development Programme. If those Members wish to have group training, other Board Members will be invited to attend.

5. Being a Learning Board			
	3.4	3.6	6.9

Two Board Members scoring particularly low affected these figures. Attendance at Board Training is a factor with this score. It is recommended that the Board implement the Learning Plan and encourage all Members to attend. A number of organisations have compulsory training in some areas. The Board may wish to consider making some training compulsory. The positive thinking coaching is likely to be the most effective training which will have highest impact across all areas.

General Observations

There is very little difference between individual (self) and others scores overall average 0.08. This shows that Board Members have a realistic picture of themselves in most instances and that there is consistency in opinion.

The scoring scale is short 1-5 so variances look large in the reports.

Much value comes from the Additional Comments section. This has not been highly populated, but will be used in preparation of Personal Development Plans (PDP).

There are only 7 scores out of 180 which fall below the median score of 3, and these are at 2.75. This only applies to self-scoring and may be reflected by peoples scoring habits. Some people score at a lower level generally than others. All scores from others are of 3 or above. This is a sign of a mature Board who have strengths, but recognise where improvements can be made.

The first time a 360 degree appraisal is carried out gives base-line data and the real value is in the next appraisal which will show improvements both in individuals and as a Board. Also the participants (self-assessment and those giving feedback) improve with experience. The Board and those giving feedback reflected the supportive, nurturing culture of Northwards Housing.

It is suggested that appraisals will be re-visited in June to check for progress and give Board Members the opportunity to identify any further training needs. This will also give Members time to reflect on their performance with the Chair on a one-to-one basis.

Board Skills Audit 2008

The following topics were raised.

- Chairing Skills / Meeting Skills

This will be addressed in PDP. Northwards provides this training for TRA's this Training Programme will be made available to the Board

- Assertiveness

This can be delivered in house through our Human Resources section. Again this will be addressed in PDP or by request.

- Positive thinking

The Board programme will include this as part of the Appraisal process.

- Property Development and Maintenance

An Asset Management training session is planned.

- Regeneration

This will be covered in the above Asset Management session. We also plan to organise the Regeneration Tour again in May 2009.

- Governance

This has been programmed as a joint session for Area Panel and Board Members.

- ALMO financing

Area Panels will be looking at the Business Plan on 17 January and some issues will be covered here. Steve Wood will hold a session by request for interested Board Members.

Board Away Day July 2008

- Jargon Buster

Diane Roberts will load and updated version of the Jargon Buster onto the Governance Website. If Board Members find omissions please inform her.

- Preventing Violent Extremism – awareness session

The Area Panels are having an ASB and Crime event on 7 March 2009. Board Members are invited to attend. Further specialised training will be identified at this event.

- Affect of world/framework/changing on Northwards

The Area Panels have an annual review of the ALMO/Housing world. This will take place in April 2009. Board Members will be invited.

- Golden Thread

This will be covered in the Pre-Inspection briefing.

- Pre-Inspection Briefing

In particular how Board Members can contribute. It was suggested that the Board could look at the relevant KLOE. This is planned for 11 November 2008.

- Equality and Diversity

See below

Other Training Requirements

- Equality and Diversity Training

Some Board Members attended the Removing Barriers training. A few Board Members have not attended and no suitable date has been found. The Board have not had updated training since a raft of legislation came into force. It is proposed that a new training session be devised for all Board members. The Board may wish for this to be compulsory.

The Board are currently completing the Equality and Diversity workbooks. It is planned that all Board Members would take the test by 17 November.

- Study Visit

It has been agreed that an appropriate visit will be arranged when reviewing Northwards post 2010 options.

Conclusion

The report has been drawn up in consultation with Enlighten Consultancy, and the Chair of the Board. Enlighten think that the process is refreshing and shows that the Board are maturing well.

As stated earlier the Board should be proud of the results, celebrate the good and excellent scores and develop the areas requiring improvement.

It is recommended that the appraisals should be carried out again in order to assess progress against this years result. This will give real value to the process.

The process was worthwhile, particularly as it looks at behavioural competencies and adds value to the board assessment.

The process is loaded towards individuals personal development and only a few items have been identified as training and development for Board improvement. Much of the training will be tailored to individuals requirements which should result in overall improvement of the Board.

Recommendation

That the Board approve the Learning Plan 2008/09 including carrying out the 360 degree appraisal process again in June 2009.

Draft Northwards Housing Board Learning Programme 2008/2009

Title	Date	Lead	Venue
Governance Toolkit	October/November	Diane Roberts	
E & D Workbook	October by 17 th November	Sue Ratchford	
One to one appraisal meeting with Chair	October/November	Sue Ratchford	
Pre-Inspection Briefing	November 11 th 5.30	Robin Lawler	Hexagon Tower
Strategic Meeting	December	tbc	
Possible Confidence/ Assertiveness training subject to PDP arrangements	Jan	Consultant	
Area Panel Business Plan	January 17 th 9.30	Steve Wood	Waterloo Centre
Positive thinking coaching*	Feb	tbc	
Equality and Diversity *	February	Sue Ratchford/Tara Kelly	
Area Panel ASB/Crime	7 th February 9.30	Mike Stevens	Waterloo Centre
Critical friend to attend Board Meeting	March	tbc	
Area Panel Governance	March tbc	Diane Roberts	
Asset Management Training	April	Larry Patrick	
Area Panel ALMO review	April tbc	Robin Lawler	
Regeneration Tour	May	Greig Lees	
Appraisal Review and 2009 Appraisals	June	Diane Roberts	
Board Away Day (1.5days)* Whole Board review of Appraisals	July		
Tenants Conference	September		
AGM and northAwards*	October tbc		
Appraisal one to one meetings	November		
Strategic Meeting	December		
Board Away Day (1 day)*	January 2010		
Board Meetings to include self-assessment time after meeting			
ALMO Finance	By request	Steve Wood	
Jargon Buster	By December	Diane Roberts	Governance Website
Study Visit	As appropriate	Diane Roberts	As appropriate

* denotes compulsory training

Resident Involvement Training Programme

The dates and topics for 2009 are yet to be agreed. The programme for 2008 covered:

- Chairing Skills
- Secretary Skills
- Committee Skills
- Resident Involvement Training
- Book Keeping Training

Staff training programme

The topics covered are:

Assertiveness – Multimedia

Disability Awareness – Multimedia

Effective writing skills – Multimedia

Equality & Diversity

Evacuation Marshall

First Aid – 4 days

First Aid Emergency – 1 day

First Aid refresher – 2 days

Health & Safety On Line

Induction for new starters

Manual Handling

Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets – Advanced Level

Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets – Intermediate Level

Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets – Introductory Level

Microsoft Project

Microsoft Word – Level 1 Word Processing

Microsoft Word – Level 2 Word Processing

Microsoft Word – Level 3 Word Processing

Microsoft Word – Specialist

Negotiation skills

Stress Management – Multimedia

Tenant Inspector Training

Time Management - Multimedia