 Northwards Housing North Manchester's Council Homes	Report to: Northwards Housing Board 10 th July 2009	Item No: 9a
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Title:	Re-inspection Action Plan		
Date:	30 June 2009		
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Confidential:	No		
For: (Please tick action required)	NOTING ✓	DISCUSSION ✓	APPROVAL

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Board on progress against the recommendations made in the Audit Commission's Inspection Report dated February 2009.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board are invited to comment and to note progress against the recommendations.

IMPLICATIONS

Equality & Diversity:	A number of actions in the plan have a direct impact on equality and diversity. If appropriate, equality impact assessments are carried out in relation to specific actions.
Financial:	None directly
Staffing:	None directly
Decency Target:	None
Governance:	The Board need to seek assurance that adequate measures are in place to deliver on improvement actions.
Risk Assessment:	Progress however against key recommendations needs to be maintained to deliver on the current judgement 2 rating of "excellent prospects."

Equality Impact Assessment	
Function being assessed	Not applicable
Section	
Date of assessment	

Person Responsible for assessment	
Is this a new or existing policy?	
If there are significant implications in terms of equality please append a summary report.	

Consultation/Consideration:

	Yes, No or N/A:	Name:	Date:
Sub-Committee:	Yes	The 3 Sub Committees regularly monitor the progress of actions relevant to service areas.	
Area Panel:	No		
Task Groups:	No		
Ward Councillors:	No		

Background

1. The Re-inspection action plan was produced following the receipt of the final inspection report from the Audit Commission in February 2009. The report made three recommendations
 1. To further develop our approach to void management,
 2. Improve the approach to leasehold management and,
 3. Improve the approach to performance management within the income management service.
2. The Audit Commission stated that the implementation of these recommendations would have a medium impact and with low costs. They also stated that they should be implemented from April 2009.

Current Performance against Actions

3. The attached report details at list of 40 actions. The three main recommendations are broken down into 11 actions in total (REI1 through to REI3c). The remaining 29 supplementary actions (REIS01 – REIS029) were extracted from comments made in the main body of the report.






	Main Recommendations	Supplementary Recommendations	Total	Performance as a % of total actions
No of actions completed	6	11	17	42.5%
No actions in progress	2	15	17	42.5%
No of actions overdue	3	3	6	15%
Total	11	29	40	100%




4. The above table breaks down overall performance against target dates. 55% of the main recommendations are now completed. The lead manager for each action has provided a brief update in the report on current progress.












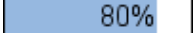
Re-inspection Action Plan June 09




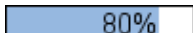



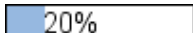

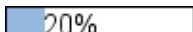
Report Author: Steve Finegan
Report Type: Action Report
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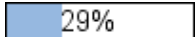













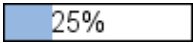

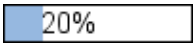



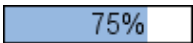


Action Status	
	Completed
	Assigned; In Progress
	Unassigned; Check Progress; Not Started
	Overdue
	Cancelled







Action Code & Title	Status Icon	Progress Bar	Due Date	Assigned To	Latest Note
REI1 Implement a robust quality checking process for ready to let voids		<div style="width: 100%;"><div style="width: 100%; background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; text-align: center;">100%</div></div>	30/04/2009	Andy Wood	Checks are carried out fortnightly by Larry Patrick and Andy Wood. From 01/06/09, the Empty Homes Team's Surveyor with Special Responsibilities is also carrying out weekly checks.
REI1a Explore the need for surveyor inspection requirement to all voids		<div style="width: 100%;"><div style="width: 100%; background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; text-align: center;">100%</div></div>	30/05/2009	Andy Wood	Learning visits completed with 3 Social Housing providers and 1 Contractor. Northwards and Manchester Working have agreed in principle that surveyor inspections are not required to all voids. Efficiency workgroups have been established and will build this into new process as part of a larger process change to be implemented in October 2009.
REI1c Increase the number of immediate relets & set a target		<div style="width: 100%;"><div style="width: 50%; background-color: #4F81BD; color: white; text-align: center;">50%</div></div>	31/07/2009	Andy Wood	Learning visits completed with 3 Social Housing providers and 1 Contractor. Northwards and Manchester Working have agreed in principle that an increase in the number of immediate voids are required. Efficiency workgroups have been established and will build this into new process as part of a larger process change to be implemented in October 2009. A









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					target for immediate relets will be set as part of the review process.
REI1d Set clear targets for reducing the number of rehousing refusals			30/04/2009	Anne Duffield	Targets approved at Sub Committee - 24th April 2009 (Stepped increase from 43% to below 30% by March 2011).
REI1e Increase the number of pre-termination visits & set a target.			30/06/2009	Anne Duffield	Targets agreed at Sub Committee - 24th April 2009 (Stepped increase from 44% to 75% by Sept 2010).
REI2 Review and introduce revised S20 notices			30/04/2009	David Heys	Leaseholders consulted regarding concerns and changes made to the standard letter
REI2a Provide information to leaseholders on calculation of sinking fund amounts and impact			30/04/2010	Alison Foster	Graham Elkes attended the leaseholder task group on 9th February 2009, and took the group through the definition of the Sinking Fund, and how it would be applied to decent homes work. MCC have now started to project plan this work following Eastlands Stock Transfer to achieve within timescale.
REI3 Consider business case for non urgent rechargeable repairs			31/08/2009	Andy Wood	Asset management sub committee approved report to charge for non urgent rechargeable repairs that do not affect the appearance of the estate on 29/04/09. New procedure was agreed at a meeting of officers on 28/05/09 and implemented with immediate affect.
REI3a Introduce and report on targets for credit union take up			30/04/2009	Alison Foster	Over 250 Northwards tenants are now known to have utilised the services of Manchester Credit Union. Northwards is now working closely with the illegal money lending team in Birmingham to encourage tenants away from Doorstep Lenders, Loan sharks, and towards the facilities of the credit union, in particular Affordable Credit and basic bank accounts. A two fold publicity campaign loan sharks / credit union is due to be issued to all tenants in August 2009. In addition, the Credit Union will be invited to open evenings for decent homes work - in particular kitchens, as it is known that many tenants are accessing credit


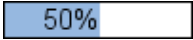
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					at extortionate rates in order to buy new white goods! The aim is to increase take up by an additional 250 tenants.
REIS01 Introduce a robust process to ensure all improvement plans are SMART			30/04/2009	Steve Finegan	Completed. Guidance issued to managers. All improvement plans for 09/10 received. (Further work required to Finance Team Improvement Plan and Financial Inclusion Plan).
REIS02 Monitor and ensure improvements in speed of response times at On Call			31/05/2009	Seema Kohli	Generally performance improved since launch of 'shadow' call centre team. All MCC calls now routed elsewhere improving performance of Northwards On Call Team. Awaiting latest stats from MCC/On Call to verify current improvement. Delay with launch of new call centre but now on target to go live on 1.7.09
REIS03 Review and identify issues to understand the lower satisfaction with the outcome of complaints.			30/06/2009	Seema Kohli	Report to be presented to next Customer and Communities Sub Committee combined with latest findings following feedback of 'handling' performance. The number of dissatisfied customers 24% is a very small sample i.e. 13 complaints. Analysis indicates 8 were about repairs and 5 about rehousing. Dissatisfaction relates to final outcome e.g. rehousing is dissatisfaction with waiting times and repairs dissatisfaction relates to communal repairs and several missed appointments. A new procedure has also been implemented at MWL to address missed appointments.
REIS04 Seek greater representation on the Board from the younger and black african community.			30/04/2010	Diane Roberts	Board Targets set in November 2008. Actions being addressed through current recruitment campaign. % target to be agreed.
REIS05 Review written information on asbestos available to tenants and as part of sign up.			30/09/2009	Alan Lawrenson	Following a presentation on Asbestos at a recent conference, officers are now in discussion with RoSPA about a strategic national approach to this issue with a view to opposing any further publication of asbestos information to tenants.

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					Best Practice guidance from Asbestos experts is clear that no information should be given to tenants. However the full Asbestos Management system will continue to be developed to ensure that all information is provided to contractors and operatives. Further discussion in relation to this approach will be required but it is proposed to await responses from RoSPA and other housing providers.
REIS06 Improve performance for completing urgent repairs on time by 0.68%			30/04/2010	Andy Wood	Performance decreased by 0.64% (98.51 to 97.87) at 31/05/09. The introduction of the Optitime system is still being embedded in MWL and sustained improvement will follow the resolution of implementation issues.
REIS07 Improve performance for completing routine repairs on time by 1.55%			30/04/2010	Andy Wood	Performance decreased by 2.18% (96.2 to 94.02) at 31/05/09. The introduction of the Optitime system is still being embedded in MWL and sustained improvement will follow the resolution of implementation issues.
REIS08 Obtain and evaluate larger sample of customer satisfaction with the repairs service.			30/12/2009	Andy Wood	Combined return of 30% from handheld and postal survey in May 2009.
REIS09 Introduce evaluation of satisfaction with repairs service by diversity strands.			30/09/2009	Andy Wood	Evaluation of tenant replies by 6 diversity strands is being carried out.
REIS10 Review the void (current relatively low) standard			30/04/2009	Andy Wood	Consultation completed with Repairs & Improvements Forum, the Tenant Inspectors and the three Area Panels.
REIS11 Review and ensure existing improvement plans for reducing void relet times are robust.			30/05/2009	Anne Duffield	Action plan for further improvement taken through P&P sub comm. Joint meeting held with LSM's and EHT to agree actions needed and to get commitment to further improvement Action plan agreed for all parts of the process at front and back end to ensure further time savings on average re-let time. Actions in plans to be monitored regularly.

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REIS12 Review and consider charging for missed appointments for gas servicing			30/12/2009	Andy Wood	Manager briefed, analysis complete and is on the agenda of the North West Gas Forum on 07/07/09.
REIS13 Explore and integrate overdue gas safety checks within repairs system			30/12/2009	Andy Wood	Manager briefed, analysis complete but not practical on current manual system. ICT consultant to investigate Promaster interface with Civica.
REIS14 Ensure a robust system for monitoring and improving rent collection performance.			30/04/2009	Alison Foster	Individual and team targets now introduced. Each member of the team is now able to access their recovery statistics on a weekly basis. In addition, the digital signage in the Cheetham Hill office is now updated on a weekly basis, allowing officers to view their recovery rate against target. Furthermore, the officers continue to work on a patch based basis, and overtime working has continued one evening per week, and one saturday per month, allowing officers the opportunity to contact those tenants who are traditionally evasive. All of the above measures have helped to create a healthy competitive environment.
REIS15 Measure and link cost of debt advice to benefit pending and welfare advice outcomes.			31/07/2009	Alison Foster	Report produced on a case by case basis identifying the level of debts at the start of the debt advice process, and the resultant debt at the time a case is completed. Proposal to report on the level of additional income generated on a half yearly basis. Report to be sent to Resources Committee for noting - October 2009 - highlighting the position for the first 6 months of the new financial year.
REIS16 Set target for increase take up of contents insurance service			30/04/2009	Alison Foster	The current scheme is accessed by just under 3,000 tenants. Through the offer of an incentive, funded by AVIVA to 'recommend a friend' or 'free accidental damage' it is hoped to increase the current take up of the scheme to 3,500 tenants by 31st March 2009.

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					In addition, Northwards is working with AVIVA on a new publicity campaign, to ensure that tenants fully understand the need for home contents insurance. Report to be sent to Resources Sub-committee in October 2009 to highlight performance against target - year to date.
REIS17 Resolve any outstanding IT issues that impact on rent recovery		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; background-color: #4f81bd; position: relative;">50%</div>	31/12/2009	Alison Foster	Reports have now been designed to specifically identify the profile of those tenants who have fallen into arrears. This information seeks to identify specific groups of tenants are falling into arrears and targeted action then follows. Further enhancement to reporting due in Aug '09
REIS18 Review effectiveness of Corporate Debt Policy in partnership with MCC		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; background-color: #4f81bd; position: relative;">10%</div>	30/04/2009	Alison Foster	We are looking to work with Manchester City Council on increasing the effectiveness of the Corporate Debt Policy. Meeting to be scheduled with Charles Metcalfe, the Manager (MCC) responsible for overseeing the application of the policy in July 2009.
REIS19 Improve response rate for closed case ASB satisfaction data.		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; background-color: #4f81bd; position: relative;">100%</div>	30/04/2009	Julie Wilson	Reviewed and data collected monthly. Action completed in April 2009.
REIS20 Publish targets for ASB and environmental actions.		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; background-color: #4f81bd; position: relative;">60%</div>	30/09/2009	Julie Wilson	Targets for ASB updated on Northwards Intranet. Redesigning Tenants handbook page in progression
REIS21 Develop and implement a communication strategy with leaseholders in partnership with MCC and On Call.		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; background-color: #4f81bd; position: relative;">80%</div>	30/04/2009	Alison Foster	A Leaseholder newsletter has now been developed in order to maintain regular communication with all leaseholders. The newsletter will be issued on a quarterly basis. In addition, it is hoped that by sharing some of the achievements of the Leaseholder Forum through the newsletter, we will be able to encourage new representation for the group.
REIS22 Carry out full impact assessment in due course of incentive scheme for under/over occupation.		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px; background-color: #4f81bd; position: relative;">0%</div>	30/09/2009	Anne Duffield	Report will be presented to Customers and Communities Sub Comm in Sept 2009.

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REIS23 Achieve Level B of Supporting People Quality Assessment in 6 out of 8 objectives		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; background-color: white; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">0%</div>	30/04/2010	Pat Scappaticci	QAF is currently being revised. New framework due to come into effect from 04/09.
REIS24 Identify VFM considerations separately on Board Report Templates.		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; background-color: #4F81BD; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">100%</div>	30/04/2009	Diane Roberts	New templates for Board and Sub-Committee reports set up incorporating Value for Money and updating other implications. Master templates to be issued to Managers for use from 1 July with guidance on completing implications and EIAs.
REIS25 Review and improve VFM in the void process		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; background-color: #4F81BD; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">33%</div>	30/09/2009	Andy Wood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduction in void banding charges applied from 01/04/09. 2. Board approved the extension of decent homes with MWL on 12/05/09 and consolidated Riverways by only using Wates and so reducing prelims. 3. Launch of Efficiency Board and Voids Efficiency Workgroup to build efficiencies into new processes as part of a switch over to Price Per Property from S.O.R. to be implemented in October 2009.
REIS26 Carry out a full impact assessment of the Northwards Xtra incentive scheme		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; background-color: white; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">0%</div>	27/11/2009	Debra Dalton	Impact assessment will be carried out 12 months after implementation and include a report to Customer & Communities Sub Committee
REIS27 Carry out a full impact assessment of the Whitebeck Court scheme.		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; background-color: white; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">0%</div>	30/04/2010	Greig Lees	'Wates Living Space' selected as preferred contractor for Whitebeck Court refurbishment, start on site anticipated September 2009.
REIS28 Review and ensure the financial inclusion plan is SMART		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; background-color: #4F81BD; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">100%</div>	30/04/2009	Alison Foster	Targets now determined for each aspect of the Financial Inclusion Action Plan
REIS29 Ensure the Covalent system is accessible to all staff		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; background-color: #4F81BD; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">33%</div>	31/12/2009	Steve Finegan	Covalent training ongoing. Access to Covalent via the Intranet set up. To be implemented in Rent Recovery Team in July 09 and then rolled out to each directorate.
REI3b Introduce and report on targets for financial literacy course take-up		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 20px; background-color: #4F81BD; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">50%</div>	30/04/2009	Alison Foster	Meetings now scheduled with three Sure Start Centres to roll out training for single parents and families- the aim is to run 2

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					<p>courses per month commencing July 2009 for up to 8 people. - Target for 2009/10 - 18 courses for up to 8 people.</p> <p>In addition, the literacy training for older residents is to be launched at Victoria Square in August 2009 - initially 3 courses of 8 residents. We will then look to roll this out to other retirement housing schemes. Target for 2009/10 - 10 courses for up to 8 people.</p> <p>We have yet to identify a suitable forum to roll out the training to young single males.</p>
REI3c Introduce and report on targets for achieving access to bank accounts			30/04/2009	Alison Foster	<p>As the current high street banks are reluctant to offer the facility of Basic Bank Accounts we are now working with the Manchester Credit union, who are looking to launch their Basic bank Account in September 2009. This facility follows additional funding for the credit union from the DWP.</p> <p>Target for 2009/10 - 20 tenants per month - Total to 31st March 2010 - 120.</p>