



Report to:

Northwards Housing Board
10th November 2009

Item No:

8e

Title:	Inspection Action Plan		
Date:	28 th October 2009		
Author:	Steve Wood	Tel No:	0161 720 5822
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Confidential:	No		
For: (Please tick action required)	NOTING ✓	DISCUSSION	APPROVAL
PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To present to the Board a summary of progress on the Inspection Action Plan as put together from the reports to Sub-Committees			
RECOMMENDATION			
The Board are asked to note progress to date.			
IMPLICATIONS			
Equality & Diversity:	Diversity is a key element in Inspection		
Financial:	There are some additional financial and resource implications to enable delivery of some of the inspection recommendations		
Staffing:	Actions should be delivered mainly within existing resources		
Decency Target:	Asset Management is a key element in Inspection		
Governance:	The Inspection Action plan will build on good governance		
Risk Assessment:	Performance against the key recommendations of the Action will be the subject of re-inspection within two to three years		

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	Asset Management Customers & Communities Resources	28 th October 2009 24 th April 2009 27 th October 2009
Area Panel:	Yes	Summary report of Inspection outcome and action plan provided.	
Task Groups	No		
Ward Councillors:	N/A		

1. The report below sets out progress to date on the Inspection Action Plan items.
2. As requested at previous meetings a full report has been attached for the attention of the Board.
3. Detailed reports are now going through Sub-Committees for scrutiny.
4. The full report shows **3 recommendations** (split into 11 parts) **and 29 supplementary comments** where progress will be reported through to Sub-Committees.
5. A summary of progress to date is as follows:

	Total	Completed	Overdue	Not Yet Due
Inspection recommendations	11	7	3	1
Supplementary comments	29	14	6	9
		70%	Last report 74%	

Recommendation

6. The Board are asked to note progress to date.

Inspection Action Plan - Board

Summary of Actions following the Audit Commission Re-Inspection in 2008 and Progress to Date


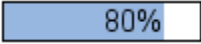

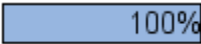

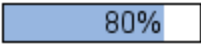
Author: Steve Wood


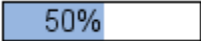

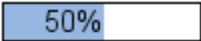




Report Type: Actions Report




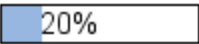

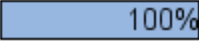

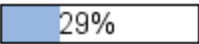
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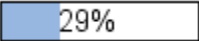









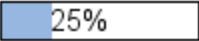



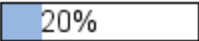



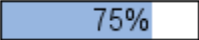
Action Code	Action Title	Status Icon	Assigned To	Due Date	Completed Date	Overall Progress Bar for Main Action	Latest Note
RE11	Implement a robust quality checking process for ready to let voids		Andy Wood	30 Apr 2009	28 Jan 2009		Checks are carried out fortnightly by Larry Patrick and Andy Wood. From 01/06/09, the Empty Homes Team's Surveyor with Special Responsibilities is also carries out weekly checks. From 29/06/09 the contractor and cleaning company certify completion on a 'Signed with Pride' basis which was identified as good practice by the Audit Commission in their inspection report for the Luminus Group.
RE11a	Explore the need for surveyor inspection requirement to all voids		Andy Wood	30 May 2009	10 Jun 2009		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 most 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.
RE11c	Increase the number of immediate relets & set a target		Andy Wood	31 Jul 2009	29 Jul 2009		Immediate relets have increased from 1.6% in Qtr 1 2008/09 to 3.0% in Qtr 1 2009/10. Asset Management Sub Committee approved target of 5.0% for immediate relets by 31/03/2010.
RE11d	Set clear targets for reducing the number of rehousing refusals		Anne Duffield	30 Apr 2009	24 Apr 2009		Targets approved at Sub Committee - 24th April 2009 (Stepped increase from 43% to below 30% by March 2011).
RE11e	Increase the number of pre-termination visits & set a target.		Anne Duffield	30 Jun 2009	05 Jun 2009		Targets agreed at Sub Committee - 24th April 2009 (Stepped increase from 44% to 75% by Sept 2010).
RE12	Review and introduce revised S20 notices		David Heys	30 Apr 2009	19 Dec 2009		Leaseholders consulted regarding concerns and changes made to the standard letter


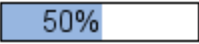


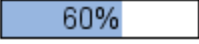
Action Code	Action Title	Status Icon	Assigned To	Due Date	Completed Date	Overall Progress Bar for Main Action	Latest Note
REI2a	Provide information to leaseholders on calculation of sinking fund amounts and impact		Alison Foster	30 Apr 2010			<p>Although an overall review of Sinking Funds has not yet been undertaken, MCC are now undertaking a review of sinking fund balances on an individual case by case basis, as and when Decent Homes work is undertaken.</p> <p>This has helped to assist leaseholders to better understand their associated share of costs for Decent Homes work, as well as enabling them to agree on an affordable repayment plan, should their sinking fund balance not cover the costs of works undertaken.</p>
REI3	Consider business case for non urgent rechargeable repairs		Andy Wood	31 Aug 2009	28 May 2009		<p>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 effect.</p>
REI3a	Introduce and report on targets for credit union take up		Alison Foster	30 Apr 2009			<p>Over 250 Northwards tenants are now known to have utilised the services of Manchester Credit Union.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>A two fold publicity campaign loan sharks / credit union is due to be issued to all tenants in August 2009.</p> <p>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 at extortionate rates in order to buy new white goods!</p> <p>The aim is to increase take up by an additional 250 tenants.</p>











Action Code	Action Title	Status Icon	Assigned To	Due Date	Completed Date	Overall Progress Bar for Main Action	Latest Note
REI3b	Introduce and report on targets for financial literacy course take-up		Alison Foster	30 Apr 2009			<p>Meetings now scheduled with three Sure Start Centres to roll out training for single parents and families- the aim is to run 2 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		Alison Foster	30 Apr 2009			<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>
REIS01	Introduce a robust process to ensure all improvement plans are SMART		Steve Finegan	30 Apr 2009	30 Jun 2009		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		Seema Kohli	31 May 2009	20 Jul 2009		Performance for week beginning 13th - 17th July was 91.3%. Average speed of answer was 8 seconds. Ongoing performance will be monitored via contract meetings.

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REIS03	Review and identify issues to understand the lower satisfaction with the outcome of complaints.		Seema Kohli	30 Jun 2009	30 Jun 2009		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.		Diane Roberts	30 Apr 2010			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.		Alan Lawrenson	30 Sep 2009	28 Sep 2009		Response has been received from RoSPA that broadly supported our current approach to communication of asbestos information to tenants. We will, of course, continue to monitor developments in best practice nationally and amongst peer organisations and will review and amend our procedure as necessary
REIS06	Improve performance for completing urgent repairs on time by 0.68%		Andy Wood	30 Apr 2010			The introduction of the dynamic appointment system, Optitime, has affected Northwards performance reports. An investigation has found that when a tenant requests an appointment is put back or Manchester Working make a follow on appointment on the same order to carry out additional works, the new appointment is recorded in Optitime, on the same order. When this information passes back across the interface, Northwards reports from Civica are erroneously classing some of these as failures. Based on Manchester Working's reports, actual performance is believed to be approximately 98.5%. Manchester Working use the same criteria as Northwards to calculate that figure.

Action Code	Action Title	Status Icon	Assigned To	Due Date	Completed Date	Overall Progress Bar for Main Action	Latest Note
REIS07	Improve performance for completing routine repairs on time by 1.55%		Andy Wood	30 Apr 2010			The introduction of the dynamic appointment system, Optitime, has affected Northwards performance reports. An investigation has found that when a tenant requests an appointment is put back or Manchester Working make a follow on appointment on the same order to carry out additional works, the new appointment is recorded in Optitime, on the same order. When this information passes back across the interface, Northwards reports from Civica are erroneously classing some of these as failures. Based on Manchester Working's reports, actual performance is believed to be approximately 97.0%. Manchester Working use the same criteria as Northwards to calculate that figure.
REIS08	Obtain and evaluate larger sample of customer satisfaction with the repairs service.		Andy Wood	30 Dec 2009	18 Jun 2009		Combined return of 30% from handheld and postal survey in May 2009.
REIS09	Introduce evaluation of satisfaction with repairs service by diversity strands.		Andy Wood	30 Sep 2009	18 Jun 2009		Evaluation of tenant replies by 6 diversity strands is being carried out.
REIS10	Review the void (current relatively low) standard		Andy Wood	30 Apr 2009	07 May 2009		Consultation completed with Repairs & Improvements Forum, the Tenant Inspectors and the three Area Panels. Asset management sub committee approved report to revise the empty homes standard on 29/04/09 and was implemented with immediate effect.
REIS11	Review and ensure existing improvement plans for reducing void relet times are robust.		Anne Duffield	30 May 2009	10 Jun 2009		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.
REIS12	Review and consider charging for missed appointments for gas servicing		Andy Wood	30 Dec 2009			Manager briefed, analysis complete and is on the agenda of the North West Gas Forum on 07/07/09.

Action Code	Action Title	Status Icon	Assigned To	Due Date	Completed Date	Overall Progress Bar for Main Action	Latest Note
REIS13	Explore and integrate overdue gas safety checks within repairs system		Andy Wood	30 Dec 2009			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.		Alison Foster	30 Apr 2009	30 Jun 2009		<p>Individual and team targets now introduced.</p> <p>Each member of the team is now able to access their recovery statistics on a weekly basis.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>All of the above measures have helped to create a healthy competitive environment.</p>
REIS15	Measure and link cost of debt advice to benefit pending and welfare advice outcomes.		Alison Foster	31 Jul 2009			<p>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.</p> <p>Proposal to report on the level of additional income generated on a half yearly basis.</p> <p>Report to be sent to Resources Committee for noting - October 2009 - highlighting the position for the first 6 months of the new financial year.</p>

Action Code	Action Title	Status Icon	Assigned To	Due Date	Completed Date	Overall Progress Bar for Main Action	Latest Note
REIS16	Set target for increase take up of contents insurance service		Alison Foster	30 Apr 2009	30 Jun 2009		<p>The current scheme is accessed by just under 3,000 tenants.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In addition, Northwards is working with AVIVA on a new publicity campaign, to ensure that tenants fully understand the need for home contents insurance.</p> <p>Report to be sent to Resources Sub-committee in October 2009 to highlight performance against target - year to date.</p>
REIS17	Resolve any outstanding IT issues that impact on rent recovery		Alison Foster	31 Dec 2009			<p>Reports have now been designed to specifically identify the profile of those tenants who have fallen into arrears.</p> <p>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</p>
REIS18	Review effectiveness of Corporate Debt Policy in partnership with MCC		Alison Foster	30 Apr 2009			<p>Meeting planned for week commencing 10th August 2009.</p> <p>This meeting will assist Northwards to better understand how the Corporate Debt Policy is used in practice, as well as gaining a better understanding of how to publicise the Corporate debt Policy to tenants and residents in north Manchester.</p>
REIS19	Improve response rate for closed case ASB satisfaction data.		Julie Wilson	30 Apr 2009	17 Jun 2009		<p>Reviewed and data collected monthly. Action completed in April 2009.</p>
REIS20	Publish targets for ASB and environmental actions.		Julie Wilson	30 Sep 2009			<p>Targets for ASB updated on Northwards Intranet. Redesigning Tenants handbook page in progression</p>

Action Code	Action Title	Status Icon	Assigned To	Due Date	Completed Date	Overall Progress Bar for Main Action	Latest Note
REIS21	Develop and implement a communication strategy with leaseholders in partnership with MCC and On Call.		Alison Foster	30 Apr 2009			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.		Anne Duffield	30 Sep 2009			Report was presented to Sub Com in Sep 09
REIS23	Achieve Level B of Supporting People Quality Assessment in 6 out of 8 objectives		Pat Scappaticci	30 Apr 2010	21 Oct 2009		level b achieved across the service
REIS24	Identify VFM considerations separately on Board Report Templates.		Diane Roberts	30 Apr 2009	30 Jun 2009		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		Andy Wood	30 Sep 2009			Recent internal audit report makes several recommendations for improving VFM in the void process. The draft report is being considered with a view to implementation of recommended actions.
REIS26	Carry out a full impact assessment of the Northwards Xtra incentive scheme		Debra Dalton	27 Nov 2009			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.		Greig Lees	30 Apr 2010			Note below dated 19/02/09 should read completion Spring 2011.
REIS28	Review and ensure the financial inclusion plan is SMART		Alison Foster	30 Apr 2009	30 Jun 2009		Targets now determined for each aspect of the Financial Inclusion Action Plan
REIS29	Ensure the Covalent system is accessible to all staff		Steve Finegan	31 Dec 2009			Covalent to be implemented in Rent Team end of August 09. Project Plan for phased roll out to local services (voids); Surveying Services and Health and Safety Team in September. Consultation on level of access and approach currently taking place.