



Your Homes
Newcastle

Delivery Plan 2006/07

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Mission Statement

The mission for Your Homes Newcastle is:

To deliver excellent services and modern homes that people want to live in.

Your Homes Newcastle will:

- Invest to deliver modern homes and safe and attractive neighbourhoods
- Deliver excellent housing management through local offices and staff who place tenants and leaseholders at the heart of their work and
 - respond to local needs
 - meet the diverse needs of the communities of Newcastle
 - meet service standards that have been set in partnership with tenants and leaseholders
- Explore new and innovative ways of delivering services
- Support independent living

Our work will be underpinned by the following principles:

- Involving tenants and leaseholders
- Providing choice based on tenants' and leaseholders' wishes
- Ensuring equality and recognising diversity
- Valuing and developing our staff to deliver excellent services
- Making the best use of our resources
- Being open and accountable
- Working in partnership to achieve more than we can alone

Foreword from Bill Midgley, Chair of Your Homes Newcastle

2006 is well underway and Your Homes Newcastle is taking time to look back over another busy year, in preparation for the one ahead.

One thing that struck me immediately as I read the list of our achievements for 2005/06 was that this is not an organisation that took its foot off the pedal when the Audit Commission gave us the coveted 'two star' rating at the beginning of 2005. Far from it, in fact. The amount of activity that is reported in this plan shows that Your Homes Newcastle is constantly striving for excellence and continuous improvement.

Obviously the fact that contractors are visible on so many sites across Newcastle, signals a successful start to the modern homes programme. Similarly the retention of Charter Marks and the addition of some new ones demonstrate our genuine commitment to customer service. Customers in Walker and Kenton can now access services in impressive new premises; while a previously neglected corner of our customer base, vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds, can look forward to improved services with the adoption of 'Inline' and the agreement to take on 'Stepping Stones'.

Not everything has gone smoothly however. We have not achieved our targets on rent arrears or empty properties, two key areas of core business. Our sickness levels are still much higher than they should be. Over the following year our committees will be scrutinising activity to improve performance and looking at what can be learnt from other organisations.

Looking ahead we face some challenges alongside exciting opportunities.

In our aspiration for three stars we know that certain issues are critical to the business this year. The delivery of the huge investment programme to provide modern homes is of course at the heart of our activity. The mobilisation of the new repairs and maintenance contract, ensuring that it brings about the efficiencies and service improvements that we want to see, is crucial too. This year we also need to start to implement the changes identified throughout the housing management review to develop an excellent service that gives our tenants value for money.

In addition, reflecting the changing world that we operate in, the Board will be giving more thought to the long-term shape of the business, providing more clarity to all our stakeholders about the services we want to develop and how we intend to ensure our financial viability for the good of our customers. If there are any viable opportunities for the provision of new affordable housing we will be exploring and evaluating them jointly with the City Council, keeping an eye out for any potential 'quick wins' on the way.

All of these add up to another ambitious year ahead which will need to be supported by responsive and supportive IT, human resources and organisational development work.

This year's Delivery Plan has been developed with more consultation than ever before, in the spirit of working towards the Investors in People award. It is also becoming more closely aligned to our financial planning processes and the way in which we pull together plans to meet the organisation's learning and development needs.

For the first time we have amalgamated this with the service plan and a summary of the service improvement programme. We want our stakeholders to look in one place to see what we stand for and what we are trying to achieve.

Many thanks to the staff and the Board members who continue to work hard to achieve our goals, and thanks too to the tenants and leaseholders who participate to keep us on the right track. Also, I do not want to forget our partners at the City Council and elsewhere as we look forward to another productive year working together for the benefit of our customers.

Introduction

This, our third Delivery Plan, sets out what Your Homes Newcastle intends to achieve in 2006/07, not only in terms of key challenges and performance improvement, but also highlighting significant projects and actions that will help to take us forward.

The Delivery Plan provides a summary guide to the strategic context that we are working in, recognising that real success means contributing to wider goals for the city, often achieved in partnership with others.

We are also now beginning to look beyond 2010 to develop clarity about the type of organisation that we want YHN to be, and to understand the issues that will affect our long term business sustainability. The Board have begun to explore these issues and will continue to do so through the year.

Simply put, this plan sets out what we are trying to achieve and how we will measure our success. It tells you:

- How well we did in terms of delivering last year's objectives and targets and where we need to improve
- What kind of organisation we want to be in 2010 and beyond
- What we want to achieve in 2006/07
- How the City Council, tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders can measure our performance
- What the links are with other plans both external and internal to Your Homes Newcastle
- How YHN will work together with others
- How we are refining our approach to performance management and delivery planning

The targets and actions in the plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Board as part of this annual planning cycle in partnership with tenants and the City Council. In this way the Board and stakeholders can be confident that Your Homes Newcastle is working towards its mission of providing excellent services and modern homes that people want to live in, while at the same time contributing to the Newcastle Partnership's vision of Newcastle as a Great North City.

Context – Newcastle and Your Homes Newcastle

As a company that is wholly owned by Newcastle City Council, Your Homes Newcastle has a key contribution to make to the regeneration of the City. The Newcastle Partnership's vision sees housing as integral to a modern European city, especially relevant to 'a welcoming built environment' promoting 'housing, health and well-being...inclusion and equality'.

The City Council is developing a Regeneration Strategy that will continue these themes and the Housing Strategy (due June 2006) will expand on the role that housing of all tenures will play.

Council housing is an important element in the life and structure of the City. A high proportion of the City's population lives in Council housing; 28 percent compared to a national average of only 13 percent.

Your Homes Newcastle was created on 1 April 2004 to manage around 32,000 tenanted and over 1,000 leasehold homes on behalf of Newcastle City Council. A good 'two star' rating from the Audit Commission set us on track to unlock £348 million that we had bid for in order to refurbish our stock to a modern standard. We received a first tranche of £64 million for our capital programme and in March 2006 received the second tranche, a further £126.8m to take us to March 31, 2008.

Governance

The Board that runs Your Homes Newcastle is made up of 18 people:

- Six tenants, elected by tenants and leaseholders
- Six Council nominees
- Six independent people, chosen by the other two groups for the additional skills and experience they bring to running a large housing organisation

The Board:

- Provides strategic leadership to the whole of Your Homes Newcastle
- Is legally responsible for the organisation and answerable to both the Council and tenants for its activities
- Sets the budget and performance standards, monitoring and reviewing the organisation's activities

In addition to the main board there are also three Area Boards, covering the east, inner west and outer west/north of the City. These boards of fifteen people in the east and outer west north, twelve in the inner west (reflecting the smaller number of homes in the area) have the same composition as the main Board: one third tenants, one third Council nominees and one third independent people. They

have a key role in monitoring local performance, facilitating local tenant participation and interfacing with other area-based organisations and initiatives.

Key Partnerships

The interface with the City Council is also an important element in the overall governance structure of the organisation and of key strategic significance. This relationship operates at a number of different levels, and will continue to evolve over time.

The relationship is captured and articulated in a number of different ways:

- The Service Agreement – the formal agreement that sets out the context within which the Council has delegated its responsibilities to Your Homes Newcastle
- The Annual Delivery Plan - contains at the higher level some of the key interfaces between the two organisations, including regular meetings between our Chair and the Council's relevant Executive Members, delivery plan monitoring and officer liaison meetings and section 151 reporting, reflecting our management of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) on behalf of the Council
- Protocols – setting out the relationship at an operational level across the very wide range of interfaces between the two organisations, from lettings and homelessness to housing benefits and regeneration
- Service Level Agreements – detailing the services that Your Homes Newcastle purchases from the Council and the regular monitoring and liaison required to manage the delivery of these services

While the relationship with the City Council is of key strategic importance to us, we work in partnership with a large number of organisations, at a local and citywide level. Key relationships include:

- Newcastle Tenants' Federation – the umbrella organisation representing over 80 affiliated tenants' groups across the City
- Northumbria Police – working together at a local level as well as in an innovative central anti-social behaviour team
- The Voluntary Sector – a wide range of contacts, supporting communities, providing advice and support and other services to local people.

Your Homes Newcastle is also a member and part of a wide range of diverse and extensive partnership areas, including the City's housing partnership, health partnership and community safety partnerships, to name but a very few. These reflect the relative size and importance of Council housing within the City and the scale of interdependencies that exist between social housing and so many other aspects of communities' lives.

Balanced Scorecard 2005/06

The Balanced scorecard is at the heart of our approach to performance management and is designed to show at-a-glance how we performed across all of our strategic objectives last year. This way of monitoring performance was developed to prevent consideration being given to one area of the business at the expense of the others.

The diagram below shows the performance that we are predicting for the end of the year (31 March) for the measures in the balanced scorecard. The traffic lights show whether targets will have been achieved (green) or missed (red). Where the results are amber this means that we were close to hitting the target set.

This scorecard is designed to give a focused snapshot of our performance. By demonstrating that we are doing well in these key measures we can give our stakeholders assurance that we are on track to achieve our strategic objectives.

To deliver excellent services and modern homes that people want to live in...

- **Delivering excellent services**
- **Delivering modern homes**
- **Achieve a better balance between supply and demand for council housing**
- **Run ourselves well**
- **Increase choice and expand our business**
- **Be responsible to the community**
- **Be recognised as customer-focused organisation**

Your Homes Newcastle, Balanced Scorecard 2005/06 – how we performed

Excellent Services & Customer Focus

1. Implement all Audit Commission inspection recommendations identified for 2005/06 by 31/03/06.
2. Achieve Charter Mark for two services by 31/03/06.
3. Identify and implement 2 new opportunities for tenant participation for hard to hear groups by 31/03/06.
4. Achieve 74% tenant satisfaction with the overall service and 65% satisfaction with opportunities for participation by 31/03/06.
5. Overall achievement of 90% of the service standards by 31/03/06.
6. Achieve 90% customer satisfaction with the overall repairs & maintenance service by 31/03/06.
7. Complete a customer satisfaction survey of the Leasehold Service by 31/03/06.

Modern Homes - Balanced Supply and Demand

1. A 1.85% change (630 homes) in the proportion of non decent homes between 01/04/06 and 01/04/06.
2. Achieve an average energy rating of SAP 59 for our properties by 31/03/06.
3. Reduce lettable voids by 10% (110 voids) by 31/03/06.
4. Agree the Asset Management Strategy by 31/03/06.
5. Select a provider under new contract arrangements for the Repairs & Maintenance Service by 31/12/05.
6. Complete the 2005/06 YHN stage two reviews by 31/12/05.
7. Deliver secure by design improvements to 3,000 homes by 31/03/06.
8. Achieve 87% customer satisfaction with the investment programme by 31/03/06.

Responsibility to the Community Expanded Choice

1. Develop a corporate strategy for EMAS by 31/03/06.
2. Develop a YHN gardening service specification and menu of options by 31/03/06.
3. Achieve external validation against Level Three of Local Government Equalities Standard by 31/12/05.
4. Invest £2.8m of the adaptations programme and adapt over 640 homes by 31/03/06.
5. Establish a baseline of customer satisfaction with the overall HASBET service by 31/03/06.
6. Commence investigation of all racist incidents referred to HASBET through the ARCH reporting mechanism within one working day.
7. In Conjunction with our partners, revise our procedures for tenants faced with eviction by 30/09/05.

Running Ourselves Well

1. All main YHN board members to be appraised by 31/03/06.
2. Achieve an HRA Balance of £3 million by 31/03/06.
3. Reduction of sickness to 10.20 days per FTE by 31/03/06.
4. Complete review of the Housing Management Service by 30/09/05.
5. Restructure Supporting People funding according to changing priorities by 30/11/05.
6. Delivery of the Representative Workforce action plan 2005/06 targets by 31/03/06.
7. Review the debt recovery element of the Exchequer SLA by 30/09/05.
8. Introduce electronic lone worker monitoring by 31/03/06.
9. Achieve first year of project plan for Investors in People accreditation for YHN by 31/03/06.
10. Reduce net rent arrears by 16% by 31/03/06.

Achievements from 2005/06

Administration

- Developed and implemented the working report for complaints to improve the response rate against target
- Full review of YHN Uniforms, followed by centralisation of the contract for provision of uniforms to 585 staff
- Review of all Potential Risk Indicators across YHN, entry onto the SX3 system and annual review process put into place

Advice and support

- Received a good Quality Assessment Framework review from Supporting People
- Our support planning process and our job specific induction for new staff were highlighted as examples of excellent practice by Supporting People
- Raised over £450,000 in welfare benefits in 2005/06
- Accessed over £68,336 in charitable funds so that tenants could furnish their homes from 1 January 2005 – 1 January 2006
- Provided a service to 1205 prospective and current tenants from 1 January 2005 – 1 January 2006, including 148 refugees through the Move On Advice and Support Workers
- Began a joint partnership benefit take up campaign with the Department for Works and Pensions to enable pensioners to access benefits by running benefit take up coffee mornings in sheltered schemes
- Revised our customer satisfaction surveys
- Established two new drop-in sessions for refugees
- Raised £12,000 from Greggs, £4,000 from Ecclesiastic sources and £68,000 in charitable funds for our customers
- Developed new partnerships with the Newcastle Literacy Trust, Marks and Spencers Ready to Work scheme and CVS
- Held awareness-raising sessions with NECA and the unaccompanied minors team

Assets and programming

- Prepared the YHN Investment Programme including external and structural improvements, internal and amenity improvements, energy efficiency for the Decent Homes Standard
- Programmed work for Modern Homes, landlord services, meeting special needs, demolition and redevelopment, office accommodation, repair and maintenance of council housing
- Managed the costs involved in YHN investment delivery

- Analysed asset management and business planning information
- Monitored and managed the painting programme
- Programme monitoring of all non-decent homes work
- Developing managing and providing information.

Asylum Seekers Unit

- Achieved Charter Mark for excellent customer service
- Shortlisted for national Public Servant award
- Awarded new NASS contract
- Successfully concluded services on interim and dis-benefited scheme
- Improved feedback from service users informing service delivery
- Delivered opportunities for events and outings to promote community cohesion
- Improved literature
- Held training and awareness raising sessions to around 300 people
- Produced a DVD called 'True Lives' in conjunction with our clients
- Signed off the achievement of the 90 actions in our Best Value Service Improvement Plan
- Website development (including translated pages)
- Delivered grant aid to 23 organisations
- Developed SLA with Social Services
- Re-launched ASU newsletters
- Re-designed the welcome pack for new households
- Following an appeal, distributed 700 Christmas presents to clients
- Organised successful integration events for Refugee Week and International Women's Day
- With Warmzone, assessed all ASU properties for energy efficiency.

CCAS (Community Care Alarm Service)

- Retained the Charter Mark award
- Introduced telecare citywide
- Introduced recycling to all sheltered schemes
- Produced a Business Plan for the service
- Operated a 24 hour anti-social behaviour reporting line
- Contributed to an options appraisal for sheltered housing
- Completed a service standard review
- Completed a Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework
- Completed individual client support plans
- Ensured that action on Audit Commission recommendations are on target
- Contributed to the option appraisal on sheltered housing stock.

Communication and Involvement

- Reviewed the Citywide Tenant Participation Compact and implemented the 2005/06 Compact action plan
- Set up and piloted mystery shopping with hard-to-hear groups
- Established service user workshops
- Developed the work of the Leaseholder Steering Group
- Supported YHN's Housing Management Review
- Reviewed format and production of and produced four editions of Homes + People
- Set up a tenant and leaseholder editorial group for Homes + People
- Developed Modern Homes information pack and DVD
- Developed a range of portable generic display equipment available to all YHN staff teams
- Held hard to hear focus groups

Concierge

- Participated in an extensive learning and development programme including NVQ Level 2 in Cleaning and Support Services, CCTV Management Software, Video Tracking Administration System, Drug and Alcohol Awareness Training, Institute of Customer Services Award (ICS), and ICS coaching certificate
- Retained the Charter Mark award
- Delivered service enhancements across the city including security improvements at 13 Resident Concierge sites with the introduction of a CCTV package, introduction to 24 hour Concierge Service at Mather / Waverly Road flats, linking into the Cruddas Park House scheme, installation of Rapid Deployment Camera relay points at two tower blocks, enabling cameras to be monitored centrally at both locations by Concierge staff
- Completed service road shows followed by analysis and action planning with the Living In Flats group
- Introduced the Older Persons Scheme, funded by YHN and Tyne Wear Fire Service, to introduce high risk tenants to potential risks of fire in their homes
- Worked in partnership with the Shaw Trust Charity including two work placements to clients of the Shaw Trust
- Held Citywide Services awareness day including, CCAS, ASU, NFS, Shaw Trust, Caring Hands Charity and Safety Works
- Held a Concierge Service update briefing session attended by 60 Community Housing Office based staff
- Completed a service charge review and reported to Board
- Contributed to value for money including cost reduction in overtime, stores and supplies, blocked chute clearances, bin cleaning, window cleaning,

light/tube changes, bulk rubbish removal, carpet cleaning, additional building cleaning, litter picking, hypodermic needle and sharp removal, sickness absence cover, use of link up facility Cruddas Park, confidential waste collection, ad hoc clean ups after site fires etc.

Equalities (across all divisions)

- Ensured equality and diversity are central to all areas of YHN business through the inclusion of relevant targets and objectives in our balanced score card, delivery, service and corporate equality plans. These are subject to regular scrutiny and reporting to the YHN Board and Governance Committee
- Defined our contribution to the City Council's published Race Equality Scheme
- Completed equality impact assessments across all YHN business areas as part of our approach to achieving level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government
- Identified further targets and objectives to be included in a revised Corporate Equality Plan
- Implemented revised Valuing Diversity training for YHN staff
- Progressed the production of a Human Resources Strategy including steps to ensure that the people YHN employs reflect the diverse communities we serve
- Entered into an agreement with our Modern Homes Programme Investment Partners outlining service standards in meeting the needs of residents whose homes are being improved
- Made the assessment of bidders approach to Equalities and Diversity a significant element in the selection of a new Repairs and Maintenance Contractor
- Delivered an adaptations programme providing alterations and improvements to homes of residents who have a disability or significant long term illness.

Facilities management

- Set up the team
- Installed the building security system including CCTV after a review of building security
- Provided a daily in-house courier service
- 100% of courier collections achieved
- Achieved internal goods receipting to sections within three working days – 100% achieved
- Set internal Service Standards for Facilities Management and Administration; all standards have been met and a customer satisfaction survey sent out internally

- Reviewed all building service contracts for YHN house.

Finance (Investment)

- Contributed to the submission of the 2nd Tranche ALMO bid, incorporating expenditure and resource projections to 2010
- Contributed to the Repairs and Maintenance procurement project, resulting in the successful appointment of City Build
- Rolled out POPS to the Technical and Maintenance Team, facilitating the ordering of service contracts
- Rolled out the Delegated Decision system to incorporate the Area Project Fund
- Reviewed and realigned of the Housing Investment Programme, following ODPM approval of our ALMO bid at the end of 2004/05, to include the Decent Homes Programme projects and resource to 2010
- Contributed to workstreams for Repairs and Maintenance procurement, planned maintenance and voids
- Dealt with all Section 151 issues with NCC.

Finance (Revenue)

- Answered all Section 151 queries raised at monthly meetings.
- Successfully negotiated amendments to YHN's management fee.
- Updated and maintained the 5 year Financial Medium Term Plan
- Achieved 97% accuracy on YHN Management Fee expenditure
- Achieved 97% accuracy on HRA supervision and management expenditure
- Trained all new starters and staff transferred to YHN on POPS within one month of being informed of starting date
- Cleared the backlog of POPS training
- Paid 91% of all invoices on time (NCC target 81%)
- Introduced new procedures for Taxable Benefit Analysis (P11D returns)
- Supported the Asylum Seeker Unit to negotiate the new 5 year contract
- Supported the implementation of the new Next Steps contract for Asylum Seekers
- Designed and delivered new Budget Management Training sessions.
- Reconciled utilities and organised disconnection
- Reconciled and maintained the Famis security groups
- Compiled and maintained authorised signatory lists for Exchequer and Corporate Billing
- Implemented new ordering procedures for Newcastle Document Services
- Set up a new clothing and uniform schedule
- Set up new procedures for the Fleet and Contract Hire
- Coordinated the production of the Financial Information Handbook

- Played a leading role in delivering the Service Planning Workshops.

Finance (Technical)

- Input 2004/05 actual expenditure onto Housemark Benchmarking
- Produced HRA and YHN final accounts in line with NCC's timetable and without qualification
- Completed YHN external audit with no concerns raised by auditors
- Submitted HRA subsidy claim to timetable without subsequent amendment of a value greater than £100k
- Answered Section 151 technical issues to NCC satisfaction
- Maintained income paid through Supporting People to 2005/06 budget
- Financial Reporting Standard 17 letter of support obtained from City Treasurer
- Assessed the impact of changes to rent restructuring guidelines
- Advised Asylum Seekers' Unit on the pricing of new contract
- Prepared first Corporation Tax return
- Reconciled the leaseholder painting fund
- Prepared the Supporting People value for money return
- Concluded NECARS statutory accounts preparation and support
- Heating Service Charges pricing strategy agreed by YHN Board in December
- Gave business planning support to NFS and CCAS.

Furniture Service

- Successfully retained the Charter Mark Award and exceeded previous assessment
- Increased the number of external contracts (Kindstream, Teesdale and North Tyneside)
- Employed our own joiner to carry out repairs to cabinet furniture
- Exceeded our target of 1200 safety equipment fittings by 268
- Launched the Garden Equipment Loan Scheme
- Fitting of Key Guards in partnership with the Community Care Alarm Service (CCAS)
- Tendered for the supply of bedding and kitchen ware
- Exceeded our child safety equipment target
- Established a recycling and refurbishment scheme.

Governance

- Introduced appraisal/review of Board members and Board Chair
- Held tenant elections to the main board
- Improved board member communication processes

- Adopted a protocol for investigating breaches of the Code of Conduct
- Produced a protocol for petitions
- Continued to develop board member training including opportunities for a range of Board members to visit a range of services
- Held the first Annual General Meeting
- Developed board away-day sessions
- Published first annual report
- Area Boards went live with appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs.
- Introduced quarterly meetings between Board Chair and Area Boards Chairs and Vice Chairs.

HASBET (Anti Social Behaviour)

- Undertook comprehensive review of our eviction procedures to prevent repeat homelessness and vulnerable people losing their home
- Supported the child safety education campaign and sponsored a school in the west end to receive activity packs and newsletters
- Redesigned a customer satisfaction questionnaire to better reflect our service standards
- Achieved a comprehensive profile of anti-social behaviour on our estates through 2000 household surveys, including issues of local concern
- Developed a database to help manage cases and analyse cases by neighbourhood
- Established links with ARCH through our database to give us a comprehensive picture of racist incidents on our estates
- Held monthly liaison meetings with Community Housing Managers to track nuisance on our estates
- Launched a website including online reporting of incidents and completion of diary sheets
- Developed a 'graded response' resulted in 1850 letters, 70 Acceptable Behaviour Agreements and 32 ASBOs, 60 notices, 13 injunctions, 16 possessions and 12 tenants losing their home
- Delivered training to frontline staff
- Introduced an ASB hotline
- Commenced staff training on court procedures
- Reviewed SLAs for Legal Services and Surveillance Team.

Housing Management

- Carried out the first stages of a wide-ranging review of the Housing Management Service
- Embraced wide ranging changes to policies and procedures as a result of inspection and the service improvement programme
- Switched to the use of SX3 for rent accounts and empty properties

- Implemented void strategy and new initiatives
- Reduced level of voids
- Introduced new processes for dealing with high cost voids
- Helped to sustain homes and communities
- Embedded use of Your Choice Homes
- Moved into new customer service premises in Walker and Kenton where, in addition to the services provided by YHN, customers can also access services provided by the City Council including Welfare Rights, City Service Cashiering and Housing Benefit. As well as the improved office accommodation for our staff, tenants in these areas benefit from improved reception areas and interviewing facilities
- Developed a local response to the modern homes work including helping with some decants
- Continued to develop relationships with tenants' and residents' associations, often to find funding solutions for locally identified issues
- Worked in partnership with the police and Neighbourhood Services; maximising available funding seeing a range of schemes being undertaken for the benefit of residents across the area such as the provision of a garden area, security works to sheltered housing schemes, and traffic calming measures in back lanes
- Contributed to the development of Tenant Participation Compacts and other tenant-led initiatives
- Participated in new induction programme for all staff
- Worked in partnership on regeneration e.g. Byker re-design and Walker Riverside regeneration
- Implemented 100% workplans for all staff
- Reinforced corporate image in the community.

Human Resources

- Drafted an HR Strategy to provide a coordinated approach to the management and development of staff within YHN
- Completed a review to ensure HR services are organised appropriately and provide value for money through a flexible and responsive service.
- Maintained YHN's "two ticks" accreditation demonstrating a positive commitment to employing disabled people
- Introduced the SAP HR and Payroll system and extended this to include the Manager Self Service module
- Enhanced the level of staff absence data provided to managers to enable them to improve staff attendance
- Developed a competence based approach to the recruitment and selection of YHN managers.

Income Management

- Made payment by swipe cards available citywide
- Issued swipe cards to all rent payers including former tenants
- Implemented the Rents module on SX3
- Agreed incentive scheme for the take up of the most cost-effective payment methods
- Strengthened the former tenants team
- Increased by over 51% the cash collected by Former Tenants' Arrears Team
- Reduced number of former tenants' arrears cases sent to debt recovery agents due to the success of our in house service
- Supplied direct debit packs to local housing offices, customer service centres and tenants increasing the number of tenants on direct debit from 299 to 1440
- Provided tenants with direct contact telephone numbers for each of the teams within the Income Section
- Managed an increased workload and reviewed working practices due to the implementation of SX3 rent modules; creation of rent accounts, scheme allowances, furniture charge procedures, creation of Insurance elements, production of swipe cards.

Information Technology (IT)

- Added new and revised sections to the website to assist Your Choice Homes, Concierge Service, Asylum Seekers, Furniture Service and Right to Buy to gain/retain Charter Mark
- Contributed to new staff E-procedures sections for Asylum Seekers and Right to Buy
- Established IT Strategy Group
- Delivered replacement programme for PC's to enable SX3 to go live and to enable Outlook to be implemented
- Replaced Team Office email with Outlook during March 2006
- Re-designed our website to meet DDA and accessibility requirements including new content management system.
- Assisted NCC to meet its EGov2 targets with our revised website by 1 April 2006.

Inline

- All team members supporting young people are qualified in mediation skills
- Led on the development of the Homeless Prevention Service
- 70 young people achieved accreditation through the Homeless Prevention Service
- Over 95% success rate in young people maintaining tenancies

- Achieved high level of staffing skills and qualifications including drugs advice, MSc and DMS Management qualifications, advanced social work award, two qualified practice teachers taking social work students, a CIPD qualified trainer and a basic skills teacher
- Transferred service to YHN on 1st January, 2006.

Investment Delivery and Disabled Adaptations

- Mobilised each of the 12 Construction Partnerships to ensure delivery of the Modern Homes Programme including the development of procedure documents and guidance notes, workshop sessions, partnering training and the establishment of key meetings e.g. the Strategic Alliance, Core Team Meetings and Core Group meetings
- Set up KPI system for monitoring contractors
- Improved consultation and communication for our service users including the procurement of a mobile consultation unit, the production of a DVD/Video, a pack of information leaflets providing details on improvement works and web-based information for customers and staff
- Developed a fast track adaptation service for those tenants involved in the Modern Homes Programme to ensure disruption is minimised.
- Carried out adaptations to other homes to support independent living
- Continued partnership with Newcastle Warm Zone to ensure affordable warmth
- Worked in partnership with BNG to achieve sustainable estates
- Developed a leasehold process for leaseholders involved in the modern homes programme
- Continued estate based planning meetings to ensure estate sustainability
- Completed of the sheltered housing review
- Procured and rolled out an enterprise project management system
- Made 2nd Tranche bid to ODPM
- Introduced a new process for citywide void management
- Identified 535 unsustainable homes for demolition
- Delivered the smoke detection unit installation programme
- Developed replacement rules for contractors
- Integrated the relocation service into the work of investment delivery
- Used the tenants' event to help define the programme.

Leaseholders

- Developed a leasehold newsletter
- Introduced a Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Improved Information with the service charge invoice
- Contributed to ongoing SX3 development
- Worked towards continuous improvement in consultation and participation through the Steering Group and the forum

Organisational Development

- Commissioned the delivery of Delegation skills training for 110 YHN appraising Managers between April and July 2005
- In consultation with Main Board Members designed, developed a comprehensive training plan, including an 'away day' and personal development opportunities to visit YHN sections
- Gained centre approval and designed, delivered and evaluated YHN's first Certificate in Leading Teams accredited programme
- Introduced a Management Competency framework
- Developed and implemented the first section of the revised YHN Induction framework which is available to all staff on the YHN website
- Commissioned the delivery of Valuing Diversity training for new staff and those requiring refresher training (293 attended by 31 March 2006)
- Conducted diagnostic assessment and developed a project plan for the achievement of Investors in People
- Developed and implemented a Health and Safety training plan for YHN

Performance Management and Policy

- Designed, conducted and analysed YHN's first Staff Survey
- Produced a 'Safeguarding Adults' policy
- Produced a 'Domestic Violence' Policy
- Contributed to the NCC lettings review
- Commissioned and contributed to the market testing of services (Concierge and Former Tenants' Arrears)
- Commissioned and tested a Cost Benefit analysis model with KPMG
- Reviewed and monitored service standards
- Reported performance to area boards, main board and committees
- Contributed to the review of service level agreements and carried out the SLA review of research services
- Produced of internal service standards
- Produced the Service Plan 2006/07
- Designed electronic procedural guidance for staff
- Produced research guidance document
- Continued delivery of Charter Mark
- Contributed to the Housing Management review
- Designed and evaluated a number of mystery shopping exercises
- Re-launched the tenants panel
- Commissioned and facilitated the STATUS satisfaction survey

Programme Management

- Formulated and implemented the 3 Star YHN Programme
- Addressed the Audit Commission recommendations and weaknesses through the Prince 2 programme
- Incorporated self assessment and action planning against the Audit Commission's key lines of enquiry into all workstreams
- Produced and implemented the Risk Management Strategy
- Introduced mechanisms to embed risk management throughout organisation at strategic, divisional and service levels
- Designed and introduced a new model for assessing service developments against a business case template
- Provided direction on strategic procurement
- Procured the Repairs and Maintenance provider

Procurement and Value for Money (across all divisions)

- Procured the Repairs and Maintenance service resulting in substantial savings
- Carried out an extensive review of Housing Management with options for future delivery presented to the board
- Produced an Annual Efficiency Statement
- Developed new processes for delivery planning to align with financial planning
- Set efficiency targets for all services in conjunction with staff
- Redesigned performance reports to include financial information
- Designed and delivered training sessions for managers
- Reconfigured budget monitors in conjunction with users
- Conducted review of the HR service
- Conducted reviews of the Service Level Agreements for legal services, research, tenancy enforcement and communications

Rent Recovery

- Produced 'tolerated trespassers' handbook
- Introduced fast-track system for rent arrears collection
- Revised rent recover procedures including bankruptcy
- Moved from mainframe to SX3
- Positive response to changed roles and responsibilities
- commenced staff training on court procedures
- Assisted in core training for local housing staff.

Right to Buy

- Developed the Right To Buy webpage
- Produced Best Value Review documents

- Carried out and analysed customer satisfaction surveys
- Dealt with applications within specified time resulting in no rent to applicants paid back
- Met Government timescales
- Worked towards the Charter Mark award including Charter Mark application
- Advised all tenants of the right to buy
- Produced freeholder and leaseholder information packs.

Technical and Maintenance

- Continued improvement in gas servicing performance
- Rolled out rapid response service across the city with early indications of reduced 'Tenant Not Ins' and increased satisfaction with the service
- Introduced processes to respond immediately to issues exposed by satisfaction surveys
- Developed a client plan to enable the development of the client team
- Improved performance management systems
- Conducted internal benchmarking across the different access points
- Introduced a 10 point plan for handling repairs calls
- Increased levels of batched repairs
- Achieved most performance targets.

Your Choice Homes

- Achieved the Charter Mark award for high quality services
- Involved five new landlords in Your Choice lettings including accredited private landlords and shared ownership schemes
- Evaluated the policy and its impact undertaken by the Housing Quality Network in partnership with the City Council
- Almost eradicated low demand in most of the city
- Re-structured the team at the Property Shop to improve efficiency
- Reviewed health assessment process to reduce the time taken to carry out assessment
- Updated website and information to customers to improve accessibility, including a new customer registration pack and information about local services on the web
- Set up a Disabled Persons Housing Register to analyse customers' housing need
- Established new opening hours at the Property Shop in consultation with customers
- Introduced a customer registration pack
- Developed SX3 lettings module
- Delivered training to all partner landlords on lettings process and the nominations agreement

- Provided four placements through the Shaw Trust
- Published 40 newsletter items in the Evening Chronicle.

Our Strategic Objectives

During 2005/06 the Board of Your Homes Newcastle has continued to develop its thinking about the long-term future of the organisation and to work towards a clearer vision and purpose that our stakeholders will be able to sign up to.

The Board and tenants' representatives

- Discussed the strategic objectives to decide whether they were still relevant and appropriate, making some refinements, reflected below
- Agreed some improvements to the way that we report on our performance
- Prioritised actions from the service improvement ('Prince 2') programme for detailed monitoring
- Developed their understanding on the demands on our stock and the projected impact on revenue from reducing stock levels, then used case studies and a draft business case model to start to think about potential directions for the business, to mitigate against falling rental income

This work will continue to be developed throughout the coming year.

Your Homes Newcastle wants to:

Deliver Excellent Services

- We will be recognised by the Housing Inspectorate as delivering excellent services to tenants and leaseholders
- We will find ways to deliver service improvements and better value for money in everything we do and everything that we purchase on behalf of tenants
- We will increase the number of external accreditations we hold for excellent service delivery
- We will value our staff and support them in delivering excellent services

Deliver Modern Homes

- We will invest the additional ALMO funding in sustainable housing to meet the DHS target in 2010
- We will raise additional funding to deliver Modern Homes - Decent Homes Plus
- Tenants will feel proud to live in Newcastle council housing
- We will contribute to the regeneration of the City, creating sustainable communities that people want to live in
- We will increase energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty

Achieve a Better Balance Between Supply and Demand for Council Housing

- We will work to maintain demand for Council housing
- We will work to increase the supply of homes of the type that people want and where they want to live
- We will work with the City Council to take action where there are homes that are not the right type or in areas that are harder to let
- We will work with others in lobbying Government to lessen the impact of Right to Buy on our ability to meet the range of needs that exist in the City

Run Ourselves Well

- We will continue to develop our approach to working in partnership with the City Council, developing our own, separate identity
- We will develop the skills and competence of the Board, collectively and as individuals
- We will develop our own independent and innovative approach to decision-making and problem solving
- We will develop our own “voice” – in the City, the region and on the national stage
- We will engage with other housing providers, Bridging Newcastle Gateshead and other partners to achieve true partnership
- We will achieve demonstrable value for money in everything we do
- We will maximise the resources available to invest in service delivery while maintaining a prudent level of HRA balances

Increase Choice and Expand our Business

- We will deliver an expanded range of “added value” support services to tenants
- We will attract new customers for our core services
- We will offer more choice to customers and potential customers by increased joint working with other agencies, particularly other housing providers through Your Choice Homes
- We will offer a range of services that meet the changing needs of our tenants as they progress through the different stages of life
- We will meet the diverse range of needs that exist in the community and respond to new needs as they emerge

Be Responsible to the Community

- We will work with our tenants and other agencies to make the City a safer place to live
- We will work to ensure that people from all the communities that live here find Newcastle to be a City that supports them and welcomes the contribution they make
- We will provide vulnerable people with the support they need to live independently
- We will be a good employer, bringing investment, training and jobs to the City
- We will protect and enhance the environment
- We will work with partners to maximise the social and economic well-being of tenants and leaseholders

Be Recognised as a Customer-Focused Organisation

- We value and respect our customers and will work to ensure that they see this reflected in all our dealings with them
- We will work to increase the range of ways that customers can access services whilst maintaining face to face contact at the core of our business
- We will take advantage of technological developments to increase our ability to take our business to customers instead of expecting customers to come to us
- We will work to increase tenant and leaseholder involvement in decision-making at all levels of the organisation

Key Targets: Balanced Scorecard 2006/07

We monitor and report on a very large number of performance measures some of which are statutory, some locally developed, some from action plans, reviews and key consultations. In order to provide a snapshot of our performance that also provides broad assurance that YHN is delivering according to plan, we place a smaller number of agreed targets in a 'balanced scorecard'.

This is designed to highlight performance against the strategic objectives above without allowing one area to over-shadow another.

The balanced scorecard for 2006/07 contains a range of measures that will show performance over time; whether it is improving or deteriorating. In the case of national indicators we can also check how we compare with other similar organisations.

**Your Homes Newcastle
Balanced Scorecard
2006/07**

Modern Homes / Balancing supply and demand

1. Reduce the average voids re-let time to 62 days by 31/3/07.
2. Achieve a 11.44% change in the proportion of non-decent homes by 31/3/07.
3. 1,863 homes to be made decent in 2006/07.
4. 8,000 investment packages to be delivered in 2006/07.
5. 95% of all available time limited capital resource to be spent in 2006/07.

**Excellent services /
Customer focus**

1. Achieve 76% satisfaction with the overall housing service by 31/3/07.
2. Achieve 65% satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management and decision making by 31/3/07.
3. Achieve 91% satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service by 31/3/07.
4. Achieve 87% satisfaction with the investment programme by 31/3/07.
5. 90% of complaints to be replied to within 15 working days during 2006/07.
6. 90% of Service Plan and Programme actions to be completed within target timescales during 2006/07.

Remit

To deliver excellent services and modern homes that people want to live in

Your Homes Newcastle seven strategic objectives for 2006/07 are:

- **Delivering excellent services**
- **Delivering modern homes**
- **Achieve a better balance between supply and demand for Council housing**
- **Run ourselves well**
- **Increase choice and expand our business**
- **Be responsible to the community**
- **Be recognised as a customer-focused organisation**

Responsibility to the community / expanded choice

1. Achieve 66% BME satisfaction with the overall housing service by 31/3/07.
2. Achieve 55% BME satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management and decision making by 31/3/07.
3. To prevent 60 cases of homelessness during 2006/07 by casework intervention.
4. 95% of cases referred to HASBET to have commenced investigations within agreed timescales during 2006/07.

Running ourselves well

1. Reduce the number of sickness days per FTE employee to 10.20 days by 31/3/07.
2. Achieve a 5% reduction in net rent arrears by 31/3/07.
3. Achieve a Housing Revenue Account balance of £5m by 31/3/07.
4. Achieve a 2.5% efficiency saving on 2004/05 baseline budget by 31/3/07.
5. 8.57% of top 5% of staff who have a disability.
6. 2.86% of top 5% of staff who are from an ethnic minority.
7. 34.29%% of top 5% of staff who are women.

How the targets were set

Modern Homes / Balancing supply and demand	
Target	Basis of calculation
Reduce the average voids re-let time to 62 days by 31/3/07	Baseline to come at year end from new SX3 query
Achieve a 11.44% change in the proportion of non-decent homes by 31/7/07.	Decent Homes projections for 2006/07
1,863 homes made decent in 2006/07.	Decent Homes projections for 2006/07
8,000 investment packages to be delivered in 2006/07.	Decent Homes projections for 2006/07
95% of all available time limited capital resource to be spent in 2006/07.	Decent Homes projections for 2006/07
Excellent services / customer focus	
Target	Basis of calculation
Achieve 76% satisfaction with the overall housing service by 31/3/07.	2005/06 STATUS survey shows an increase of 2% to 74% for overall satisfaction. Seek to increase by a further 2%.
Achieve 65% satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management and decision making by 31/3/07.	2005/06 STATUS survey shows a small drop in satisfaction from 64% to 63%. Seek to increase by 2%.
Achieve 91% satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service by 31/3/07.	Baseline shows 90% satisfaction. New contract will have a much larger sample size. Seek 1% improvement.
Achieve 87% satisfaction with the investment programme by 31/3/07.	Maintain satisfaction levels as more schemes go on site with the 12 new construction partners.
90% of complaints to be replied to within 15 working days during 2006/07.	Current baseline of 83.33%. Improved monitoring has led to better performance last quarter, should continue.
90% of Service Plan and Programme actions to be completed within target timescales during 2006/07.	Service Plan actions year end projected to be 90%. Programme actions projected at 70%. Joint target of 90%
Responsibility to the community / expanded choice	
Target	Basis of calculation
Achieve 66% BME satisfaction with the overall housing service by 31/3/07.	2005/06 STATUS survey showed big increase from 50% to 64%. Numbers continue to be small. Seek to increase by 2%.

Target	Basis of calculation
Achieve 55% BME satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management and decision making by 31/3/07.	2005/06 STATUS survey showed a drop from 65% to 52%. Numbers continue to be small. Seek to increase by 3%
YHN contribution to preventing homelessness (BVPI 213)	
95% of one, five and ten day cases referred to HASBET to have commenced investigations within agreed timescales during 2006/07.	Current baseline being measured shows 90% being achieved.
Running ourselves well	
Target	Basis of calculation
Reduce the number of sickness days per FTE employee to 10.20 days by 31/3/07.	Target for 2005/06 was 10.20 days. Projected year end is 13.11 days. Retain target for 2006/07.
Reduce net rent arrears by 5% by 31/3/07.	Baseline to come at year end from new SX3 query.
Achieve a Housing Revenue Account balance of £5m by 31/3/07.	Agreed with Newcastle City Council City Treasurer under the Section 151 process as a prudent level of balances.
Achieve a 2.5% efficiency saving on 2004/05 baseline budget by 31/3/07.	Target set by central government.
8.57% of top 5% of staff who have a disability.	Increase from two to three the number in the top 5% (35 staff).
2.86% of top 5% of staff who are from an ethnic minority.	Increase from zero to one the number in the top 5% (35 staff).
34.29% of top 5% of staff who are women.	Increase from 11 to 12 the number in the top 5% (35 staff).

The Business Beyond 2010

Your Homes Newcastle was created with all eyes on 2010, our minds focused by the Government's target date for the achievement of the Decent Homes Standard.

This year, with direction from the Board we need to clarify our thinking about the longer term nature of the business.

In late 2005 and early 2006, the Board began to consider issues to help this process, initially using case studies and a draft Business Case model to think about potential directions for the business, and the generation of income to replace that lost through falling rental income.

In order to arrive at agreed overarching principles and to avoid developing in an ad hoc way the Board will be considering;

- The extent to which reducing income through reducing stock means reduced service provision for our existing tenants (as opposed to staying as we are)
- The benefit to the delivery of excellent services from increased income to the HRA
- Whether there are some groups of customers that we would like to prioritise in terms of developing services for them
- Whether in some circumstances we would consider providing services at a net cost to the HRA, because the services seem very relevant to us and our strategic objectives or whether, as a minimum, service developments need to be self financing
- Whether all proposals should directly benefit existing tenants as service recipients, or whether increased income is considered to be a benefit in itself
- Whether all proposals should yield a specified rate of return, or whether we believe that in terms of income generation, every little helps
- The degree to which we need to be clear about what we are good at and where we may have a strong offer in the market
- The positive impact that services to non-tenants already has on our finances
- Whether we see it as appropriate to manage shrinking services in the public sector
- The views of the Audit Commission.

Fit With Other Plans

The mission and objectives of Your Homes Newcastle have been informed by and support the objectives of the Newcastle Plan. This includes the full range of themes within the plan, not just the targets and actions of the housing theme.

The delivery of excellent services and modern homes is an important contributor to the creation of safe, attractive neighbourhoods that are sustainable, healthy and are where people will choose to live.

The Newcastle Plan for 2004-2007 has housing as one of its nine key themes - "A Newcastle where people feel at home".

It aspires to have housing that provides:

- A range of attractive choices
- Well-designed, well managed buildings
- Neighbourhoods where people feel good about themselves and their communities

In achieving this, the Newcastle Partnership will:

- Improve the quality of the City's housing to help make Newcastle and the North East a better place to live
- Ensure housing promotes well being

Key achievements from the housing theme of the Newcastle Plan that Your Homes Newcastle will directly contribute to are:

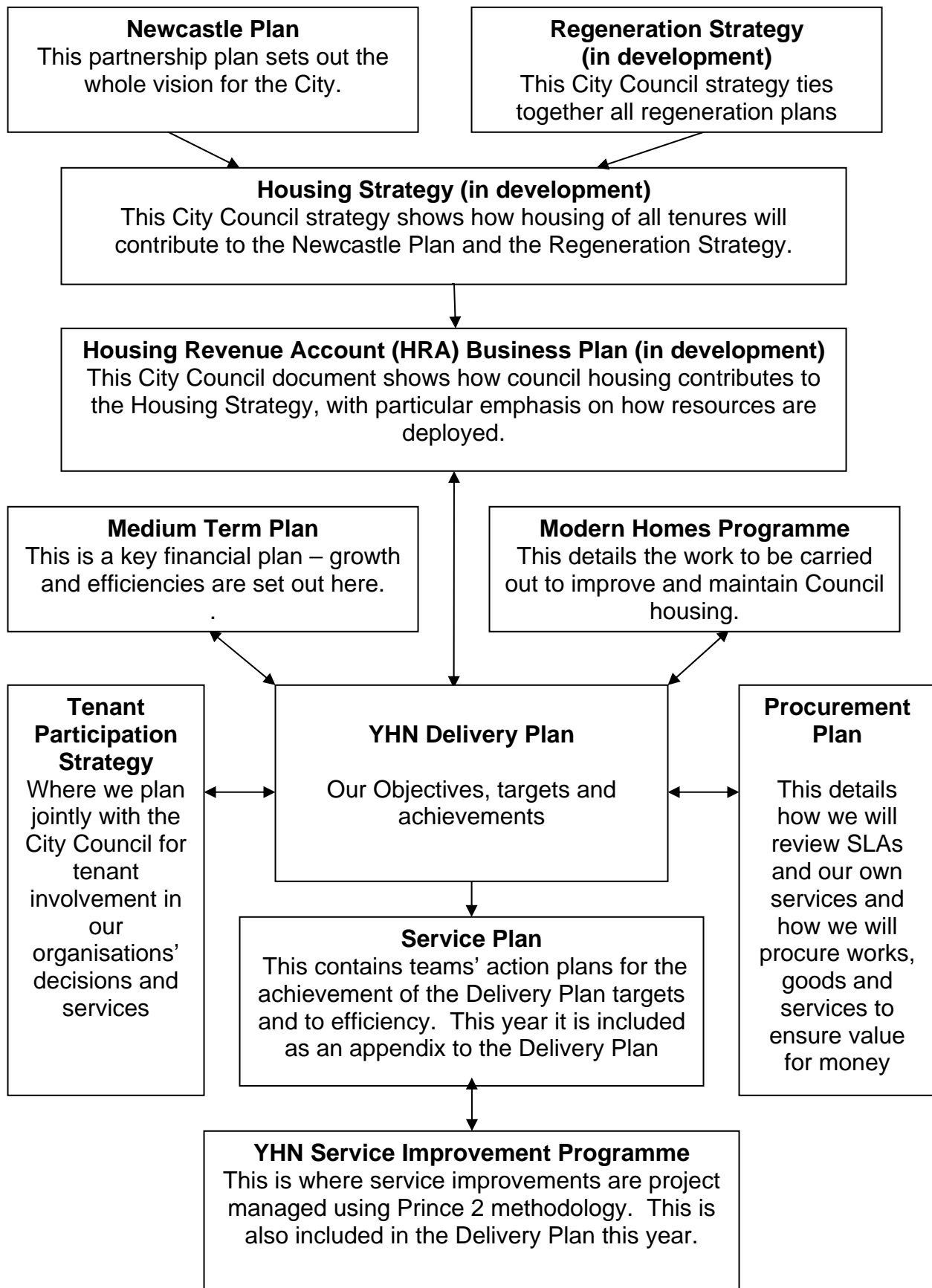
- Meeting or exceeding the Audit Commission's target for good housing management in Council housing (achieved following inspection in December 2004)
- Improving more homes to secure by design
- Providing homes for refugee households
- Improving the energy efficiency of 20,000 Council homes by 2008
- Bringing Council homes up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard
- Working with housing associations to help people in temporary accommodation move on to more permanent homes

Other targets from the Plan that Your Homes Newcastle directly contributes to are:

- Joint working with the Police to reduce Anti Social Behaviour
- Work with the City Council to report, monitor and take action against racial harassment

- Providing support to vulnerable people, particularly people suffering domestic violence
- Support for the work of Neighbourhood Wardens
- Making neighbourhoods clean, green and safe, particularly through investment and enforcement
- Continuing to provide support to the high proportion of older people and vulnerable adults who are cared for in their own homes
- Providing enhanced training and development programmes, particularly as a result of our Decent Homes Investment Programme
- Ensuring that local businesses benefit from the increase in investment that will flow from our Decent Homes Programme

The following diagram shows the relationship between the different plans and strategies that impact on Your Homes Newcastle and which are reflected in our Delivery Plan for 2010.



How the Plan was Developed

This year there were a range of improvements to:

- The way that we prepared the Delivery Plan and Service Plan
- The way that we integrated these plans with financial planning and other activity
- The way that we report on our performance.

These improvements were designed to deal with these issues:

- Service planning and financial planning tended to be separate exercises
- It was felt we report on too many indicators which means that people can't see the wood for the trees and sometimes the picture of performance is distorted
- The Balanced Scorecard contained a mixture of performance targets and one-off actions
- Most of the targets chosen for previous Balanced Scorecards did not allow for trends in performance to be demonstrated
- Involvement in the planning processes meant that many staff did not feel connected to the plans, which would not satisfy Investors in People.
- Previously the training plan was driven by the Organisational Development team, rather than by the workforce
- Actions for service improvements are contained in the 'Prince 2' programme – people had to look in more than one place for the whole picture of what we are trying to achieve

We want processes and documents that:

- Support the strategic objectives and the long-term viability of the organisation
- Ensure that the resource implications of performance and service planning are considered properly
- Give assurance to our stakeholders that they have a good understanding of our plans and our performance
- Provide a simple but comprehensive report on our performance
- Involve people in planning their services and setting their performance targets
- Embed considerations of efficiency alongside service improvement
- Embed considerations of learning and development needs
- Place together financial info, performance plans, service/section plans and the service improvement ('Prince 2') plan

To do this we:

- Reaffirmed the strategic objectives
- Gained agreement from the Board about development activity for the long-term future of the organisation
- Integrated the timing and activity related to delivery and financial planning processes
- Held sessions for a cross section of staff to review the year and to plan for 2006/07 in terms of performance, service development, budgets and resources, learning and development
- Simplified the balanced scorecard in terms of the numbers and types of indicators
- Improved the performance reports so that they are more easily understood, provide graphs for visible trends and comparative information
- Attached the service plan to the Delivery Plan as an appendix and included information on the Service Improvement Programme ('Prince 2'), so that there is one summary plan for the organisation
- Created a learning and development plan that relates to people's needs in terms of delivering the plan as identified by the staff

We intend to initiate these processes much earlier in the year for the 2007/08 plan to allow for more integration into the Medium Term (financial) Plan timescales.

Investment and the Modern Homes Programme

In embarking on the Modern Homes Programme, YHN has moved from delivering an Investment Programme delivering some £13 million (600 improvements a year) to £65 million (around 6,000). In the first eight months of the programme, YHN's Property and Contract Services Team and NCC City Design Team have concentrated on mobilisation with the 12 construction partners. The number of homes being worked in across the city has quadrupled. Inevitably with this level of increase there has been an increased level of customer enquiries and in some cases complaints. The client teams and construction partners are working together well to ensure these are addressed and the lessons learnt.

A key part of the Modern Homes Programme is the development and monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure the performance of construction partners is managed. KPIs have been developed to cover areas of performance including defects, survey accuracy, adherence to programme, diversity and employment training for 2006/07. These KPIs will be used to assess the allocation of work to partners for 2007/08 as part of the new contract conditions. The progress on the 2005/06 programme at 1 December was

	Position at 01/12/05	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Projected Outturn
Schemes started on site – 2005/06:	64	123	129
Number of units in schemes on site:	6,173	9,640	10,256
Number of units completed:	2,098	5,745	6,112
Number of units made decent:	231 (at 30.09.05)	630	630
Number of adaptations:	377	640	640
Number of Secure by Design:	716	3,000	3,000
Number of energy efficiency measures:	3,434	*SAP 59	*SAP 59

The Modern Homes Programme delivery has seen a major increase in the level of consultation and communication with tenants and leaseholders. The activity and development has included:

- Development of an information DVD and video and a new set of information leaflets
- Regular liaison with the Tenants Investment Forum and Leasehold Forum
- Development of working guidelines with 12 Construction Partners including protocols for replacement rules and resident liaison
- Development of the Mobile Consultation Unit
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys

In programming the works on each of the 350 estates it has been necessary to adjust the years that the estates will be in the programme to fit the planned release of resources from Central Government. We submitted a second tranche bid for ALMO funding in line with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) timetable. Since then, the ODPM has delayed the timetable to allow some other ALMOs more time to make their submission. Our bid identifies the overall need for Modern Homes resources of £474m and an increase ALMO allocation of £126m. This represents a re-profiled investment programme based on increasing knowledge of the stock condition and taking into account inflation.

2006/7 Programme Resources (as per ALMO bid 2004)	£83.7m
Estimated commitments carried forward from 2005/6 starts	£39.8 m
Resources available for new starts	£43.9m

These resources included over-programming carried forward from 2005/06. Over-programming for 2006/07 is set at 10% and provision for omits and Right To Buy is currently estimated at 5%. Inflation (BCI) will be met from within these figures.

The Modern Homes Programme has been prepared using methodologies agreed by the YHN Board on estate based planning, sustainability reviews and scheme prioritisation. The key aspects of the methodology for programming and prioritisation are as follows:

- Tackling Decent Homes Standard failures is top priority
- The works are split into internal and external packages.
- The internal package is led by electrical failures against the standard and the external by window failures.
- Alignment with Newcastle City Council's regeneration priorities and programmes.

In reviewing the programme for 2006/07 YHN has considered the policy and programme alignment with the Bridging NewcastleGateshead (BNG) Programme and submission to the ODPM for 2006/08. Key areas for alignment include Walker Riverside, Daisy Hill, Byker, Elswick, the Discovery Quarter, Cruddas Park and New Mills. The alignment will help ensure ALMO funding for the Modern Homes Programme to achieve the DHS by 2010 links to BNG and other funding to effect real market change. BNG funding provides opportunities to secure innovation, improvements in key non-DHS areas such as security, energy and environmental sustainability which are so crucial to changing and improving housing markets.

Analysis of current demand pressures in the YHN managed stock shows there is an increased need for larger family housing and specialist accommodation for older people and disabled people. Opportunities to improve the supply will need to be taken from:

- Conversions in the Modern Homes Programme
- Opportunities in the voids programme
- Re-conversion of former offices
- Consideration of extensions

The aim will be to create homes to help tackle need including 4/5 bedroom family housing, 2/3 bed bungalows and 1 and 2 bed sheltered flats.

The programme to 2010 is under constant review consequently there have been amendments made to the original programme including

- Schemes deferred as work not required and transferred to the painting programme.
- Schemes on hold from the previous year due to sustainability reviews
- Combined packages for multi-storey flats and block dwellings.
- Grouping of work due to geographical or structural issues
- Schemes brought forward to ensure contract capacity of constructor partners is met.

An outline of the proposed programme for 2006/07 is at Appendix One.

Budgets and Financial Management

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and YHN budgets set out what services will be provided in the year and how they will be funded. The budgets are monitored and reported to Finance Committee and to the City Council at a Section 151 meeting on a monthly basis. Significant amendments to budgets are highlighted for approval by Finance Committee and the Board. The Board receives quarterly updates on the latest budget and Medium Term Plan position.

YHN Probable Estimate 2005/06

The net expenditure shown in this table is funded by a Management Fee from the HRA.

Base Budget	Probable Estimate	Variation from Base Budget		Actual to Date
£	£	£	%	£
24,487,110	23,541,790	-945,320	-3.86	14,232,045

The major variations from the base to the revised budget include:

- £1,710,000cr Increased staff turnover savings
- £367,500 Staffing reviews and associated costs
- £366,000 Temporary agency staffing
- £166,310 INLINE Service
(part year; Supporting People funding for service in HRA)
- £206,560cr Interest on balances

HRA Probable Estimate 2005/06

Budget	Base Budget	Probable Estimate	Variation from Base Budget		Actual to Date
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m
Expenditure	127,265,250	133,372,770	6,107,520	4.80	101,795,105
Income	- 127,058,230	- 135,653,590	-8,595,360	6.77	-20,278,324
Surplus(-) Deficit	207,020	-2,280,820	-2,487,840	n/a	81,516,781

The major variations from the base to revised Budget include:

- £2,111,340cr – Increase in HRA Subsidy (ALMO Investment Funding)
- £1,448,490cr – Increased rent income (fewer RTB sales and demolitions)
- £945,320cr – Reduced YHN Management Fee
- £1,000,000 – Increase in provision for bad debts (rent arrears)

YHN Base Budget 2006/07

The net expenditure shown in this table is funded by a Management Fee from the HRA

Base Budget		Variation Base to Base Budget	
2005/06	2006/07		
£	£	£	%
24,487,110	25,960,560	1,473,450	6.02

The major variations from the 2005-06 to 2006-07 base budgets include:

- £1,557,820 Staffing Costs
- £486,640 Staffing Reviews and TUPE transfers
- £452,810 INLINE Service (funding for service in HRA)
- £250,000 Provision for Single Status Phase 2
- £452,950 National Pay awards
- £205,420 Annual Increments
- £290,000cr Increased staff turnover provision
- £258,360 INLINE Service running costs (funding for service in HRA)
- £193,280cr Interest on balances

HRA Base Budget 2006/07

Budget	Base Budget		Variation Base to Base Budget	
	2005/06	2006/07		
	£	£	£	%
Expenditure	127,265,250	141,427,230	14,161,980	11.13
Income	-127,058,230	-141,534,610	-14,476,380	11.39
Surplus(-) Deficit	207,020	-107,380	-314,400	n/a

The Budget for 2006/07 incorporates an estimate of the additional income that will be raised from increases in rents, service charges and heating charges that were agreed by Newcastle City Council Executive at its meeting on 18th January.

The Budget assuming the increases in rents and charges for 2006/07 shows a small surplus balance on the account for the year of £107,380, this compares to an estimated deficit balance in the 2005/06 base estimate of £207,020, a variance of £314,400.

A balanced HRA ensures the long term financial stability of the account and the budget shows that this is estimated to be the case in 2006/07.

This budget will leave an anticipated estimated balance at 31 March 2007 of £7,569,270.

The increases agreed are:-

- An average increase in general Council house rents of £2.32 (5%) per week, in accordance with Government guidelines
- An increase in the level of service charges for concierge, resident concierge, furniture, TV, wardens and security alarms of 3.2% per week in line with Government guidelines
- An increase in the level of district and group heating energy charges of 40%, an average increase of £2.76 per week
- An increase in garage rents of £1 per week with no increase for people qualifying for a disabled persons garage allowance

The major variations from the 2005/06 to 2006/07 Base Budget include:

- £4,457,150_{cr} Proposed increase in Rents, Service and Heating Charges
- £1,095,190_{cr} Recharge to Investment Programme
- £1,473,450 Increase in YHN Management Fee
- £2,616,160 Net decrease in HRA Subsidy
(notional rent less allowances)
- £1,513,800 Inflation (including £1.25m on energy costs).

Medium Term Plan 2005/06 to 2009/10 Update

The latest estimated forecast position shows a credit HRA balance at or above the agreed medium term target of £5m up to 31 March 2008.

The Medium Term Plan does however highlight the deterioration of the annual position on the HRA from a balanced account in 2006/07 to a deficit of £2.45m in 2007/08.

The estimated level of the HRA Balance provides sufficient resource to fund this deficit in 2007/08 but this level of deficit is not a sustainable position.

Finance Committee will continue to receive monthly updates on the latest Medium Term Plan position throughout the year.

Proposals will be brought forward to Finance Committee and Board to address the forecast deficit for 2007/08 if projections continue to estimate it at an unsustainable

Performance Management

The overall purpose of the YHN performance management framework is to ensure that our strategic objectives are threaded through all levels of the organisation to the frontline service delivery. In other words it is designed to translate vision into action and to demonstrate the extent to which this occurs. The framework is used to drive improvement in services and is regularly refined and improved to reflect customer focus, tenant priorities and local circumstances.

Using the framework we aim to

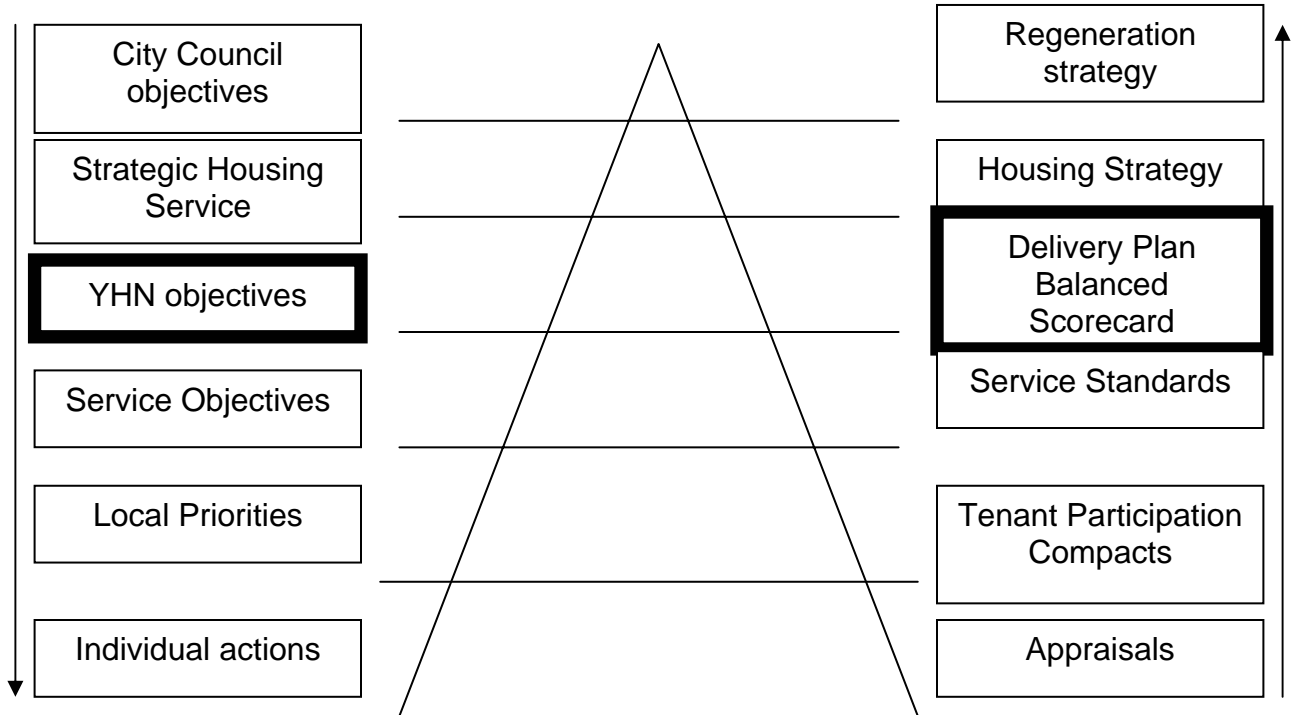
- Foster an organisation-wide commitment to continuous improvement
- Devolve accountability and responsibility for performance
- Identify and celebrate success
- Deal with barriers to high performance.

The inherent principles are that we

- Ensure all targets are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) and are outcome oriented where possible
- Benchmark our performance with others and look at trends to help us understand the issues
- Traffic light reports so that stakeholders can get a snapshot picture of performance
- Keep all stakeholders involved and informed of performance issues
- Focus on action plans for recovery in areas of under-performance
- Operate a uniform approach to supervision, workplans and appraisals.

The following diagram shows the way that objectives and target thread through all levels of performance.

Objectives and Targets in Performance



Performance Monitoring

This table shows how the monitoring of the balanced scorecard fits into the monitoring of performance at all other levels.

Aims and objectives	Where they are contained	Reporting mechanisms
City Council	Regeneration Strategy	To be confirmed
	Portfolio strategic aims	Business Management Group Scrutiny committees
	Housing Strategy (in development)	To Regeneration Scrutiny Panel (Proposed to Newcastle Housing Partnership)
YHN Objectives	Delivery Plan – includes balanced scorecard of indicators	Annually to tenants in Homes and People Quarterly to tenants' reps, and City Council Quarterly to YHN Board Quarterly summaries to all elected members and YHN staff via Housing Service News
	Housing Best Value Performance Indicators	Quarterly to City Council Quarterly to YHN board. Quarterly summaries to all elected members and YHN staff via Housing Service News
Service objectives	Service standards	Bi-monthly to Area Boards Through management structures to staff
	Service Plan	Through appraisal structure Annual summary to YHN Board, all staff and elected members
	Service specific improvements	Contained within the YHN 'Prince 2' Programme. Reported quarterly to Programme Board Quarterly priorities to Board
	Local performance indicators	Quarterly to YHN Board and bi-monthly Area Boards
Individual Actions	Workplans and appraisal	Management monitoring of workplans monthly and appraisals annually with interim review

Using a traffic-light approach to monitoring, performance issues are highlighted through red or amber indicators. Where these are reported, information is provided on the actions and tasks being undertaken to improve performance.

The YHN 'Prince 2' programme also operates using a traffic light system and through exception reporting which means that stakeholders can get an at-a-glance overview of the performance of the organisation.

The Service Improvement Programme

YHN is committed to continuous improvement and one of our major strategic goals is to provide excellent '3 star' services. The key mechanism to allocating and coordinating our resources to achieve this is through the YHN service improvement programme. This is structured and managed using the 'Prince 2' project management method. 'Prince' actually stands for 'projects in a controlled environment' and it is this approach that has helped us monitor and deliver a wide range of projects.

The Prince approach to project management was introduced in 2003 to address the need to provide a structured and robust approach to delivering three key areas of activity simultaneously: the creation of the ALMO, service improvements and the development of the Decent Homes programme. Since then the programme has periodically been reviewed and refined to respond to the changing environment that we operate in.

The current programme structure has five projects which in part reflect the structure of the organisation;

- Finance
- Business Processes
- Housing Management
- Stock investment and asset management
- Value for money.

Each project has a project board which reports on progress monthly to the Programme Board chaired by the Chief Executive. Under each Project Board were a number of 'workstreams' which are responsible for the delivery of a number of 'products' all designed to contribute to the achievement of our three star rating.

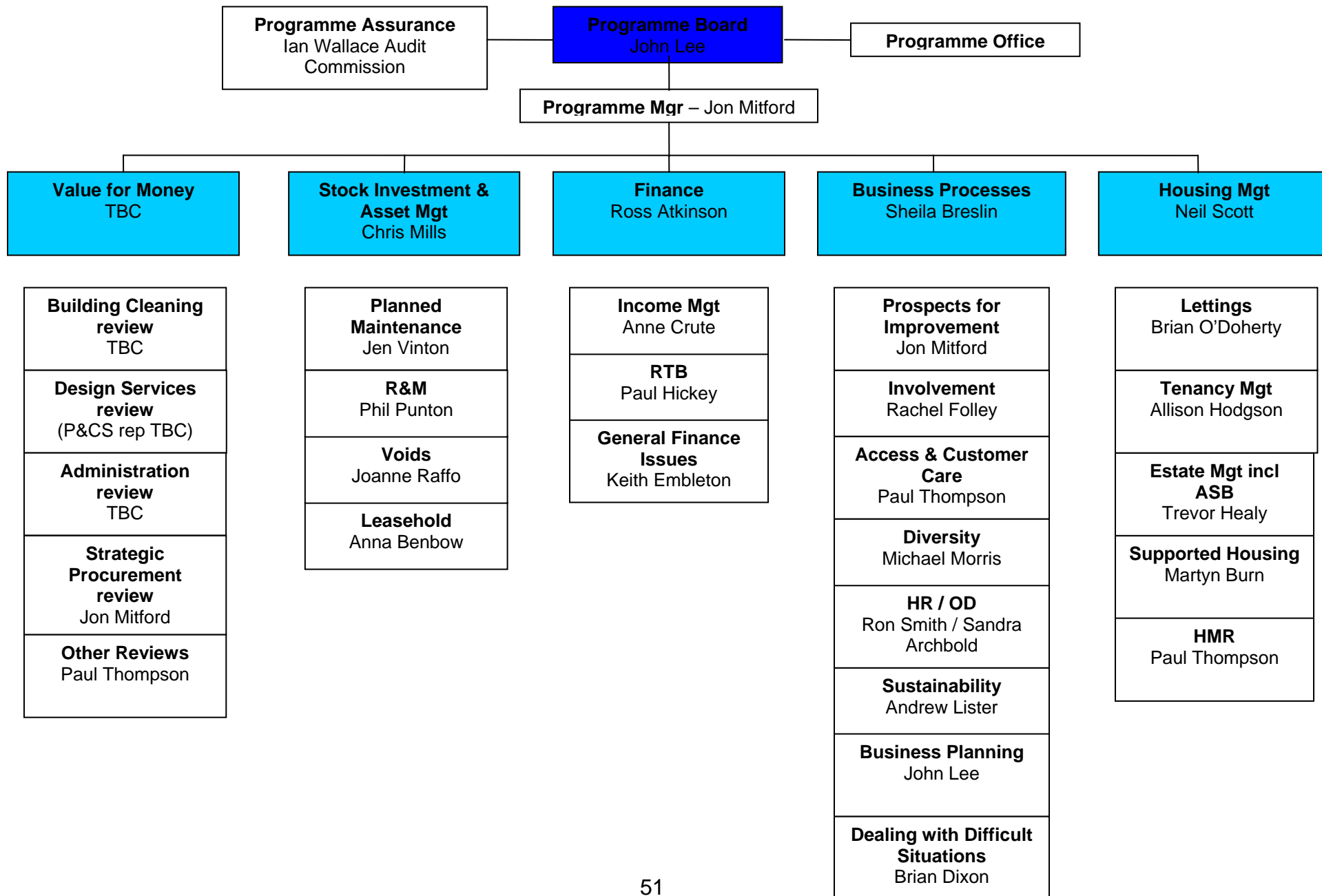
All workstreams are expected to regularly report on progress against any Audit Commission recommendations or weaknesses and also against plans to deliver against the key lines of enquiry (KLOEs).

The programme is based on a matrix management structure. Workstreams consist of staff drawn from across the organisation's divisions, each developing their areas of expertise.

Consultation with the board, the Tenants' Federation, the tenants' panel and the City Council has identified the following aspects of the programme for regular monitoring reports

- Choice Based Lettings Review
- Sustainability Reviews

- Void properties
- Mobilisation of the new repairs and maintenance contract
- Housing Management Review
- Improving access to services
- Income management strategy
- Participation methods



Value for Money

Achieving value for money is an important element of our strategic objective of running ourselves well. Sound financial management and financial reporting are vital to excellent services. We need to be sure that we use public money to have optimum impact. Wherever we identify efficiencies we open the door to improved services.

Procurement Strategy

Procurement means the buying of goods (such as office supplies), works (like large scale modernisation schemes) and services. As such it is an area with great potential for managing our resources well. Our approach is contained in a corporate procurement strategy. The strategy applies to services provided externally, internally and purchased from the City Council. It also contains a Procurement Plan which sets out a programme of service and SLA reviews.

In 2006/07 we will be reviewing

- Building Cleaning
- Environmental Services for these services we will be represented on the City Council's review as a key stakeholder
- Procurement (including City Buy)
- Design Services
- Administration

We will be completing the review of

- Legal Services
- Housing management

Important Areas of Value For Money Work

In addition to agreeing our strategic approach to procurement, we have also taken steps over the year to ensure that achieving value for money is firmly embedded within the organisation and that it is prioritised within the wide raft of improvement measures that are being put in place. To this end, a separate project was created to address value for money issues within our service improvement programme, to ensure that the projects underway were robustly managed.

Our approach to embedding value for money can be illustrated in these areas of activity:

- The procurement of a provider for the repairs and maintenance service under new contract arrangements
- The implementation of the Housing Management Review findings
- Monitoring the performance of the twelve construction partners to ensure that the arrangements continue to deliver efficient and effective services
- Agreement and review of all of our service level agreements covering the purchase of services from the City Council
- The revision of a procurement plan to set reviews of our own services alongside SLA reviews
- The development and application of a template to evaluate the Business Case for new services
- The inclusion of efficiency targets in the service planning pages of this document
- The cycle of Estate Based Planning to ensure that investment in properties is based on their long term sustainability
- The use of 'Housemark' benchmarking information to identify areas where cost may be an issue and to use that information for more detailed analysis, including activity based costing where appropriate.

Equalities and Diversity

Our Approach to Equality & Diversity

YHN manages 33,000 tenanted and leasehold properties across the City. We recognise that the people who live in these homes have diverse backgrounds, circumstances and needs. They are all ages, disabled and non disabled, of different races and ethnic backgrounds, heterosexual, lesbian, gay and bisexual and from faith and non faith backgrounds.

Our Equalities Policy and Corporate Equalities Plan outline our vision, aims and targets and how we are meeting our responsibilities:

- As an employer
- Providing services to our customers
- Working with other organisations
- Involving communities

Our commitment to equality goes beyond our legal duties and our policy outlines the need to address equality of opportunity through avoiding direct and indirect discrimination, making sure that all areas of Your Homes Newcastle are involved in meeting this objective. To make this happen, responsibility for equalities and diversity rests with our board, and our Chief Executive acts as our corporate champion in ensuring proper systems are in place to put our policy into practice. Central to this is the adoption of the achievement of level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by 2010 as a target for YHN.

As part of achieving this standard, Equality Impact Needs Assessments have been carried out against all areas of our business including existing policies, procedures and services with regard to race, gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation and age and identified where there may be unmet needs or potentially discriminatory outcomes. In turn our Corporate Equality Plan contains our targets and objectives for YHN as a whole and these are monitored by Governance Committee on behalf of the YHN board.

Corporate Equality Plan

Our Corporate Equality Plan currently includes 23 separate objectives and targets across all four divisions of Your Homes Newcastle. These are supplemented by additional actions in our service plan with named officers responsible for their completion against an agreed timetable. Progress in achieving these is reported quarterly using a 'traffic light' system to Governance Committee. In addition, YHN Board receives twice yearly ethnicity monitoring reports which measure a number of key aspects of our services to the public, to

ensure we comply with the statutory Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) Code of Guidance for Social Housing.

As we achieve these existing targets, we will agree a revised Corporate Equality Plan for the coming year and will once again confirm who is responsible and against what timetable these should be achieved. Significant issues to be addressed by the plan include:

- An agreed timetable for the achievement of Level 4 and Level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, including an agreed process and identification of the necessary means to achieve these levels
- Anticipation of new legal duties with regard to Gender and Disability Equality Schemes required of public bodies by the end of 2006 and agreement with Newcastle City Council as to how YHN will contribute to these
- Agreement with Newcastle City Council of our mutual responsibilities in meeting the revised CRE code of guidance in Housing
- Publication and implementation of a YHN Corporate Procurement Strategy, including how we will ensure our partnering contractors approach to equalities and diversities reflects that of Your Homes Newcastle
- Publication and implementation of a Human Resources Strategy and action plan to remove any barriers to the recruitment of under represented groups and promote YHN as an employer that is representative of the communities we serve
- Completion of our audit of partnership working to make sure equality considerations are clearly stated and understood including our expectations of how partners will approach equality and diversity issues
- Consolidate participation and involvement arrangements to include representatives of under represented groups including the Establishment of a Strategic Independent Advisory group as one means of doing so.

Learning and Development

This year we have taken a different look at the way we develop the learning and development plan for Your Homes Newcastle staff. In the past we have tended to have a fairly 'top-down' approach to the development of the plan based on an objective analysis of the organisation's needs.

Service Planning

This year we wanted to be sure that staff had given thought to what was expected of them in terms of achieving the strategic objectives and related targets, and that the staff had then worked out what learning and development was needed to help them achieve those targets. Service planning workshops held in January facilitated the consideration of teams' learning objectives which will be reflected in the learning and development plan both in terms of themes and service specific needs.

Appraisals

The plan is also being developed to include learning and development themes identified through appraisals, also designed to help people fulfil their objectives.

Professional Training

Professional training will again be a feature of the plan, with some commitments rolling over from 2005/06. Decisions about future commitments from this budget will be based, in part, on an impact assessment of the value of professional training to date.

NVQ Training

Our approach to NVQs will be reviewed based on the findings and recommendations from the Housing Management Review. The outcome will help to shape our approach to opportunities in customer services and other NVQ programmes.

Other Developments to Support the Staff of Your Homes Newcastle

There are a range of initiatives within the umbrella of organisational development which will be contained in a new HR Strategy in 2006.

Significantly there is a workstream within the service improvement programme to take the organisation towards the achievement of the Investors in People award by the end of the year. A wide range of initiatives will be progressed within the workstream, many of which are closely linked to our emerging approach to management competencies.

Another group of staff are working on a plan called 'A Great Place to Work' which will set up a range of schemes to enhance YHN role as an employer. This too will constitute part of the HR Strategy.

The strategy, which will be consulted on between March and June, covers

Developing our service

- HR review

Great Place to Work

- Workforce Planning
- Equalities and diversity
- Recruitment and selection
- Reward and benefits

Developing our people

- Learning and development
- Investors in people
- Management competences
- Succession planning

Working together

- Participation and involvement
- Performance Management
- Healthy People
- Safe workplace

Monitoring our progress

- Key objectives
- Annual HR report

Risk Management

YHN has in a place a strategy to manage the risks to the organisation, recognising the importance of the top corporate and strategic risks and the requirement to actively manage risks throughout YHN. The approach taken to risk management is therefore to start the process at the corporate and strategic level and then roll it out throughout the organisation.

Our processes include:

- Risk identification and scoring, including an assessment of the likelihood and potential impact of each risk
- The identification and assessment of controls
- Prioritisation and actions
- The completion and maintenance of risk logs
- Key roles and responsibilities

These apply to all levels of risk which we have identified in the diagram below.

