



## **Board**

**24 March 2009**

### **Items for Information**

#### **1. Introduction**

The attached are for information:

- (i) Chief Executive's Report
- (ii) Delegated Decisions 13 February to 13 March 2009
- (iii) Minutes :
  - Property Committee held on 19 January 2009
  - Outer West & North Area Board held on 19 January 2009
  - Inner West Area Board held on 20 January 2009
  - East Area Board held on 22 January 2009
  - Finance Committee held on 12 February 2009

#### **2. Recommendation**

Board is asked to receive these items for information.

#### **Contact Officer:**

Maureen Dickson, Company Administrator and Board Support Officer, ext 28624



## **Board**

**24 March 2009**

### **Chief Executives report**

**Report by John P Lee**

#### **FOR INFORMATION**

##### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report aims to give Board a taste of some up and coming national developments that are influencing the work that YHN is involved in currently and that they may be asked to look at in more detail at some future date.

##### **2. Your Homes Newcastle Strategic Objectives**

- 2.1 The current and future developments discussed in the report will influence the delivery of all our current strategic objectives:
- Support and care to communities
  - Three star excellent services
  - A quality workforce
  - Refurbishing and building homes

##### **3 Key Issues**

###### **3.1 Housing and Regeneration Act introduces two new key agencies**

The new Housing and Regeneration Act became law in November 2008. It focuses on delivering recommendations made within the Cave report, 'Every Tenant Matters', published in June 2007. The Cave report recommended a new system of social housing regulation based on the provision of high quality housing, the expansion of choice and the empowerment and protection of tenants. In order to achieve these recommendations the Housing and Regeneration Act introduced two new key agencies which went live in December 2008.

### **Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).**

This is a new housing and regeneration agency for England, which will create opportunities:

- for people to live in affordable homes in places that they want to live in, and
- for local authorities and communities to deliver the ambitions they have for their area

The Homes and Communities Agency joins up the delivery of housing and regeneration under one roof, bringing together the functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities, and key housing and regeneration programmes previously delivered by Communities and Local Government, including the Thames Gateway, Housing Market Renewal, Decent Homes.

This integrated approach will enable the HCA to hold a 'single conversation' with local authorities and other partners on the specific housing and regeneration needs of their individual areas. This will ensure that communities receive the best outcome for them and make it easier to resolve potential stumbling blocks to regeneration and suitable development in a particular locality whilst meeting national targets. With an investment budget of over £5 billion per year, the HCA's scale and resources means it will bring about a step change in housing supply and enhance people's quality of life. This will not only entail the delivery of much needed housing (both affordable and within the private sector) but also the creation and regeneration of sustainable communities within which these homes are built.

Sir Bob Kerlake is the Chief Executive of the HCA, Robert Napier has been appointed as chair and our link to the agency is through Pat Ritchie the REGIONAL Director.

### **The Tenant Services Authority (TSA).**

The TSA is the new regulator for social housing, dedicated to raising the standard of housing services by putting tenants first. Taking over the Housing Corporation's responsibility for regulating housing associations and social landlords, the TSA will set high standards of management across these areas and, later, local authority social homes.

The TSA will:

- champion tenant's needs and aspirations from housing
- promote choice for tenants and providers
- challenge providers to meet or exceed standards
- shape standards, utilizing informal and formal consultations
- adopt a co-regulatory and proportionate approach
- be independent and cross-domain
- work to create more choice about the way housing is managed and the landlords who provide it

The TSA plans to do this by:

- putting tenants at the centre, and ensuring that landlords do the same
- acting fairly, independently and decisively
- encouraging excellence and focusing on real performance - both of the landlords it works with and the people it employs

In this way the TSA will be a catalyst for change, one which will hopefully improve the quality of life for millions of social tenants.

The Chair of the TSA is Anthony Mayer, former Chief Executive of the Greater London Authority. The Chief Executive is Peter Marsh, formerly Deputy Chief Executive of the Housing Corporation.

The TSA will consult with tenants and social landlords across the domain to develop the new standards framework for all social tenants, for implementation from the end of 2009 onwards.

The Chair recently wrote to Anthony Mayer inviting him to visit YHN to experience the work of a 3\* ALMO and to begin a conversation with the agency prior to any regulation activity.

### 3.2 **White paper to transform welfare system**

In December 2008 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) released the White Paper 'Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future'. The paper sets out the proposals made by the government to reform and simplify the current welfare system, with the ultimate intention of reducing unemployment levels and eventually eradicating child poverty. The paper outlines the Government's pledge to provide a personalised and supportive welfare system, however greater expectations are also placed on those in receipt of welfare provision. The proposals mean that all those accessing the system will be expected to effectively utilise all support offered to find employment as soon as reasonably possible. Although the timing of the paper has been heavily criticised, the government maintains that the current financial situation has been considered within the reform, and will enable those currently out of work to improve their skills and progress into work as soon as the labour market improves.

### 3.3 **Improving public services to create 'New Opportunities'**

The 'New Opportunities' white paper released in January sets out a raft of policies about the key role of public services to support the governments initiatives towards increasing social mobility and enabling everyone to fulfil their potential in a fair society. In order to empower communities and remove any barriers which may stand in the way of achievement, the paper proposes to introduce laws to ensure that all public services are 'excellent, personalised and responsive'. Additionally, the paper outlines plans to extend the current Family Intervention Programme in order to increase the support provided to disadvantaged families. The policies come into the following categories:

- New opportunities
- Success in the global economy
- Supporting child development
- World class schools
- Pathways for all
- Getting on in work
- Supporting family life
- Supporting communities to support individuals

We will have to wait and see what this means for us if and when the proposals reach the statute books.

### 3.4 **Empty Promise**

YHN and many other social housing organisations and Local Authorities has signed up to Inside Housing's Empty Promise. This is a campaign that aims to persuade the government to bring about action on VAT and grant rates and provide guidance to help landlords to reduce the number of empty homes in their areas. It is estimated that while there are about 1.8m people on housing waiting lists in England there are over 750,000 empty homes that could be used to meet some of that need. Additionally, it is estimated that 75,000 homes will be repossessed in 2009 and about 85,000 new homes will be built. Unfortunately, many of these new homes will remain unsold because of the current economic climate.

In Newcastle it is estimated that there are in excess of 5,000 homes and at the same time over 9,000 registered for re-housing. Knowing that recession exacerbates this problem not only in terms of people needing homes and leaving homes empty but in the blight brought about by increasing numbers of empty homes in our communities, now is the time to act.

YHN's Chair recently wrote to Pat Ritchie Regional Director of the HCA asking to meet her to discuss how we could work with the HCA around this issue as it is not all about building new houses in terms of meeting demand.

### 3.5 **Ending child poverty - making it happen**

The Government is currently consulting on a white paper that aims to enshrine in legislation its pledge to eradicate child poverty in the UK by 2020. It will also lay out roles and responsibilities in meeting its aims for children and young people as laid out in the New Opportunities white paper (3.3) in light of the current global economic situation. The white pare is all about increasing opportunity and life chances for those children and young people who grow up in low income families and often lack the experiences that their peers enjoy.

A Child Poverty Bill will be introduced in 2009.

### 3.6 **HRA review**

In June 2009 we can expect to be consulted about the government review of the HRA subsidy system and potential changes to the fiscal rules governing subsidy, borrowing and self financing. Proposals as currently being advocated will amount to the biggest shake up of Housing Finance in thirty years with the onus being on local services paid for by local income and the retention of local receipts. In other words levelling the playing field for many Authorities. There have been a number of self financing pilots running over the last few years and the findings from these will feed into the review.

In determining how any changes will affect YHN either negatively or in terms of producing benefits, we will have to carry out a great deal of work when the actual proposals/options become clear. Our Finance Team will be offering a briefing session to Board Members about many of the salient issues in advance of the consultation coming to Board so that members are fully equipped to make any appropriate decisions when the need arises.

#### **4. Work in Progress**

- 4.1 We are looking at the ongoing developments around regulation and looking to keep a pace with these in terms of how we deliver performance frameworks and involve tenants in decision making.

The Chair recently wrote to Anthony Mayer inviting him to visit YHN to experience the work of a 3\* ALMO and to begin a conversation with the agency prior to any regulation activity.

- 4.2 YHN's developing worklessness strategy aims to address many issues presenting as part of the welfare reform proposals.

- 4.3 We are ahead of the game in many respects, in that our work around support and care is already addressing many of the issues raised as part of the New Opportunities white paper, for example the Family Intervention Project.

- 4.4 YHN's Chair and Pat Ritchie Regional Director of the HCA will be meeting up at the Chair's request to discuss how we could work with the HCA around the Empty homes issue as it is not all about building new houses in terms of meeting demand. Additionally, we are looking at individual requests from developers about taking on unsold stock.

- 4.5 We will be looking to respond to the Child Poverty white paper by 11 March 2009

- 4.6 We will continue to keep a pace with the emerging suggested options for self financing and the potential effects on YHN and NCC so that we are able to respond comprehensively to the awaited consultation.

#### **5 Next Steps**

- 5.1 Will report regularly to Board about developments in these areas

#### **Contact Officer):**

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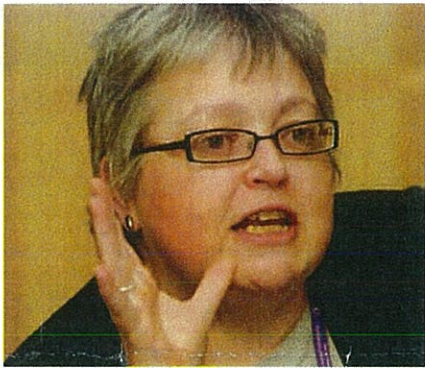


# engage

SPRING 2009

A MESSAGE FROM CIH CHIEF EXECUTIVE **SARAH WEBB**

# Are you ready?



**With my HA Board hat on (I'm the chair of the Black Country Housing Group) I spent time earlier this month listening to Anthony Mayer, chair of the new Tenant Services Authority, talking about the move from 'regulation' to 'governance'.**

If it doesn't sound too crazy, my reaction was to be both excited and terrified in equal measures. Anthony looked us straight in our collective eye and, in his inimitable way, said: *"if we have reasons to be concerned about the performance of your organisation it's the Board we will be coming to for a little bit of a chitty-chat"*.

In case we hadn't got the message he went on to explain that **the TSA expects to have its primary relationship with Boards rather than with chief executives.** He isn't expecting the TSA staff to regulate the work of employees – he is expecting Boards to exercise robust governance of their organisations.

I think this is fantastic news – a far more significant victory than the promise of 'light-touch regulation' and offers us the opportunity to have a far more 'adult' relationship with the regulator.

With my CIH hat back on, it's also making a reality of changes that we've been pressing for for years. Before Elton and Cave we did some work on a new approach to regulation – one that was customer-centric and that covered all tenants.

The scary part is that this new approach really is **a wake-up call for Boards** in both HAs and ALMOs. Whether we are looking within our own sector or further afield there is hardly a major organisational failure that hasn't resulted from poor governance (think Mirror Group pensioners,

Enron, WorldCom and Ujima). **This is clearly the time for Boards to do some serious self-examination.** To ask themselves 'are we fit for purpose? Are we really in control? In what ways are we accountable to our residents?'

It's a question I'll be asking at BCHG but it's also something the CIH will be exploring as I launch a major governance review of our own organisation – the first in many years.

Paddy Gray, CIH's next Vice President, will be leading this work and I expect it will result in some significant changes for us.

It's also an area of work that ConsultCIH will be prioritising as we seek to offer support to the sector to respond to the major changes ahead.

ConsultCIH' existing expertise in this area is part our wider commitment to healthy organisations – whether that's yours or ours.

So my question to you is: **Are you ready for the TSA's move from regulation to governance?**

## Board

24 March 2009

### Delegated Decisions – Schedule of non-confidential Delegated Decisions taken between 13 February and 13 March 2009

No	Directorate/Delegated Officer	Authorised Date	Subject	Cost/Budget Provision	Ward
1.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Breslin Sheila - YHN Head of Business Development	2/13/2009	Fire Detection System Allendale House and Teasdale House	Funding of the total expenditure amounting to £88,186.80 will be met from Fire Protection Continuing Programme budget.	Byker; Woolsington
2.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Breslin Sheila - YHN Head of Business Development	2/23/2009	Environmental Improvements to Heaton Squares	Funding of the total expenditure amounting to £43,691.94 will be met from PEMS and Housing Project Fund.	North Heaton
3.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Breslin Sheila - YHN Head of Business Development	2/23/2009	Proposed demolition of Phase 1 Heart of Walker	Funding of the total expenditure amounting to £329,325 will be met from BNG.	Walker
4.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Breslin Sheila - YHN Head of Business Development	2/23/2009	Environmental Improvements to Clarks Hill Walk Phase One	Funding of the total expenditure of £268,510.56 will be met from the Planned Environmental Improvement and Maintenance Scheme	Newburn
5.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Breslin Sheila - YHN Head of Business Development	3/4/2009	Appointment of Consultant Dampness and Condensation study at 6nr Multi Storey Blocks	Funding of the total expenditure amounting to £10,240 will be met from Feasibility Budget.	All Wards
6.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Scott Neil - Head of Housing Management	3/4/2009	Assist in development of Palatine Beds. This follows on from work done by PLUS Ltd in November 2008	Cost - £12,500 + £2,500 expenses = £15,000 total Code 1YHTS / D404	All Wards

7.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Atkinson Ross - (YHN Head of Corporate Service)	3/4/2009	Provision of Recruitment Services - Head of Finance & Head of Property Maintenance	Cost £13,000 Code 1YCA5/AC45	All Wards
8.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Atkinson Ross - (YHN Head of Corporate Service)	3/5/2009	Purchase & Installation of six Dyson Air Blade Hand Driers to replace the twelve existing appliances within the toilet areas within YHN House Headquarters	Code - 1YCSA / D111 Cost £3,348 (Purchase) Cost £512 (Installation)	All Wards
9.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Breslin Sheila - YHN Head of Business Development	3/5/2009	Additional security gates and extension to door entry system	Funding of the total expenditure amounting to £19,175.52 will be met from the housing project fund.	Westgate
10.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Breslin Sheila - YHN Head of Business Development	3/6/2009	Demolition of 25 Greenhill View, Cowgate (Formerly the Harry Marsden Boxing Club)	Funding of the total expenditure amounting to £18,050 will be met from Continuing Demolitions Programme (part)	Blakelaw
11.	<b>Your Homes Newcastle</b> Breslin Sheila - YHN Head of Business Development	3/6/2009	Lift Improvements at Westgate Court	Funding of the total expenditure amounting to £35,936 will be met from Lifts Continuing Programme.	Westgate



## Property Committee

19 January 2009  
(5.00 pm – 6.00 pm)

### Present:

G Allison (Chair)

### Also Present:

W Bowman, W Drury, J Reid, R Renton, R Higgins, J McLaughlin and S Murphy (ex-officio)

### In Attendance:

S Breslin	- Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Business, YHN
J Vinton	- Investment Delivery Manager, YHN
N Scott	- Director of Tenancy Services, YHN
D Lanhorne	- Assets & Programme Manager YHN
J Henderson	- City Design
S Darroch	- Democratic Services, Newcastle City Council

## 9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from M O'Callaghan and J Common.

## 10 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2008

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of meeting held on 17 November 2008 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## 11 YHN CAPITAL PROGRAMME – JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT

Submitted: Report by Assets and Programme Manager and Finance Manager (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

The Committee was informed that the report reflected the financial position at the end of quarter to 2008/09. A number of issues were highlighted for the Committee's information as follows:-

- The projected deficit had decreased from £42.5m to £36.8m. Identified savings of £45.1m meant that there was a potential programme contingency of £7.3m (reduced from £11.4m at Q1), as a result of resource

reallocation. However, it was noted that £12m of planned expenditure in the final year of the programme remained unsecured.

- The Committee was referred to Table 2, Decency Performance. It had been expected that the first two quarters of 2008/09 would be slower in terms of packages completed and units made decent, as a result of the allocation of work to constructors following the 2007 benchmarking exercise. However, YHN was currently forecast to overachieve on energy efficiency target and be close to target on pace of completions.
- Delivery performance as set out in Table 4 was noted. It was agreed that constructor performance would be considered in more detail under item 5 of the agenda.
- Average unit cost of each package delivered had decreased from approximately £12,000 per package at the start of the programme to £9,750 per package at the end of quarter 2.
- The total average cost for each property in order to achieve overall decency by 2011/12 had now improved by £350.00 per property, as a result of an increase in the amount of average available budget per property.
- At the end of Q2, programme pace was at an average of 1,731 packages per quarter. This needed to increase only slightly to be on target and it was noted that Quarter 3 results indicated a better level of activity.
- Current programme excess funding for Non Decent Homes projects had increased from £5.1m to £9.1m and the opportunity may exist to vire some of these funds to the Decent Homes programme in due course.

The Chair thanked D Langhorne for the report, noting the positive progress being made.

At this point the Chair welcomed Steve Murphy, newly appointed chair of the YHN Board, to his first meeting of Property Committee.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received and comments noted.

## 12 **YHN INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

Submitted: Report by Investment Delivery Manager and Customer Care Manager (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

J Vinton presented the report which, set out customer satisfaction information on the Modern Homes programme for Quarter 3, 2008/09. The following key points were highlighted for the Committee's information:-

- At the last meeting the overall satisfaction level had been disappointing at 85% against the target of 90%. This had improved in Quarter 3 such that overall satisfaction was now at 87%. It was noted that within the quarter YHN had delivered more surveys relating to external than internal packages which may have contributed to the improvement in performance.
- At the previous meeting, concern had been expressed about YHN's use of the "neither happy or unhappy" question in customer satisfaction surveys, which was counted as a negative response in analysis. J Vinton noted that she had been advised that this approach was consistent with all survey work carried out by YHN. Work was also underway to consider the possibility of a range of questions to score overall satisfaction in order to more accurately understand and focus tenants responses. YHN was also working to improve the training for conducting telephone surveys. Consideration was also being given to reviewing delivery targets for the forthcoming year with the possibility of developing different targets for internal and external packages.
- The Committee was referred to Section 5.2 of the report which showed a breakdown of upheld formal complaints for Quarter 3 2008/09. It was confirmed that in relation to the three complaints relating to staff, these had concerned sub-contractors rather than YHN direct employees. Constructors had been informed and this matter had been addressed
- A number of complaints had been generated following the failure of constructors to leave calling cards when failing to gain entry for electrical testing. Follow-up letters had then been sent by YHN which had prompted complaints from tenants who had not been aware that a visit had been made.
- Key actions taken as a result of complaints received, included the incorporation of an explanatory paragraph in the first letter to tenants covered by a Scheme Allowance, to confirm when payment would be received.
- Key issues identified from survey returns were noted as shown in Appendix 1.
- A Committee member reported that anecdotal evidence he had received indicated that there were some concerns about a lack of respect being shown by FHM staff working on estates in the west end of the city. J Vinton noted that this had already been picked up with FHM, who had responded with an Action Plan. The problem was thought to have arisen because FHM had ramped up staffing levels but failed to support this with adequate training. It was also confirmed that data to be presented at the March meeting would demonstrate that this had impacted on the amount of internal works allocated to FHM under the recent benchmarking process.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received and comments noted.

13 **YHN PAINTING PROGRAMME 2009/10**

Submitted: Report by Asset and Programme Manager (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

D Langhorne introduced the report which set out the proposed programme for meeting YHN's objectives to carry out painting and pre-painting repairs over a five year programme. Historically, the cycle had been seven years due to budgetary constraints.

Moving forward the external programme would focus on painting estates where windows etc met Decent Homes standards. Internally, painting of communal areas would take place within groups of properties. All work would be prioritised according to time lapse since completion of the last painting programme.

The Committee was referred to Appendix 1 setting out the draft internal and external painting programme for 2009/10. It was noted that there would be one addition to the external programme in relation to pre-paint repairs and painting of estate 648, Hexham Avenue Duo-Slabs.

**RESOLVED-** That Property Committee accept the report and note the draft painting programme for 2009/10, subject to the addition of Estate 648 into the external painting programme.

14 **REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE JOINT PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE REPORT TO NOVEMBER 2008**

Submitted: Report by Contract Performance and Development Manager and Finance Manager (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

N Scott presented the report which provided information on the performance and current financial position of the Repairs and Maintenance contract for November 2008. The Committee was asked to comment and raise questions on any aspect of the report.

- Performance was measured across seventeen key performance indicators.
- Four areas were identified where in November, performance had not been met. These included jobs raised on emergency status; complaints responded to within ten days; ratio of expenditure over response to planned maintenance; and average number of days to issue gas warrants.
- The repairs and maintenance budget was currently forecast to achieve a £292,000 under spend, allowing for void capitalisation.

- A committee member raised a query in relation to the number of jobs raised on emergency status. He noted that there were only eighteen jobs raised during daytime and 1,634 raised out of hours and sought confirmation that this was correct. N Scott confirmed that this to be the case, as most of day time jobs were appointed. Of more concern was the number of jobs still being raised out of hours. It was confirmed that these covered a wide range of activities.
- Referring to the previous agenda item, a committee member noted that while he recognised that percentages could be misleading, in the west of the city only 50% of complaints received had been responded to within ten days. N Scott confirmed that only two complaints had actually been received in the period and YHN had failed to meet its target for one of these by one day.

It was noted that the 98% target for responding to complaints was high, which meant that it was difficult to consistently meet.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received and adopted.

## 15 **REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACT BUDGET UPDATE**

Submitted: Report by Director of Tenancy Services (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

N Scott presented this item. He confirmed that the report related only to work carried out by Citybuild. The Committee's attention was drawn to issues of concern in areas of increased expenditure as follows:-

- In relation to the Rapid Response service, a report was to be considered later on the agenda with proposals for that service.
- The cost of voids had dropped by 7% as a result of all void work now being progressed through the "One Stop Shop" route. However, overall cost of voids remained high.
- A review was underway to consider the impact of work carried out under the Modern Homes programme, on the Repairs and Maintenance service. Four property groups comprising between 1300 and 1800 properties each had been assessed during the six months prior to Modern Homes investment and six months after. In addition, the most recent six month period for each property group was also being analysed. This had identified a number of unusual trends including a continued increase in electrical and plumbing work. This was being investigated and a report would be brought back to the March meeting. At the year end, the position for the R&M budget was projected to be a £292,000 under-spend.
- A Working Group of YHN, Citybuild and City Design officers had been

established to investigate areas which had a significant bearing on R&M expenditure. A range of joint YHN/Citybuild recommendations had been produced which had been approved by YHN senior management team. These were noted as set out in Appendix 1. In particular, the Committee was asked to note changes to the authorisation limit for responsive repairs additional works from £500.00 to £300.00 per job. It was noted that this had already had a significant effect on expenditure with a 17% reduction in costs citywide.

Pre-inspection checking of all One Stop Shop voids had also resulted in a £24,000 saving.

The Officer Group was continuing to meet fortnightly and a report would be brought to the next meeting.

- In response to a query from the Chair, N Scott confirmed that the process of requiring YHN officers to be involved in more authorisations of repairs. was not resulting in a delay in service to tenants. Furthermore, KPI's were not being affected. YHN officers had given a commitment to respond to any required authorisations within 24 hours. In the event that this was not possible, the work would be carried out and the job evaluated when complete.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received and it be noted that a report would be brought to the March meeting on further outcomes from the Joint YHN/Citybuild Officer Working Group.

## 16 **RESPONSIVE REPAIRS, CATEGORIES AND TIMESCALES**

Submitted: Report by Director of Tenancy Services (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

N Scott presented the report, explaining that during Audit Commission inspection in June 2008 (which had resulted in the award of a three star rating), the Audit Commission had commented favourably on the general quality of the Repairs and Maintenance service. However, it had suggested that the number of repair categories had not been adequately analysed to ensure appropriate balance between customer focus and value for money. It recommended that YHN carry out further work to establish whether it could justify the level of cost arising from the provision of a prompt response service.

It was explained that the report therefore reviewed the current arrangements, examined the scope for a reduction in the number of repair categories and sought to assess whether it was possible to achieve improved value for money without compromising quality of service.

The following key points were then highlighted for the Committee's information:-

- The number of two and four hour emergencies was very small. On that basis, it was proposed to remove the two hour category which was rarely used and replace this with a single four hour response category.
- The current one, three, and seven day repair categories would be replaced by a seven day urgent repair category. In doing so, it was noted that within the urgent category of repair it was necessary to allow for Qualifying Repairs as defined within the Secure Tenants (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994.
- With regard to routine repairs it was noted that it was proposed to reduce the current time allowed to complete repairs in this category from 20 days to 15 days.
- N Scott explained that the Rapid Response Service was very popular, but given the inherent costs associated with delivering such a quick turn around, it was questionable whether this was a value for money service for tenants. It was also noted that other registered social landlords had achieved three star ranking without offering this repair category. Assessing the service against data and criteria put forward by the Audit Commission, YHN considered on balance that it was unlikely that the current Rapid Response Service represented full value for money. It was therefore proposed that this service should be removed.
- The Committee was also asked to note that it was proposed to alter the response times for batched repairs from within sixty days to within forty days.

N Scott confirmed that the planned changes to repair categories would be consulted on with tenants and leaseholders and in due course with Citybuild. In response to a query, N Scott confirmed that at this stage the Committee was simply being asked to agree the proposals as a set of principles for consultation. Once consultation had been carried out there would be a report back to Property Committee at the May meeting on the findings of the consultation exercise.

In response to a query from a Committee member, N Scott confirmed that where an emergency repair was reported late in the working day it would be passed to the Out of Hours Service.

**RESOLVED** – That:-

- (i) the changes in the repair categories and timescales as detailed in the report be agreed in principle; and
- (ii) YHN officers be instructed to carry out consultation with tenant leaseholder representatives on the proposals and report these results back to Property Committee; and

- (iii) that consultation also take place with Citybuild, on the implications of the proposed changes and a report be brought back to Property Committee on Citybuild's response, including any financial and service delivery performance implications.

## 17 **ANNUAL GAS SERVICING 2008/09**

Submitted: Report by Director of Tenancy Services (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

N Scott presented the report and explained that it set out the background for the introduction of the 46 week gas servicing programme.

Property Committee was asked to approve the retention of the 46 week gas servicing programme during 2009/10 and to agree to receive a report in March 2009 setting out service charges for the next financial years and efficiencies applicable in the current year.

N Scott explained that the report represented the position at week 42 of the 46 week cycle (to 7 December 2008).

The Committee was informed that there were currently 420 properties overdue a gas service and it was expected that the target of having zero outstanding properties by the end of the cycle is achievable.

N Scott noted that a comparison of the position at December 2007 with the position at December 2008 illustrated that in 2007 there were 2,541 outstanding properties compared with 565 in 2008. 2007 had subsequently required an intensive three month exercise to get access and carry out services in over 3,500 properties. This had been achieved but had represented a significant effort. By contrast in 2008 position there was now a much lower percentage of properties with services outstanding for more than one month.

N Scott noted that the Committee had previously queried and sought clarification on the £260,000 of additional costs associated with the introduction of the 46 week cycle. He confirmed that YHN was discussing with Citybuild potential financial adjustments under the contract.

A committee member noted that each year there seemed to be a persistent core of around 400 properties which remained outstanding and queried whether there was evidence to suggest that these tended to be the same group of tenants. N Scott confirmed that analysis indicated that this was not the case.

In response to a query from the Chair, N Scott confirmed that court costs were built into the overall budget. Two officers in the Property Maintenance Team were largely dedicated to exercising warrants and this team had recently been increased with the addition of one further officer.

A committee member noted that the Audit Commission had recently suggested that consideration be given to establishing Housing Management visits and queried whether this had been built into the process. He also asked whether a process map could be provided for the Committee's information. N Scott confirmed that he would produce a process map.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- (i) the Committee approve the retention of the 46 week servicing programme during 2009/10; and
- (ii) the Committee agree to receive a report in March 2009 setting out service charges for the next financial year and discount arrangements applying for the current year.

18 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – That the next meeting of YHN Property Committee take place on Monday 16 March 2009 at 5.00 pm at YHN House, Benton Road, Newcastle upon Tyne.

19 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – That the Press and Public be excluded during consideration of agenda item no. 13.

## Your Homes Newcastle Outer West and North Area Board

19 January 2009

(5.30 pm – 6.15 pm)

### **Present:**

I Laverick (In the Chair)

K Best, M Brennan and A Lough

### **In Attendance:**

M Morris	- Your Homes Newcastle
S Freed	- Your Homes Newcastle
D Lawson	- Your Homes Newcastle
I Scott	- Your Homes Newcastle
R Smithson	- Democratic Services

## 66. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from G Allison, M Lynch, G Pattison, J Foley and B Drury.

## 67. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2008**

The minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **Matters Arising:-**

#### **(a) Newbiggin Hall Gating Scheme**

M Morris highlighted that he had spoken to the City Council officer responsible and a report would be going to the Councils Planning and Transport Committee in March 2009. Following this meeting the appropriate delegated powers would be in place to move forward with this.

#### **(b) Review of Area Boards**

M Morris highlighted that the time limited committee was still in place and has received comments and information from the various Area Boards, including information from the SWOT analysis carried out at the last meeting. It was

anticipated that there would be recommendations following the meeting of the Time Limited Committee in March 2009.

## 68. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING**

Submitted: Report by Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Business (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

M Morris outlined the report as attached. It was noted that in October and November 2008 targets had been exceeded for:-

- Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance.
- Satisfaction with investment programme.
- Number of void properties available to let.

Targets had not been achieved, but were heading in the right direction for:-

- Programmed investment packages delivered.
- Reduction in rent arrears.
- Average void re-let time.
- Number of homes made decent.

Targets had not been achieved for:-

- Cases referred to HASBET and dealt with within the timescale set.

On satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service, M Morris highlighted that the high satisfaction results were based on over 8,000 repairs carried out during the period with 1,500 people giving feedback.

On satisfaction with the investment programme, S Freed was pleased to comment on the good results. However, as she had mentioned previously, the results were affected substantially by whether internal or external packages of work had taken place during the period.

On programme and investment packages delivered, it was noted that the performance was heading in the right direction with confidence that by the year end, targets would be achieved.

On the number of homes made decent, direction of travel was up and there was confidence the target would be met by the end of the year due to the length of the

programme.

On voids re-let time, it was noted that although the target was not being achieved, performance was improving with the length of time from the Outer West down from 50.2 days to 41.7 days.

On voids properties available to let, it was noted that performance was on target and heading in the right direction. M Morris highlighted that there were now only 78 voids in the Outer West area and this was creating new challenges for the team in regard to managing people's expectations.

On reduction in the rent arrears, it was noted that performance was heading in the right direction and corrective action had been taken to improve performance including

- Refresher training for all officers involved in arrears recovery.
- A Citywide promotional campaign to address the wider impact of the economic downturn for increasing benefit take up and offering advice on budgeting to tenants.

On the poor performance for the percentage of cases referred to HASBET within the timescales, M Morris explained that this was due to the low number of cases which was 14. One case had not been responded to quickly due to an IT error, this had disproportionately affected the percentage performance.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received for information.

## 69. **SERVICE STANDARD MONITORING**

Submitted: Report by Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Business (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

M Morris outlined the report as attached. In October and November 2008, the leasehold services adaptations and advice and support team services were monitored.

On the leasehold service standards, all standards were green except for the standard "we'll invite you to a leaseholder's forum once a year." M Morris informed the Board that the Forum was planned to take place this financial year.

On the adaptations service standards, all were green except for the standard "send a welcome letter to 100% of new adaptation service users within 28 days of referral being received by the adaptations team during 2008/09." It was explained that welcome letters were sent out to 175 new adaptation service users within 28 days. In quarter two, two letters were not sent due to a change in referral arrangements.

M Morris noted the 95% satisfaction rate from customers and felt this was a fact that YHN staff should be proud of.

The standards for the advice and support service were all green.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received for information.

## 70. **MODERN HOMES STANDARD INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**

Submitted: Report by Area Investment Manager (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

S Freed outlined the report as attached.

She outlined the new start in the Outer West and North area, including amongst others:-

- Estate 407 Church Road Estate low rise with external improvements to 33 units.
- Estate 412 Dinnington Aireys for internal improvement 36 units.

S Freed highlighted a particular piece of work to the Investment Delivery Team and was particularly enthusiastic about carrying out. These were bungalows in South Gosforth, originally built in 1946. Extra care would need to be taken due to the age of the residents and the state of the properties concerned. However, they were confident in taking this project forward.

In response to a member's question, S Freed explained that the properties were near Hyde Terrace. The Chair asked if a site visit could be arranged during the work. M Morris highlighted that this might be an inappropriate time of year due to the short hours of daylight currently, but he would be glad to arrange it later in the year.

S Freed went on to outline the completions, amongst these were included:-

- Estate 331 Kenton Bar Houses with external work to 220 units.
- Estate 340 Montagu bungalows with external work to 81 units completed.

S Freed also went on to outline benchmarking issues. The exercise to benchmark the performance on the construction partners delivering the Modern Homes Programmes was nearing completion and this exercise involved reviewing the cost and quality of each construction partner and would determine the level of financial allocation for the proposed 2009/10 programme. Details of the outcome of this review and the proposed 2009/10 programme would be available at the next Area

Board.

S Freed highlighted the customer service data on page 46 of the agenda which showed 100% satisfaction for all areas except Throckley Central which had a 94% satisfaction rate. A member highlighted that she found this breakdown of customer survey data useful and would like to see it broken down further into internal and external works.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received for information.

**71. AREA PROJECT FUND**

Submitted: Report by M Morris (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

M Morris outlined the report as attached. He highlighted appendix 1 with the allocated revenue and capital budget available. Of the £233,600 budget, £229,465 had been allocated, although there was £4,000 still available, it was felt prudent not to commit this due to the fact that some projects had not completed the final tendering process.

M Morris highlighted that from the next meeting onwards, he would appreciate any suggestions from members for schemes for the next financial year.

A member raised a concern over the car park next to Beaumont House with cars still being parked too close to the pavement, forcing elderly residents to walk on the grass verges. M Morris agreed to look into this. The Chair highlighted that from February 2009 the Council would be able to deal directly with some parking offences, although obstruction issues would still fall within Northumbria Police's remit.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received for information.

**72. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would take place on 9 March 2009 at 5.30 pm.

## Inner West Area Board

20 January 2009  
(5.30 pm – 6.15 pm)

### Present:

G Knox  
(In the Chair)

A Morris

P Stafford

M Adjei-Mensah

### In Attendance:

S Bagnall - Your Homes Newcastle

K Bryant - Your Homes Newcastle

P Moody - Democratic Services

### 1. QUORUM

It was noted that there was no quorum for the meeting.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Renton, James and Stephenson.

### 3. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 11 November 2008 were approved as a correct record.

### Matters Arising:-

#### (a) Review of Area Board - Tenant Members

In response to a question it was indicated that there was no further information at this stage.

**(b) Performance Management and Monitoring**

With regard to the information requested at the last meeting the following information was given:-

- At the end of 2008 there were 2,273 customers on the housing waiting list.
- There were 654 transfer applications
- There were 1,618 on the register
- There were 17 homeless priorities
- There were 32 medical priorities

**4. MODERN HOMES STANDARD INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2008/9**

The report of the Area Investment Manager was introduced by S Bagnall.

Reference was made to the following issues:-

- Programme – A recent review of the programme had been carried out so as to achieve the desired spending in the current and future years. A large proportion of schemes were on site in the Inner West.
- Estate 140 – Rye Hill East (Summerhill) – This was still awaiting planning permission and listed building consent.
- Estate 224 – Queens Court – This scheme was currently on programme despite a number of problems which had occurred.
- Estate 1141 – Cruddas Park High Rise Flats – This had started on site in December 2008. It was expected the works would be completed in 2010.
- Ashfield Close – The scheme to convert 4 bed-sits into 2 three bed roomed houses was completed.
- 8 schemes were listed as being completed and it was indicated that the customer satisfaction reports would be fed into the next meeting.

- Estate 230 – Slatyford No Fines – This was a large scheme with 250 properties in 10 blocks.
- Customer Satisfaction – The overall average customer satisfaction in the Inner West area from the surveys completed in October and November was 84% which was less than the target. It was indicated significant work had been done to attempt to improve the quality of the customer satisfaction results. Extra teams had been brought into the area. It was hoped that a lot of issues had been resolved. This initiative would continue and it was hoped that the situation would improve.

## 5. **BENCHMARKING**

An update was given on a benchmarking exercise which had been carried out and on the effect on the main contractors who would be carrying out works in the area. In particular reference was made to FHM, Straightline, Kendall Cross and Turney Wylde.

It was queried whether the system for allocating works was driving costs down and in answer to this it was indicated that it was and in particular some contracts had achieved good prices.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

## 6. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING**

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Business was introduced by K Bryant.

Reference was made to the following aspects:-

- Of the 8 target areas the summary indicated that 6 had a red traffic light. In respect of the 6 the performance trend for 3 was upwards, and for the other 3 it was downwards.
- Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance – performance against target was good although the direction of travel was downwards.
- Satisfaction with the investment programme – the performance against target showed a red traffic light and the direction of travel was downwards. In this connection it was felt that two schemes by a particular contractor may have affected the outcome. The next report may reveal an improvement.
- Programmed investment packages delivered – the performance against target had a red traffic light and the direction of travel was upwards. It was

noted that no corrective action was required as performance was determined by the programme identified by contractors. In addition the commencement of several schemes had been delayed whilst planning issues were resolved.

- The number of homes made decent – the performance against target showed a red traffic light and the direction of travel was upwards. It was indicated that performance was only slightly off the target and this was linked to work with partners for example Warm Zone. Attempts were being made to address several issues with Warm Zone.
- Voids relet time – the performance against target showed a red traffic light and the direction of travel was upwards. It was commented that the relet time had now moved down to 41 days which was still over the target.
- It was queried whether there were many long term void properties in the area and it was answered that there were a few in Cruddas Park. The situation of these properties was routinely considered at officer meetings.
- Number of void properties available to let – the performance against target showed a green traffic light and the direction of travel was upwards. It was commented that despite the good figures there were difficulties where the demand was for 3 and 4 bedroomed properties.
- Reduction in rent arrears – performance against target showed a red traffic light and the direction of travel was downwards. Reference was made to the corrective action being undertaken and it was felt that the yearly target may be obtained.
- % of cases referred to HASBET within the timescales – the performance against target showed a red traffic light and the direction of travel was downwards. It was commented that during the period in question, there had been 7 referrals to HASBET and there had been one case which had not met the timescale.

## **7. SERVICE STANDARD MONITORING**

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Business was introduced by K Bryant.

- Service Standards – leasehold – It was noted that there were three green traffic lights and one amber. The amber traffic light related to the Leaseholders Forum and a meeting of that group was planned to take place next year.
- Service Standards – Adaptations. There were 2 green traffic lights and 1 amber.
- Service Standards – Advice and Support. There were 4 green traffic lights.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be on Tuesday, 10 March 2009 at 5.30 pm.

## Your Homes Newcastle – Area Board East

22 January 2009

(5.00 pm – 6.00 pm)

### Present:

D Besag

C Harvey

H Warren

I Johnson

### In Attendance:

T Healy - Your Homes Newcastle

A Todd-Mills - Your Homes Newcastle

I Stearman - Democratic Services, Newcastle City Council

## 1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

**RESOLVED** – That C Harvey be appointed as Chair for this meeting.

## 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from R Harral, G Kane, V Dunn and D Warman.

## 3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### Matters Arising:-

#### (a) Performance Management and Monitoring – Satisfaction with Investment Programme

(Minute no. 3 (c) refers).

A member referred to the figures relating to Daisy Hill and asked for an explanation

why the customer satisfaction was so low (53% which was some 20% lower than average). It was explained that there were a number of factors, the key was that the quality of work in phase one was below standard. This was due to the original electrical installer. However, following the appointment of a new Project Team Leader there was a substantial improvement and the customer surveys were now more positive.

**(b) Modern Homes Standard Investment Programme 2008/09**

(Minute no. 5 refers).

It was reported that English Heritage had indicated that they were happy with the pilot property with timber windows and therefore work could commence on the three schemes under the programme within the Byker Estate.

**(c) Raby Street**

(Minute no. 7 refers).

The meeting was updated on the plans to increase the size of the units in Avondale House to make them more attractive. It was stressed that it was still at the feasibility stage and that a significant number of voids still existed.

In response to a question from a member on the demand for better quality sheltered accommodation, T Healy confirmed that a good location was paramount. Byker currently provided five sheltered housing accommodation schemes, over 6% of the City provision, and if funding was available for conversion, they could be more attractive and therefore be more in demand.

**(d) Walker Riverside**

(Minute no. 7 refers).

A report would be presented to the Board's next meeting in relation to the situation at Walker Riverside.

**4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING**

Submitted: Report by the Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Business (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

T Healy introduced the report which provided information in performance targets reported to this Area Board. The following comments were made:-

**(a) Satisfaction with Repairs and Maintenance Service**

The East End performance with regard to satisfaction with repairs and

maintenance was 96% which was slightly higher than the Citywide average. This indicator tends to fluctuate, but over the last four periods, it had been consistently above target.

**(b) Satisfaction with Investment Programme**

Satisfaction with the Investment Programme continued to rise and again was just above the Citywide average performance.

**(c) Programmed Investment Packages Delivered**

It was noted that this performance was significantly above target. For example, the community total so far this year was 2,133 Programmed Investment Packages delivered which exceeded the cumulative target of £1,714 packages delivered.

**(d) The Number of Homes made Decent**

The number of homes which reached the Decent Standard was just above target, but lower than the City average. However, a surge in the number of homes being made decent was expected in the coming months.

**(e) Voids Re-Let Time**

Repairs to properties were being targeted during the notice of termination period. When properties became vacant there was less repair work to be done meaning that they were re-let more quickly. This was now being done across the whole East End and it was continuing to reduce the re-let time month by month. However, despite this, there was evidence of a plateau effect and therefore staff were looking at ways to drive forward further improvements.

**(f) The Number of Void Properties Available to Let**

The number of empty properties had increased slightly, but was still well below reduction target. This figure was in line with the general trend of production, although in the previous period it was exceptionally low. Staff were advertising properties in advance of completion of the repairs and in notice of termination period. Reductions in voids had helped to reduce rental loss but voids were becoming so low now in the East End (particularly houses) that it was becoming difficult to house the volume of cases with priorities quickly. The average number of void properties available to let fluctuated between 78 and 87.

**(g) Reduction in Rent Arrears**

Over the last three periods, rent arrears had stabilised and reduced. In the light of an economic downturn, difficulties were anticipated and the position would be clearer in February 2009 when figures would be available. It was anticipated that roadshows would be carried out offering financial help and support to those affected by the downturn. Additional advice and support would be needed as the

downturn bites harder.

(h) **Percentage of Cases referred to HASBET**

The target had been achieved in the East End and ways of achieving even better performance was being investigated. In particular, good practice in other areas was being examined.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received.

5. **SERVICE STANDARD MONITORING**

Submitted: Report by the Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Business (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

T Healy introduced the report which detailed performance against service standards for leasehold adaptations and advice and support.

All targets had been met except in the case of two which were currently amber. One of these related to the establishment of a leaseholders forum once a year and plans were in hand to arrange this for next year. The other amber related to the issue of welcome letters to new adaptation service users within 28 days of a referral being received. This was achieved in respect of all but two users whose letter was not sent due to a change in referral arrangements.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received.

6. **MODERN HOMES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2008/09**

Submitted: Report by the Area Investment Manager (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

A Todd-Mills introduced the report which set out progress on the Modern Homes Programme to December 2008 and key achievements of the Modern Homes Programme between November and December 2008 and provided an update of the key issues effecting the delivery of the Modern Homes Programme.

Following the Christmas and New Year break all work on sites was progressing satisfactorily and overall targets were met or exceeded in many cases.

The results of recent customer satisfaction surveys showed that the overall average customer satisfaction in the East End was 94% which compared favourably with the Citywide average of 92% satisfaction.

In relation to internal improvement work to homes at Avistone Gardens, an exercise was being carried out on the cost and quality of the work and a report would be brought to the Area Board's next meeting.

As indicated at the Area Board's last meeting, English Heritage had been asked to review the specification of the Modern Homes windows in Byker. As a result, English Heritage had agreed the specification for the low rise windows to be changed to timber.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received.

## Finance Committee

12 February 2009  
(3.00 pm – 3.55 pm)

### Present:

R Harral  
(In the Chair)

G Allison

W Bowman

J Cuthbertson

A Mirza

M O'Callaghan

### Also Present:

J Reid - Board Member

J McLaughlin - Board Member

### In Attendance:

R Atkinson - Director of Finance and Resources

A Lister - Finance Manager – Financial Business Support

C Nicholson - Finance Manager – Procurement and Payments

H Garbutt - Concierge Service Manager

M Burn - Head of Support & Care

G Ellingham - IT Manager

J Hussain - Newcastle City Council

A Hickey - Manager – Administration

J Miller - Democratic Services

## 30 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from D Slesenger.

## 31. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

**RESOLVED** – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item:-

### Concierge Service Review Interim Report

## 33 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair explained that he had requested that in future an action list be produced at each meeting, this would be on the agenda for the following meeting and items removed as they were completed (as had also been agreed for Audit Committee).

It was agreed that the following items from the January meeting be added to the action list.

- (i) Responsive Repairs System – Report on review of Response Repairs Systems. N Scott – May 2009
- (ii) Cashiering SLA Update on SLA discussions. A Crute – March 2009
- (iii) Indication to be provided on percentage of overall debt burden represented by those tenants who paid monthly, but because of when they paid were always in arrears. R Atkinson/N Scott.
- (iv) Investment Panel – Management Team to report to Finance Committee by exception depending on magnitude of financial impact. R Atkinson as and when required.
- (v) Forecast Column – To be incorporated in report. YHN officers with immediate effect.
- (vi) IT Strategy – Finance Committee to see contract/SLA before it was signed. G Ellingham.

### **Matters Arising:-**

#### **(a) Management Fee**

(Minute No. 26 refers)

It was noted that the City Treasurer had agree the increased Management Fee. There may be a change to the way the Management Fee was shown in future.

(b) **Provision in the Accounts for Cost of Holiday that had not been used**

(Minute No. 26 refers)

A Lister reported that it had been agreed to make provision of £500,000 in the accounts for the cost for holiday that staff had not used.

34. **YHN CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT**

Submitted: Report by Assets and Programme Manager and Finance Manager (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

It was noted that this would be the last time the Committee would receive this report due to changes in the Committee structure.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be accepted as an ongoing update on performance.

35 **YHN CAPITAL PROGRAMME MOVEMENTS**

Submitted: Report by Finance Manager – Financial Business Support (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

A Listed introduced the report which detailed movements totalling (£6,308k) in the 2008/09 YHN Capital Programme following the review of programme with Project Officers.

**RESOLVED** – That the movements detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

36. **QUARTERLY RIGHT TO BUY UPDATE**

Submitted: Report by Manager, Central Services (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

P Hickey introduced the report which provided a half year update on right to buy. He commented that there was no change in the market conditions and right to buy sales were continuing at a significantly lower level than in the previous year. He drew members attention to the repurchase of a former Council house.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received.

37

## **CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY UPDATE AND PROGRESS**

Submitted: Report by Finance Manager – Procurement and Payments (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

C Nicholson circulated an updated report (copy attached to Official Minutes) and introduced the report which provided an update on the Corporate Procurement Strategy Action Plan together with a general procurement progress summary. The updated report provided an estimate of the potential financial impact of slippage on some of the procurements. He added a caveat that the savings in the report were based on assumed 10% savings on the initial budget. Discussions were still being held with individual service managers to see if all the savings were reasonable and achievable in the timescale.

The Chair requested that in future, reports of financial target reductions be shown in a forecast column.

In response to a member's query regarding the potential impact of the current economic climate on procurement, C Nicholson commented that recently there had been an increase in inquiries on tender opportunities, especially from local organisations. He also referred to the use of harmonised documentation as an attempt to simplify the procurement process and an initiative to pay smaller suppliers within 10 days to try and stimulate the economy.

**RESOLVED** – That the update report be received.

38

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2008-2009**

Submitted: Report by Director of Finance and Resources (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

It was agreed that detailed consideration of the workplan be deferred at this stage until the outcome of the review of the Committee structure was finalised.

It was noted that the Repairs and Maintenance Finance and Performance Monitoring Report and Contract Budget Issues Update would not be submitted to Finance Committee in March as these would no longer be submitted to the Committee.

It was agreed that a discussion be held at the next meeting on what the members wanted at future training sessions which would now be held as separate events as agreed at the previous meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That the workplan be noted but further consideration be deferred until the outcome of the changes to the Committee Structure had been finalised. .