



The Gateshead Housing Company Resources and Audit Committee

Thursday 28 April 2011 at 10am
Board Room 2, The Gateshead Housing Company, Keelman
House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley
Trading Estate, Gateshead NE11 0XA

Agenda

Item	Business
1.	Apologies for Absence
2.	Declarations of Interest
	<u>ITEMS FOR DECISION</u>
3.	Minutes (Pages 3-10) To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 27 January 2011
4.	Matters Arising
5.	Operational Risk Register – Housing Management (Pages 11-27) Report of Director of Finance
6.	Internal Audit Plan 2011/12 (Pages 28-30) Report of Chief Internal Auditor, Gateshead Council
	<u>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>
7.	Sickness Absence and Human Resources Update (Pages 31-54) Report of Director of Finance

Contact: Stuart Gibson Tel: (0191) 433 5308 Date: 21 April 2011

Item	Business
8.	Health and Safety Update (Pages 55-60) Report of Director of Finance
9.	Equality and Diversity Update (Pages 61-83) Report of Director of Finance
10.	Management Accounts – Fourth Quarter 2010/11 (Pages 84-98) Report of Director of Finance
11.	Value for Money Year End Update (Pages 99-105) Report of Director of Finance
12.	Contract for Printer Consolidation - Review of First year of Operation (Pages 106-109) Report of Director of Finance
13.	2010/11 Internal Audit Update – Progress Report (Pages 110-112) Report of Chief Internal Auditor, Gateshead Council
14.	Forward Plan (Pages 113-115) Report of Chief Executive
15.	Items for Future Agendas
16.	Date and Time of Next Meeting Thursday 7 July 2011 at 10am (audited accounts only) Thursday 28 July 2011 at 10am (Both to be held at Keelman House, Fifth Avenue, Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley, Gateshead)
17.	Exclusion of the Press and Public The committee may wish to consider excluding the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with categories 1 and 4 of the company’s Access to Information Rules.



RESOURCES AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

27 January 2011

PRESENT:

Directors

Richard Armitage
George Clark
John Hamilton
Peter Mole
Joachim Mouanda Moussounda

Advisers

Bill Fullen	Chief Executive
Jon Mallen-Beadle	Director of Finance
Neil Bouch	Director of Housing Management
Sarah Thompson	Finance Manager
Jennifer Aston	Human Resources Manager
Jim Farquhar	Chief Auditor, Gateshead Council
Gareth Edmunds	Audit Manager, Gateshead Council
Louise Woodhead	KPMG
Stuart Gibson	Company Administrator

Apologies

Stan Dawson
Paul Foy
Sara Woolley

61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

62 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 4 November 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63 MATTERS ARISING – LIFT BREAKDOWNS

It was noted that there has been no increase in lift breakdowns compared to last year. A report on the lift programme will be submitted to the next meeting of Asset Management Committee.

64 EXTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY AND PLANNING MEMORANDUM

The committee received the external audit strategy and planning memorandum for the financial year ended 31 March 2011 which has been produced by KPMG, the company's external auditors.

RESOLVED – That the external audit strategy and planning memorandum be approved.

65 DRAFT BUDGET 2011/12

The committee received a presentation by Jon Mallen-Beadle on the draft budget 2011/12.

The draft budget will be discussed further at the Board Away Day in February 2011 and presented for approval at the Board Meeting in March 2011.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

66 OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER – CORPORATE SERVICES

The Operational Risk Register for the Corporate Services Directorate has been reviewed and an updated Register was submitted.

A number of future actions have been implemented and these are now identified as controls within the register. In addition, some new further actions have been identified for some of the risks.

The finance risk around a reduction in funding available has been deleted as it has already been agreed as a Strategic Risk.

The committee has previously approved a risk around failure to maximise rental income via Financial Inclusion initiatives. Due to issues relating to the Government's proposals under the Localism Bill and in particular the reform of Council housing finance, it is proposed that this risk should be escalated to the Strategic Risk Register.

RESOLVED – (i) That the updated Operational Risk Register for the Corporate Services Directorate be approved.

(ii) That the risk around failure to maximise rental income via Financial Inclusion initiatives be escalated to the Strategic Risk Register.

(iii) That future actions link to Internal Audit reports where there is a specific recommendation relating to that action.

67 ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

The company recognises that all cases are different and that a single, standardised procedure may not always address the unique issues of each individual case. The company aims to deal positively and sympathetically with

employees who have medical conditions or injuries that affect their ability to work normally.

A new absence management procedure is proposed which is designed to assist employees who are absent from work due to illness, while also enabling the company to maintain effective staffing levels. It aims to deal fairly and reasonably with employees who have either frequent or extended periods of sickness absence.

Currently the disciplinary procedure may be applied in certain circumstances to assist in the management of attendance at work. It is proposed that the company ceases to consider short or long term absence as a disciplinary matter and introduces 'cautions' in certain circumstances. The cautions would be managed through the absence management procedure and in some circumstances may lead to dismissal.

The company will continue to use the existing 'trigger levels' to identify those employees with attendance records that give cause for concern.

Absences will be dealt with under two new procedures: - short-term absences of less than 15 days and long term absences of 15 days or more.

The proposed procedures for dealing with short term and long term absence were submitted.

A programme of training will be developed to assist managers to implement the procedure.

RESOLVED – That the introduction of a new absence management procedure be approved, subject to: -

- The procedure being more specific about what is a "reasonable" period of time when there is no prospect of the employee being unable to return to work which might result in a person's employment being terminated with notice.
- The procedure making it clear that Resources and Audit Committee will hear appeals.

68 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – THIRD QUARTER 2010/11

The committee received an update on the management accounts for the third quarter of the financial year 2010/11 including the income and expenditure in relation to both revenue and repairs up to the end of December 2010.

The budget which is included within the management accounts has increased by £79,000 due to £75,000 worth of income received for the Lettings Policy Review being carried over from 2009/10 to 2010/11, which has increased income levels and £4,000 being included for the management fee in relation to managing properties on behalf of Tees Valley Housing Association.

The management accounts show an under spend to date of £49,000. This is due mainly to overheads being underspent to date and a saving on staffing costs through the Decent Homes staff reduction programme. However, it is expected that the overhead budget and the salary cost budget will break even at the year end.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

69 SICKNESS ABSENCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

The committee received a report for the period April to December 2010 on the sickness absence levels, general human resources (HR) initiatives and developments and learning and development activity.

The total sickness absence equated to 6.39 days (compared to 8.23 days for the same period last year). This equates to a 22.4% decrease in days lost in the period compared to the same period last year.

The company set a target of 9.75 days absence per employee for the current financial year (an improvement on last year's performance of 10.37 days). The performance to date is very encouraging and demonstrates the success of health and wellbeing initiatives and early HR interventions that have been introduced to help meet the target.

In the period April 2006 to March 2007, sickness absence was 15.10 days per employee. This compares to 10.37 days for the period April 2009 to March 2010. Performance of 6.39 days in the period April to December 2010 suggests that the company is likely to meet its target of 9.75 days and improve on previous year's performance.

Short term absence relates to periods of absence less than 15 working days in duration with long term absence greater than 15 days in duration. In the period, short term absence was 3.57 days and long term 2.83 days. This compares with 3.44 days short term absence and 4.8 days long term absence in the same period last year. This equates to a 3.6% increase in short term absence and 41% reduction in long term absence in the period as compared to the same period last year.

In the period, the biggest cause of absence was stress with 533 days absence. This compares 1081 days lost in the same period 2008. It is encouraging that initiatives to support employees have resulted in a 51% reduction over the last two years.

The financial cost of sickness absence to the company for the period was £202,647 as compared to £260,999 for the same period last year.

Managers are provided with monthly sickness information and guidance detailing sickness absence triggers, action required and the early intervention of human resources.

The company has held 80 sickness counselling interviews in the period triggered in response to four periods of absence or two periods of 15 days or more in a rolling 12 month period.

In the period, 12 cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) / counselling sessions were supported by the company. 18 options interviews were attended in the period.

The committee received an update on the following HR initiatives and developments: -

- Information sharing
- Retirement due to ill health
- Work Life Balance
- Investigation and Disciplinary
- Grievances
- Bullying and Harassment
- Whistleblowing
- Job Evaluation
- Recruitment
- Health and Wellbeing Initiatives
 - Wellbeing Diagnostic Tool
 - Passport to Health
 - Flu Vaccinations
- Heating Update.

In addition, the committee received an update on the following learning and development activity: -

- Investors in People (IiP)
- Employee Attitude Survey
- Qualifications
- Training Delivery
- Future Training
- Adult Apprenticeships
- Psychometric Testing
- ICT Training
- Health and Safety Training.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

70 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The committee received an update on the following health and safety activities: -

- Policy, procedure and safe systems of work
- Accidents
- Asbestos management
- Fire safety management
- Legionella control
- DDA
- Cyclical repair and maintenance
- Overall safety performance audit for the Partnering Contractors.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

71 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE

The committee, at its last meeting held on 4 November 2010, approved a revised action plan taking into account the recommendations of the external review of equality and diversity held earlier in the year, providing a focus going forward to ensure this continues to be an area of strength for the company. This also ensured the company met the requirements of the new equality legislation introduced with the Equality Act in October 2010.

The action plan will be reviewed annually and therefore a high proportion of the actions contained within this are to be completed by the end of the financial year.

Details of what has been achieved since the last meeting and actions to be achieved within the next period were reported. The full action plan was also submitted.

The company has also recently been shortlisted in the TPAS (Tenant Participatory Advise Service) Awards for contributions to equality and diversity. This award submission was based on the Single Equality Scheme and accompanying projects which demonstrate the high regard the company's work in this area continues to receive. The winner of the Northern Awards will be decided on 11 February.

It was previously noted that the new public sector duty is currently out for consultation and due to come into force in April 2011. Guidance is due to be provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to be produced in January 2011 when the final duty has been agreed. The draft document however sets out an expectation for the company, as a public body to provide a range of equality data relating to the workforce and the services it provides to allow the public to use the information to challenge the company and hold it to account on its performance.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

72 ISO 14001 – CONTINUING ASSESSMENT SURVEILLANCE REPORT

The committee received an update on the outcome of a scheduled re-inspection regarding the company's BS EN ISO 14001:2004 Environmental Management System certification (usually referred to as ISO 14001).

The BSi inspection in October 2010 took the form of a full day visit to the company and included site visits to two housing offices and a tour of Keelman House to ensure compliance with environmental legislation, the published Policy Statement and the Environmental Management System.

At the company's full certification inspection in June 2010, BSi identified three minor non-conformities against the international standard that needed corrective actions. The October 2010 inspection confirmed that these had been appropriately remedied.

However, the inspection found a further two minor non-conformities that need to be put right before BSi return for their next re-inspection in April 2011. Because of the minor nature of these two non-conformities, BSi have not requested the company to submit a corrective action plan and will confirm compliance at their next visit.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

73 2010/11 INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE – PROGRESS REPORT

Progress made by the Internal Audit Service against the audit plan for the financial year 2010/11 was reported.

As at January 2011, the audit plan is on course to be achieved. 14 audits are either complete or substantially complete, 11 audits are currently in progress and six audits are due to commence in the fourth quarter. As at 31 December 2010, 68% of the audit plan in terms of actual audit days against planned days was achieved by the Internal Audit Service.

The 2011/12 Audit Plan will be developed following a review of the current strategic and operational risk registers and through discussions with the Director of Finance – this will be a risk based audit plan. This plan will be presented to the next meeting of this committee on 28 April 2011.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

74 FORWARD PLAN

There is currently no system in place to make this committee aware of reports it will receive at future meetings. It has also previously been agreed in the 2010 Governance Improvement Plan to have an annual plan of meetings with themed subject matters programmed in.

A forward plan of reports that will be presented to meetings of this committee during the year was submitted. This will not be an exhaustive list of reports and there will clearly be a number of other items of business that the committee will be required to consider during the course of the next year. It will however give the committee an idea of forthcoming business. It will also assist officers when planning in business and meetings to avoid when there is a lot of business.

RESOLVED – (i) That the forward plan be noted.

(ii) That the forward plan be a standing item on future Resources and Audit Committee agendas.

75 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday 28 April 2011 at 10am in Board Room 2, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Team Valley, Gateshead.

76 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated categories of the company's Access to Information Rules.



Report to Resources and Audit Committee

28 April 2011

Title: Operation Risk Register – Housing Management

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To agree an updated Operational Risk Register for the Housing Management Directorate.

Background

2. The committee, at its meeting held on 4 November 2010, approved an updated Operational Risk Register for the company.
3. The updated register was split into individual service areas within each directorate.
4. The Board has previously approved an updated Risk Management Policy and one of the requirements within the Policy is that this committee will scrutinise an operational risk register for a directorate at each meeting as well as any critical/high risks that require any attention. The committee will also recommend to the Board any risks to be escalated to the strategic risk register.

Operational Risk Register – Housing Management

5. The Operational Risk Register for the Housing Management Directorate has been reviewed and an updated Register is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. Any changes to the register are highlighted in blue.
6. A number of future actions have been implemented and these are now identified as controls within the register. In addition, some new further actions have been identified for some of the risks. These are also highlighted in blue.
7. The following risks have been deleted: -
 - R14: Not having correct escalation and legal recovery in place for new tenancy types (system in place and no need for any further action)
 - R15: Sending former tenant arrears letters out that result in justifiable complaints (system in place and no need for any further action)

- HM5: information on customers is lost, stolen or misplaced on estate or in homes (corporate action, to be incorporated into risk on Corporate Services register around data protection)
- HM11: Out of date housing office inventories (to be transferred to Corporate Services register)

8. The following risks have been amalgamated into one risk each: -

- HM12: Carrying out of illegal evictions / HM16: Property is illegally occupied
- HM14: Breakdown in established partnerships to deliver estate management, sheltered and ASB services / HM15: Ineffective arrangements for the monitoring of legal, grounds maintenance and sheltered housing SLA's

Link to Values

9. This report links to the following company values: -

- Being a listening and learning organisation
- Being honest, accountable and transparent
- Being motivated, trained and committed
- Being customer focused, innovative and professional
- Embracing equality

Risk Management Implications

17. The risk management implications are identified throughout this report.

Financial Implications

18. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

19. There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report, however equality and diversity issues were considered when agreeing controls for a number of the risks.

Health Implications

20. Although there are no health implications directly arising from this report, the successful implementation of the recommendations will have a positive impact on the health and well being of Gateshead residents.

Environmental Implications

21. There are no environmental implications directly arising from this report.

Value for Money Implications

22. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

23. The Risk Manager has met with the Risk Management Group when reviewing the Operational Risk Register for Housing Management.

Impact on Customers

24. An effective risk management process will maintain the delivery of services to customers.

Recommendation

25. The committee is recommended to approve the updated Operational Risk Register for the Housing Management Directorate.

Housing Management - Boroughwide Services Operational Risk Register

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
	VOIDS:						
VO1	Levels of void properties held inactive pending decisions by council on future use, or pending conversion works (and preventing achievement of target on void rent loss). Eg 50 voids held for 6 months = £85k rent loss	Weekly void monitoring Monthly rent loss reports Permission to remove McErlane Square voids from debit (Jan 2011); 385 Alexandra Road (Feb 2011) Updated list of HELD properties sent to Housing Services (Feb 2011)	3	2	Phil Hogg	Maintain list of HELD properties As permission received from Housing Services, remove properties from debit.	Weekly updates Within one week of receipt
VO2	Injury to customer as a result of a property viewed or let in unsafe condition leading to claim/action against company	Safe to view procedure / Lettable Standard/ 'Check and Test' final inspection.	1	3	Phil Hogg	Regular training held with the Void Officers and repairs partner to ensure a good understanding of the Lettable Standard.	2011
VO3	Poor performance on voids timescales or standards by contractor leading to delays in letting	Weekly operational meetings with Morrison. Monthly performance review meetings	2	2	Phil Hogg	Maintain the weekly and monthly meetings and take appropriate actions as required.	2011

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
VO4	Inability to maintain current published lettable standard due to potential reduction in void budget	Monthly Void budget monitoring meetings 2011/12 void budget set for limited amount of major works	2	2	Phil Hogg	Monitor levels of major work requests Monthly monitoring of levels of category of void work carried out (with alerts if nearing notional maximum levels)	From April 2011
VO5	Vandalism / damage to void properties leading to additional expenditure, and damaging the reputation of an estate	"Security matrix" showing for every street if security would be needed – and what type	2	2	Phil Hogg	Matrix reviewed annually	Aug 2011
	LETTINGS:						
LE1	Reduced availability of properties due to property demolition and increased numbers on Housing Register	Phased priority awards for demolition tenants. Chandless phase 1 priority awarded Oct 2010 Monitoring of lettings and priority ratios. 'Best use of stock' (Underoccupation incentive.)	4	2	Jackie Armstrong	First review of Chandless phasing plan completed and scheduled for implementation July 2011 (also in Op Support section below) Quarterly monitoring of lettings by category / property type reported to Housing Services to inform any review of ratios. Report also covers numbers / categories on Housing Register Report on under-occupation incentive to customer and communities (KJ)	July 2011 Next HomeChoice meeting with Housing Services due in May 2011 Aug 2011

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
LE2	Potential loss of some functionality and ability to cross reference data due to change to a sub-regional lettings scheme across Tyne and Wear , with a new (Abritas) IT system to manage lettings that is separate from our Northgate Housing IT system	Each partner Tyne and Wear authority has agreed to use software (NDL Metascybe) that enables transfer of data between systems	2	2	Jackie Armstrong	Abritas Choice Based Lettings system configuration + Installation of NDL Metascybe software	By June 2011
LE3	Loss of / damage to furniture packages by tenants Leading to additional expenditure and efforts to recover from tenant	Recharges. Programme of Home Visits to furnished tenancies	2	2	Jackie Armstrong	Annual Review of furnished Service	End year 2010/11
LE4	Delays in process of letting homes impacting on performance on void rent loss and average relet times, and on ability to rehouse quickly those in need	Monitoring of relet times. Measuring impact of increase in direct lets. Targets for rehousing Urgent Homeless cases. Urgent voids identified with repair	2	1	Jackie Armstrong	Annual performance report will highlight any areas for concern and have associated actions to be implemented.	June 2011

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
		partner.					
LE5	Risk of not following policy when selecting an applicant for a property. (Reputation, complaints, ombudsman)	Lettings shortlist audits / Training and procedures for lettings team	1	2	Jackie Armstrong	Annual Internal audit to overview effectiveness of controls	Next Audit 2011 (to be confirmed)
LE6	Incorrect advertising of properties, leading to customers bidding/not bidding as they would have if correct. Could lead to complaints, or need to re-advertise + delay.	Lettings Officers visit and photograph properties and prepare advert information. Draft property newspaper circulated for approval	1	1	Jackie Armstrong	Sub regional plans to implement new publishing system	Autumn 2011
	RENT & INCOME:						
RI1	Potential reduction in customers' Housing Benefit entitlement due to government reforms – may lead to increase in arrears	Arrears prevention / income maximisation advice	2	3	Phil Gallagher	Monitor changes in HB entitlement Obtain information from Housing Benefit team on customers affected by increase in non-dependant charges	April 2011 April 2011
RI2	Tenants not paying rent or not prioritising payment of rent, and - as a result - accruing arrears	Pre-tenancy advice/ New Tenancy Officers. Regular rent campaigns promote importance of paying rent. Arrears Escalation process.	1	2	Phil Gallagher	Financial Inclusion research project into arrears and BME tenants (New risk around failure to maximise rental income via Financial Inclusion initiatives escalated to the Strategic Risk Register and approved by Board on 8 March 2011)	Report by June 2011

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
		<p>Court Pre-action protocol.</p> <p>Arrears prevention work and identification of groups at higher risk or requiring additional support/advice</p>				Publicity on changes to HB entitlement and non-dependant charges	
RI3	Delays in processing payment of tenants' Housing Benefit – leading to increased arrears	<p>Partnership agreement / meetings with HB section to review HB processing performance. RAIT training on HB.</p> <p>Pre-tenancy advice to tenants.</p>	1	2	Phil Gallagher	<p>Monitor impact of delays in processing HB due to installation of new council HB IT system in Nov/Dec 2010</p> <p>(Delays have been kept to within manageable limits)</p>	January-Mar 2011
RI4	Not having correct escalation and legal recovery in place for new tenancy types — preventing action from being taken	<p>Legal advice</p> <p>Research</p> <p>Training</p> <p>New escalation procedures</p>	4	2	Phil Gallagher	<p>Escalation for starter tenancies to be developed in conjunction with legal services.</p> <p>Remove from register as system in place and no need for any further action</p>	December 2010
RI5	Sending Former Tenant arrears letters out that result in justifiable complaints —eg as a result of IT system not having been correctly updated to record a deceased tenant	<p>Letters prompted by IT system, but authorised by Officers.</p> <p>Investigating incidents to determine what went wrong— and if learning or training required.</p>	4	2	Jonathan Graham	<p>Learning point from recent complaint has identified training need for front-line staff on terminating tenancies. To be rolled out to local office staff via briefing note.</p> <p>Remove from register as system in place and no need for any further action</p>	December 2010

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
RI6	Ineffective or inefficient arrangements for prevention and recovery of former tenant arrears – poor value for money	<p>RAIT procedures focus on preventing arrears throughout tenancy.</p> <p>Specialist former tenancy recovery team – begin at receipt of notice of termination.</p> <p>Appropriate use of external Debt Collection Agencies.</p> <p>Tracing.</p> <p>Proposed write-off of unrecoverable debt.</p>	1	2	Jonathan Graham	Two write-off exercises each year – next in Quarter 2 2011/12	September 2011
	OPERATIONAL SUPPORT:						
OP1	Not achieving phasing plans for rehousing of tenants on clearance schemes – leading to delay of demolition contracts	<p>Regular updates on progress</p> <p>Liaison with lettings team / Housing Services</p>	2	4	Martin Poulter	<p>Five remaining tenants in phase 2 at Ravensworth Road maisonettes to be rehoused by June 2011 (two have offers as at 11 April 2011)</p> <p>Award clearance priority to</p>	<p>June 2011</p> <p>July 2011</p>

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
		Requests made where appropriate for Direct Lets to enable moves to take place Rehousing of 1st phase of Ravensworth Road tenants completed ion target by Dec 2010				phase 2 at Chandless estate (following review, awards to be made July 2011)	
OP2	Inability to cover concierge shifts due to staff shortages, vacancies – may lead to complaints about service charge, and in Warwick Ct only would prevent access	Small pool of casual staff / Standalone option in 2 suites (not Warwick), Running 4 blocks from 1 suite.	3	1	Martin Poulter	Year end position statement on frequency of use of 'standalone' Monitor frequency of use of 'standalone' option	May 2011 2011/12

Housing Management – Tenancy and Estate Management Operational Risk Register

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
HM1	<p>Risk of fires/tripping hazards/safety in communal areas in multi storey accommodation, low rise and sheltered accommodation</p> <p>Impact – risk of injury or fatality to staff and customers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> multi storey check system in place to remove hazards Furniture replacement programme in place to remove non compliant furnishings in sheltered accommodation 	2	4	D Ewart/J McCartney	Develop an approach to safety checks in medium and low rise	September 2011
HM2	<p>Reduced customer satisfaction with living in neighbourhood due to lack of funding for estate & environmental projects</p> <p>Impact – reduced customer satisfaction in neighbourhoods could lead to increase in tenants moving out and reduced demand for properties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established partnership arrangements in place Access to funding via community groups in place EO toolkit outlining current resources available to maximise implementation of schemes. 	3	2	D Ewart/J McCartney	Explore & Identify other external funding resources No alternative funding available at present but review will be ongoing to support environmental work	Ongoing
HM3	<p>Grounds Maintenance Service not delivered to agreed published standards</p> <p>Impact – reduced customer and councillor satisfaction with neighbourhoods and reduced demand for homes due to visual look of estates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint working arrangements established and in place monthly and quarterly performance monitoring meetings held with customers and partners to scrutinise performance Annual review of 	3	2	D Ewart	Annual review of Grounds Maintenance Service Agreement with customer involvement	May 2011 July 2011

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
		Service Agreement with customer involvement is undertaken					
HM4	<p>Not reporting Safeguarding Adult or Children issues</p> <p>Impact – risk of serious injury or fatality to a child or adult and potential risk of legal challenge if we are found to be at fault</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and procedures in place • Staff training is reviewed annually & refreshed every 3 years • Referrals and cases are monitored through NRT • Training is provided through multi agency Safeguarding Boards & through TGHC • Specialist safeguarding children training for housing ??—or company held Jan-March 2011 & has been included in annual training directory 	1	4	Julie McCartney	<p>Implement revised procedures for safeguarding Adults</p> <p>Working with the Council to finalise revised procedure and rollout of training programme from June 2011</p> <p>Staff briefing on updated safeguarding children procedures to be carried out</p>	<p>June 2011</p> <p>June 2011</p> <p>June 2011</p>
HM5	<p>Information on customers is lost, stolen or misplaced on estate or in homes</p> <p>Impact—risk of challenge from customers under Data Protection Act and loss of customers trust in company</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data protection policy briefing provided to all staff & staff briefing held in December 2010 • Procedures in place to store or remove confidential information. • Staff briefing on data protection 	4	3	Housing Managers	<p>This has been deleted as its a corporate action for the company as a whole</p>	

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
		responsibilities carried out annually					
HM6	Theft or violent incident in a housing office relating to cash collection and collection of cash from telephone boxes in sheltered and high rise Impact – risk of injury to staff and loss of income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly office compliance checklists undertaken CCTV, security screens in offices to record activity Cash handling procedures in place Panic alarms to police installed Access to cash office locked and controlled Staff double up to collect cash from telephones & washers in sheltered schemes & MSB's 	1	3	Housing Managers	Review coin operated systems within communal areas to consider alternative options such as card operated	June 2011
HM7	Key Officer to manage ASB database leaves or goes on long term sick Impact – currently no other trained to manage database so access to info would be disrupted	Support from Gateshead Council and ICT teams 3 NRT officers now trained on ASB database; plus guidance notes produced	2	2	J Meldrum/M Huston	Ensure other team members are trained and acquire skills to manage database	
HM8	Relevant information about new vulnerable customers not shared with housing offices and frontline services Impact - risk of vulnerable customers not being supported appropriately leading to tenancy issues and potential loss of tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information recorded on Northgate Fortnightly meetings held between HomeChoice & Housing options team to review medical & homeless cases 	2	2	Jackie Armstrong	Request access to Council's Peter Lally (manages P1E returns & homeless cases) system to enable HomeChoice to view notes on homeless cases	September 2011

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
						Develop a protocol with the Council to include information sharing & recording on the Arbitras system for sub regional CBL scheme	September 2011
HM9	<p>Risk of performance information being inaccurate / open to human error due to use of spreadsheets rather than Northgate</p> <p>Impact – risk of performance not reaching targets and customer service standards not being met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management Framework - manual checks are undertaken by CSO's and managers. Audit trail in place for checking • monthly/quarterly reports/ PI and service standard monitoring in place • AHM/SMT monitoring and performance reports to committee • Use of performance point to monitor trends in performance 	2	2	All Managers	Review the Performance Management Framework	May 2011
HM10	<p>Reduced delivery of customer service due to lack of staff cover</p> <p>Impact – risk of increased customer dissatisfaction and complaints; Risk of reduced performance in key areas of service and collection of income</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local cover arrangements made between offices, including the diversion of phones; prioritising work tasks in place. • Reminding 	1	1	Housing Manager	Explore options for mobile working	December 2011

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
		employees about the use of alternative locations if they can't get into their office					
HM11	Out of date housing office inventories Impact—risk of loss of assets in housing offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory procedure and standard forms in place 	3	4	Housing Managers	Issue annual reminders to conduct reviews and produce annual report on compliance Transferred to Corporate Services Register	April 2011
HM12	Carrying out an illegal eviction Impact—loss of rental income, inability to let property		4	2	Housing Manager	Annual review of procedures and training to be carried out Deleted as now combined with HM16	May 2011
HM13	Failure to share appropriate information on dangerous or high risk individuals Impact – would present safety risk to staff visiting or in contact with these individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safer Estates agreement in place; training for staff; procedure and policy guidance in place Attendance by NRT at MAPPA and multi agency meetings ASB procedures reviewed annually & updated training carried out 	1	2	J Meldrum/M Huston	Review and update PVP procedure across all services (draft guidance and procedure agreed; ICT development underway)	Sept 2011
HM14	Breakdown in established partnerships to deliver estate management, Sheltered and ASB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular partnership meetings and protocols in place 	1	2	J McCartney/ D Ewart	Annual review of terms of reference of partnership	September 2011

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
	services Impact – lack of multi agency specialist services leads to less support for customers and reduced appearance of estates; Lack of effective monitoring of SLA's may lead to risk of reduced levels of service and VFM not being achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of reference in place and reviewed annually Quarterly monitoring meetings in place Annual review of SLA's undertaken (Moved from HM15) 				arrangements	
HM15	Ineffective arrangements for the monitoring of legal, grounds maintenance and sheltered housing SLA's Impact–		4	2	J McCartney/ D Ewart	Deleted as combined with HM14	
HM16	Property is illegally occupied Impact - risk of lost rental income & increased costs for legal recovery of property; Damage to Company's reputation and possible civil action against company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures in place to manage illegal occupancy Estate inspections carried out by EO's HB fraud checks monitored and investigated Support/guidance from Legal services provided through SLA Procedures in place to investigate and action Legal training provided (Transferred from HM 12) 	2	1	Housing Managers	Carry out refresher training on illegal subletting and occupation	May 2011
HM17	Management of ASB database Impact – ability to improve reporting on ASB & identify areas for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASB database training and procedure guide in place manual input into 	2	1	J Meldrum/M Huston	Explore options to manage system in house Explore feasibility of	Sept 2011

Risk No	Risk	Controls	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Future Actions	Timescale for implementation
		<p>Northgate system when ASB case is opened</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northgate updates ASB database with tenancy details 				linking ASB database to Northgate system	
HM18	<p>Loss of cash counter computer facilities (ACR) Impact – reduced customer satisfaction in service and potential human error in recording payment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand written receipts are available for use alternative payment methods are publicised for customers Customers are redirected to other services where there is a loss of power and no security available 	2	1	Customer Service Officer	Re-fresh training to housing office network around procedures for taking manual cash.	June 2011
HM19	<p>Out of date tenancy and estate management procedures Impact – risk of delivering inconsistencies in customer service and reduced customers satisfaction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review in place to ensure procedures kept up to date Wednesday briefing sessions provide refresher training for staff 	2	1	J McCartney		
HM20	<p>Continuous improvement plan for sheltered housing not kept up to date Impact - risk of not retaining CHS accreditation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan in place along with project monitoring group 	1	1	M Muldoon-Smith	Progress report to be submitted to CHS to retain accreditation	May 2011
HM21	<p>Neighbourhood Action Plan not kept up to date Impact - risk of not retaining Cleaner Safer Greener accreditation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan in place and monitored by Wrekenton Communities Partnership 	1	1	T Smare	Progress report to go to committee	May 2011



Report to the Resources and Audit Committee

28 April 2011

Title: Internal Audit Plan 2011/12

Report of: Chief Internal Auditor, Gateshead Council

Purpose of Report

1. To approve the Internal Audit Plan for the year 2011/12.

Summary

2. The Chief Internal Auditor has produced an audit plan for the year 2011/12 and it is attached at the Appendix to this report.

Link to values

3. This report links to the following company values: -
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being motivated, trained and committed.

Impact on tenants

4. No impact directly from this report.

Risk Management Implications

5. The perceived risk of each audit is based on a twelve point assessment taking into account such areas as materiality, complexity of the system, potential for fraud and sensitivity. Based on a score derived from the assessment, audits are categorised as high, medium and low priorities. The Company's risk registers and the previous year's audit work is also reviewed. This informs the time allocation and the frequency in which audits will be carried out.

Financial Implications

6. The cost of the internal audit work plan is fully provided for in the 2011/12 budget.

Equality and Diversity Implications

7. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

Value for Money implications

8. The delivery of the 2011/12 audit plan and the implementation of internal audit recommendations will assist in identifying efficiencies and achieving value for money.

Health Implications

9. There are no health implications associated with this report.

Environmental Implications

10. There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

Consultation carried out

9. The plan has been developed following consultation with all relevant stakeholders within the company.

Recommendation

10. The committee is asked to approve the internal audit plan for 2011/12.

Contact: Jim Farquhar, Chief Internal Auditor, Gateshead Council Tel No 0191 433 3711

	Internal Audit Plan 2011/12	Planned Days	Planned Report to Committee
	CORPORATE SERVICES		
1	MAIN ACCOUNTING	5	Jul-11
2	HOME REWARDS	9	Jul-11
3	HUMAN RESOURCES	9	Jul-11
4	COMMUNICATIONS	8	Jul-11
5	RENT COLLECTION	9	Oct-11
6	BUSINESS CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS	4	Oct-11
7	CREDITORS	7	Oct-11
8	COMPANY PAYROLL	7	Oct-11
9	BUDGET SETTING AND MONITORING	5	Oct-11
10	PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK	7	Oct-11
11	COUNTER FRAUD ARRANGEMENTS	11	Oct-11
12	PROCUREMENT	5	Jan-12
13	COMPLAINTS	7	Jan-12
14	IT AUDIT	16	Jan-12
15	DATA SECURITY & INFORMATION GOVERNANCE	8	Jan-12
16	GOVERNANCE	5	Apr-12
17	CORPORATE IT	1	Apr-12
	HOUSING MANAGEMENT		
18	VOID MANAGEMENT	9	Oct-11
19	TENANCY ALLOCATION AND LETTINGS	11	Oct-11
20	HOUSING ESTABLISHMENTS	12	Jan-12
21	RENT ARREARS	16	Jan-12
	KEELMAN HOMES		
22	KEELMAN HOMES	13	Jan-12
	PROPERTY & TECHNICAL		
23	GAS SERVICING	5	Jan-12
24	ASBESTOS	9	Jan-12
25	CAPITAL PROGRAMME	11	Apr-12
26	REPAIRS	11	Apr-12
	GENERAL		
	COMMITTEE TRAINING	4	
	CONSULTANCY & GENERAL ADVICE	8	



Report to the Resources and Audit Committee

28 April 2011

Title: Sickness Absence and HR Update

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with an update on general HR initiatives and developments.

Background

2. This report provides the Committee with the following information: -
 - Employee and HR Monitoring digest
 - Sickness absence update
 - Work Life Balance update
 - Investigation and Disciplinary update
 - Grievance, Bullying and Harassment update
 - Other HR initiatives and developments.
 - Learning and development activity

Employee and HR Monitoring Digest

3. Attached at Appendix 1 to this report is an analysis of the key employee data and HR monitoring to provide the Committee with an overview of the company's performance and key priorities.

Sickness Absence Update

4. Attached at Appendix 2 is an analysis of the sickness absence levels for the period from April to March 2011 and compares these with our performance last year with that of the top quartile performance for ALMOs as a whole.
5. Appendix 3 provides in a graphical format the reasons for absence within each department of the company for 2010/11.
6. The total sickness absence for 2010/11 was 8.3 days compared to 10.37 days in 2009/10. This equates to a 20% decrease in days lost in 2010/11 compared to 2009/10.

7. The company set a target of 9.75 days absence per employee for the current financial year (an improvement of last year's performance of 10.37 days). Absence has reduced 1.45 days below the target of 9.75 days and reduced 2.07 days on last year's performance. This is very encouraging and demonstrates the success of health and wellbeing initiatives and early HR interventions that have been introduced to achieve the target.
8. In 2006/07, sickness absence was 15.10 days per employee. This compares to 8.3 days for 2010/11. This equates to a 45% reduction (7.07 days) in a four year period.
9. Short term absence relates to periods of absences of less than 15 working days with long term absence greater than 15 days in duration. In 2010/11, short term absence was 4.71 days and long term 3.6 days per employee. This compares with 4.52 days short term absence and 5.86 days long term absence in 2009/10. This equates to a 4.2% increase in short term absence and 39% reduction in long term absence in 2010/11 as compared to 2009/10.
10. In 2010/11, the biggest cause of absence was stress with 613.8 days absence. This compares 1273.5 days lost in 2009/10. It is encouraging that initiatives to support employees have resulted in a 51.8% reduction over the last two years.
11. Managers are provided with monthly sickness information and guidance detailing sickness absence triggers, action required and the early intervention of human resources.

Managing Sickness Absence

12. The company has held 118 sickness counselling interviews in the period April to March 2011 triggered in response to four periods of absence or two periods of 15 days or more in a rolling 12 month period.
13. In the period April to March 2011, 20 cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) / counselling sessions were supported by the company.
14. 18 options interviews were attended in the period April to March 2011. The meetings provide employees on long term sickness absence with support relating to options and their future employability with the company. Options include phased return to work, redeployment, work life balance, reduced hours, and reasonable adjustments to the working environment and ill health retirement.

Information Sharing

15. In April 2011 we met with Human Resources at Gateshead Council to share information about measures and initiatives that have contributed to the improvements in managing attendance.

Retirement due to ill health

16. In the period January to March 2011 the following activity has taken place:

- One employee was reassessed in January 2011 following an appeal to tier two (reduced pension) pension award. The appeal was successful on the basis of the reassessment and the employee was subsequently awarded tier one (full pension) of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Work Life Balance

17. In the period April to March 2011 the following work life balance applications have been approved:

No of Applications	Type of Work Life Balance Request
4	Application to return to full time working
17	Application to reduce working hours
2	Applications for job share
9	Applications for compressed hours

Investigation and Disciplinary

18. In the period April to March 2011 the following activities have taken place:

Suspension	Outcome
2	2 Investigations
Investigation	Outcome
12	7 No further action 3 Progressed to disciplinary hearing 1 Suspension followed by No Further Action 1 Employee left before disciplinary carried out
Disciplinary	Outcome
5	2 Dismissal 3 First written warning
Capability	Outcome
2	1 Stage 3 1 Ill health Dismissal

Grievances

19. During 2010/11 there were two informal grievances and four stage one formal grievances. One stage one grievance has progressed to stage two and is now resolved. The remaining grievances have been resolved without further action needed.

Bullying and Harassment

20. In the period January to March 2011 there were no allegations of bullying or harassment.

Whistleblowing

21. In the period January to March 2011 there were no reported incidents.

Job Evaluation

22. One employee has taken voluntary redundancy, seven employees remain in protection.

Recruitment

23. In the period January to March 2011, the company has advertised four internal vacancies, 19 applications have been received and appointments were made. There were no external vacancies advertised.

Exit Interviews

24. In 2010/11, 55 employees left the company. Of these, 28 exit interviews were held with an HR advisor. 27 employees did not have an exit interview for the following reasons:-
- Two were dismissed
 - Two employees were seconded to another organisation prior to leaving
 - One employee was on a career break and was out of the country
 - Five employees were off due to ill health
 - 16 employees did not attend
 - One was on maternity leave and did not return
25. All employees were contacted and given the opportunity of an exit interview with an option to complete the exit interview form without an HR advisor and return in the post.
26. Of the 28 exit interviews carried out general comments indicate:
- The majority of employees enjoyed working for The Gateshead Housing Company
 - Employees indicated they had a good relationship with colleagues and management
 - Employees would return to work for the company in the future
27. Of the 28 exit interviews held, employees are asked to provide reasons for leaving. They can select more than one reason. Results are as follows:-
- 57.14% Took Voluntary Redundancy (16)
 - 35.71% left for better career prospects (10)
 - 25% retired (7)
 - 21.42% left because their contract ended (6)
 - 10.71% left for more responsibility (3)
 - 7.14% left for personal reasons (2)
 - 7.14 % leaving the area (2)
 - 3.57% stated not valued by management (1)
 - 3.57% Dissatisfied with present post/pay (1)
 - 3.57% Workload/hours (1)

Employment Law Updates

The Equality Act 2010 – Gender Pay Gap

28. Section 78 of the Equality Act 2010 requires employers of 250 or more employees to publish information about their gender pay gap i.e. the difference in pay between male and female employees. This is not yet in force and the coalition government is looking at a voluntary framework of gender pay reporting.

Agency Worker Regulations

29. Agency worker regulations are now finalised and will be implemented 1 October 2011. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) are drafting Government guidance and it is expected a final version will be released in July 2011.

Abolition of the Default Retirement Age (DRA)

30. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, which came into effect on 1 October 2006, prohibited discrimination on the grounds of age in the workplace. The regulations contained a very important exception in the form of a national default retirement age (DRA) for employees in the UK, set at 65 years of age.
31. The DRA has allowed employers to dismiss employees fairly by reason of retirement when they reach 65, or beyond provided they followed a set of statutory retirement procedure.
32. From 1 October 2011 employees who reach the age of 65 cannot be retired using the DRA. Transitional arrangements cover employees who will reach 65 on or before 30 September 2011.
33. The Government has made a commitment to review the impact of abolition of the DRA in 5 years time in 2016.

Government Consultation on Reform of Employment Tribunals and improving Workplace Dispute Resolutions

34. The Government has launched a major consultation on reforming the employment tribunal system. The consultation is part of the Government wide growth review, one of the key stated aims of which is to increase employer confidence in the workplace in hiring and managing staff effectively and to seek to stimulate job creation. Consultation closes April 2011.
35. The key proposals under the Government consultation include: -
 - Introducing financial penalties for employers found to have breached employee rights
 - Introduction of fees for commencing employment tribunals complaints
 - Claimants to submit all disputes to ACAS for pre claim conciliation
 - Guidance to manage parties' expectations
 - Encouraging settlement - a formal process for making settlement offers
 - Increasing the qualifying period for unfair dismissal from 1 to 2 years
 - Mediation and workplace resolution.

Forthcoming legislation

36. The Bribery Act was due to come into force in April 2011 but has been postponed for at least three months. The Act introduces a new corporate offence of 'failing to prevent bribery'. Companies must put in place adequate procedures to prevent bribery however guidance has yet to be published.
37. The New right to additional paternity leave and family friendly policies comes into effect April 2011. This may mean that fathers are likely to be able to take advantage of additional paternity leave enabling mothers to effectively transfer part of their maternity leave to their partner. Fathers can take up to 26 weeks additional paternity leave if the mother decides to return to work before the end of her 52 week leave. This applies to the father of the child and partners (same sex partner) of the mother / main adopter. Some of the leave may be paid if taken during the mother's 39 week paid maternity pay period.

Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

Free Health Checks

38. South of Tyne and Wear NHS have delivered free health checks to employees who are registered with a GP in Southin Tyneside, Sunderland or Gateshead who are over 40 years of age. However an employee who has been diagnosed with diabetes, stroke, kidney problems, heart problems or on medication for cholesterol or high blood pressure is not eligible.
39. 12 employees attended the health check. The employees received a personal health check report which provides an analysis of their current health status. The report includes blood pressure and cholesterol results, cardiovascular risk, lifestyle, alcohol and weight management results.
40. The report enables employees to take charge of their own health and wellbeing. Results can be compare after six months to see if improvements are being made or maintained.

Chiropody

41. We continue to offer chiropody services once a month. The Chiropodist has attended Keelman House and an outbased office. 21 employees took advantage of this service in the period January to March 2011.

Chiropactor

42. 13 employees attended a free spinal check and consultation with a Doctor of Chiropractic.

North East Better Health at Work Award

43. Seven employees attended an information event at Gateshead College to explore the requirements and benefits of the award. The North East Better Health at Work Award has been developed to give recognition to workplaces in the North East Region which actively promote workplace Health.

44. The North East Better Health at Work Award is a partnership between NHS and local Primary Care Trusts, Public Health departments, Gateshead College, the TUC, other health improvement specialists and employers. The Award is supported by Government Office for the North East, Sport England and neshep.
45. Any size or type of organisation can take part in the Award which is free to enter.
46. Employees benefit from access to a wide range of health support services in their local area and organisations benefit from implementing a health framework which enables them to bring together health activities in a structured way.
47. Organisations can also benchmark against others in their sector and across the North East to measure performance on health and wellbeing in the workplace and identify the impact that any health initiatives have on the health and wellbeing of their workforce.
48. Employees have an opportunity to increase their personal knowledge of health issues and share their enthusiasm about health with other employees by becoming a health advocate within their organisation.
49. There are three levels to the award – Bronze, Silver and Gold – and each level takes a year to achieve, however flexibility is offered to those organisations that need it.

HR surgeries

50. In August 2010 the company introduced human resources surgeries. The surgeries are held in a dedicated room and developed to provide a venue where employees can seek advice and support on matters that affect them during their employment. Although the surgeries are held at Keelman House managers and employees have been informed that an advisor will attend any of the outbased locations on request. In the period August 2010 to March 2011 13 employees have attended the surgeries at Keelman House. There have been no requests for an HR advisor to attend an out based office.

Learning and Development Activity

Investors in People (IiP)

51. The IiP assessment will take place 9 – 16 June 2011. Improvement Development Growth (IDG) has been appointed to carry out a full re-assessment of ten indicators to include health and wellbeing.

Employee Attitude Survey

52. An employee attitude survey was issued to all employees in December 2010. 162 responses were received which equates to a 42% response rate. 87% of respondents indicated that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their employer. A summary of the results is attached at Appendix 4 and full breakdown of the results has been posted on the Board Members Website.

Training

53. The Equality and Diversity e-learning was re-launched in February 2011. There are two modules one for all employees and another for managers. The e-learning application has been updated to provide an overview of the main changes in legislation from the introduction of the Single Equality Act. 75% of employees have completed module one, achieving a pass rate of 80% or more.
54. Smoke-free homes Alliance are working with FRESH NE to offer free training about the effects of second hand smoke. A pilot is taking place in Felling, Wrekenton and Central Gateshead. Estate Officers, Rent and income Officers and Tenant Liaison Assistants have attended training.
55. Five survey training courses have been delivered. The purpose of the course is to help us to better understand how we develop our surveys and gain the most from our contact with customers.
56. A team building event was arranged for the Neighbourhood Relations Team (NRT). The event included managing change, current legislation and problem solving. Employees were provided with an Insights personality profile for self-awareness.
57. Shelter delivered a course on Immigration Status and Housing Rights to the Lettings team.
58. 80 employees identified the need for training to deal with difficult situations. Courses are being delivered for the company by Gateshead Council.
59. The HR and Learning and Development team delivered Help with Employment training course as part of the moving forward courses. The training provided practical help with application forms, interview skills and expelling some of the myths about equal opportunities.

Future Training

60. To support the launch of the Absence Management Procedure an e-learning programme is being developed for all employees. In addition a training course will be delivered to managers on the implementation of the procedure.
61. Responses from a survey by the Union Learning Representative (ULR) has resulted in the planned deliveries of three free courses to include; Spanish, Maths and English. A European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) course will commence in May for a small charge.

Adult Apprenticeships

62. 20 employees have enrolled on level 3 adult apprenticeship courses provided by Sunderland College as follows;
 - Customer Service Apprenticeship (9 employees)
 - Business Administration Apprenticeship (7 employees)
 - Management Apprenticeship (2 employees)
 - NVQ Certificate in Management (1 employee)

- NVQ Certificate in Business Administration (1 employee)

ICT Training

63. During the January 2010 to March 2011 the following activity took place:

- 1-2-1 coaching excel
- Northgate customer profile demonstration
- SharePoint Libraries

Health and Safety Training

64. In the period January 2010 to December 2011 the following health and safety training have been delivered :

- Tool box talk on Bio Hazards
- Tool box talk on Ladder training
- Evac Chair training
- Legionella awareness training
- Stress Awareness
- Manual handling
- Defibrillator training
- First Aid 1 day course
- First Aid 3 days course

Link to values

65. This report links to the following company values: -

- Being honest, accountable and transparent
- Being motivated, trained and committed across the company
- Being caring and respecting
- A commitment to all our employees
- Embracing equality

Impact on Customers

66. Sickness absence impacts on the level of service provided to customers. Every effort is taken to keep this to a minimum. Managing absence and delivering in our commitment to have a well trained and responsive workforce will directly lead to improved services to customers.

Risk Management Implications

67. This report will assist in managing two of the company's strategic risks: -

- Failure to sustain improvement
- Failure to recruit and retain suitable staff.

Financial Implications

68. The financial cost of sickness absence to the company for the year was £262,900 as compared to £328,870 for the same period last year.

Equality and Diversity Implications

69. The company's commitment to being an equal opportunities employer is an integral part of every aspect of the company's activities. All training is designed to meet the diverse needs of the community and employees.

Value for Money implications

70. Value for money principles are followed in all aspects of the service to include managing sickness absence and providing focussed training. Reduced sickness absence ensures we maximise service delivery to tenants and customers.

Health Implications

71. The initiatives and prevention work that has been introduced over the past year have had a positive impact on the health of our staff. The clearest measure of this is that over the past 12 months sickness absence has been only 8.3 days, which is the lowest level of sickness absence the Company has had since its inception.
72. The company's commitment to learning and development is embedded in the Investors in People award (IiP) and is applied consistently across the company. Our approach to provide tailored learning will have a positive impact on employee's health and overall wellbeing and will minimise any stress.

Environmental Implications

73. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

74. The company's HR consultants EEF Northern have been consulted on aspects of the report. A number of the courses delivered and developed were identified by employees, as part of the annual appraisal process.

Recommendation

75. The views of the committee are sought on whether the committee is satisfied with the update on general HR initiatives and developments.

					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2010/11					
Performance Measure		Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Number of people employed by TGHC					
Male		185	180	180	168
Female		217	212	212	207
Permanent Employees		395	381	376	354
Temporary Employees		7	11	16	21
Full Time		336	324	323	306
Part Time		66	68	69	69
Number of starters (since 01 April 2010)		8	6	7	6
Number of leavers (since 01 April 2010)		9	16	7	23
	Normal age Retirements	1	4	0	2
	Early Retirements	1	0	0	0
	Ill health retirements	0	0	1	0
Number of employees seeking redeployment		0	0	0	0
Number of employees in Protection following Job Evaluation		11	11	8	7
Diversity Monitory					
Gender					
	Male	185	180	180	168
	Female	217	212	212	207
Age					
	Under 18	0	0	0	0
	18 – 25	34	28	27	26
	26 – 35	131	127	125	117
	36 – 45	78	80	81	84
	46 – 55	92	92	94	93
	56 – 65	66	64	64	55
	66 +	1	1	1	0

 The Gateshead Housing Company Working with Gateshead Council					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2010/11					
Performance Measure		Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Disability	Perceived themselves as disabled	62	57	56	53
	Do not perceive themselves as disabled	340	335	336	322
Ethnicity	White British	391	381	381	367
	White Irish	1	1	1	1
	White Other	1	1	1	1
	White and Black Caribbean				
	White and Black African				
	White and Asian				
	Asian or Asian British Indian	1	1	1	1
	Asian or Asian British Pakistani				
	Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1	1	1	1
	Asian or Asian British Other	1	1	1	1
	Black or Black British Caribbean				
	Black or Black British African	5	5	5	4
	Black or Black British Other	1	1	1	1
	Chinese				
	Other				
(Results from 292 respondents to personal details audit)					
Faith	Buddhist	0	0	0	0
	Christian	175	175	175	175
	Hindu	1	1	1	1
	Jewish	0	0	0	0
	Muslim	1	1	1	1
	No Religion	63	63	63	63
	Prefer Not to say	47	47	47	47
	Sikh	0	0	0	0
	Other religion	5	5	5	5
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual	2	2	2	2
	Gay Man	2	2	2	2
	Gay Woman/Lesbian	0	0	0	0
	Hetrosexual/straight	256	256	256	256
	Prefer not to say	32	32	32	32

					
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2010/11					
Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	
Recruitment Monitoring					
Number of BME applicants for external posts					
Application for employment	1	1	0	0	
Short listed for interview	0	0	0	0	
Offered post	0	0	0	0	
Number of disabled applicants for external posts					
Employment	2	2	0	0	
Short listed for interview	1	1	0	0	
Offered post	0	0	0	0	
HR advisory issues					
Investigations	3	4	1	2	
Disciplinary	1	3	1	2	
Suspensions	1	0	1	0	
Oral Warning	0	0	0	0	
First Written Warning	0	2	0	1	
Final Written Warning	0	0	0	0	
Dismissals	1	0	0	1	
Appeals Submitted	0	0	0	1	
Stage 1 Grievance	1	3	0	0	
Stage 2 Grievance	0	1	0	0	
Bullying and Harassment	1	0	0	0	
Whistleblowing	1	0	0	0	
Capability	0	0	1	0	
Health and Wellbeing					
Total number of working days lost per employee	1.72	1.75	2.92	1.91	
Total number of working days lost to sickness	646	637	1052	678	
Number of Occupational Health appointments	10	32	14	27	
• New referrals	7	17	9	23	
• Review appointments	3	15	5	4	
• Surgery appointments	10	29	14	27	
• Home appointments	0	3	0	0	
Number of employee counselling/CBT sessions	3	9	0	8	
Number of Sickness Counselling Interviews	33	30	17	38	

 The Gateshead Housing Company Working with Gateshead Council				
Employee and HR Monitoring Digest 2010/11				
Performance Measure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Number of options interviews (long term sickness)	6	6	6	1
Number of employees who have had a phased return	6	2	4	3
Learning and Development				
Number of new staff receiving induction	8	6	7	6
Number of staff undertaking professional Qualifications	17	14	14	14

Sickness Absence Summary Sheet 2010 - 2011

Appendix 2

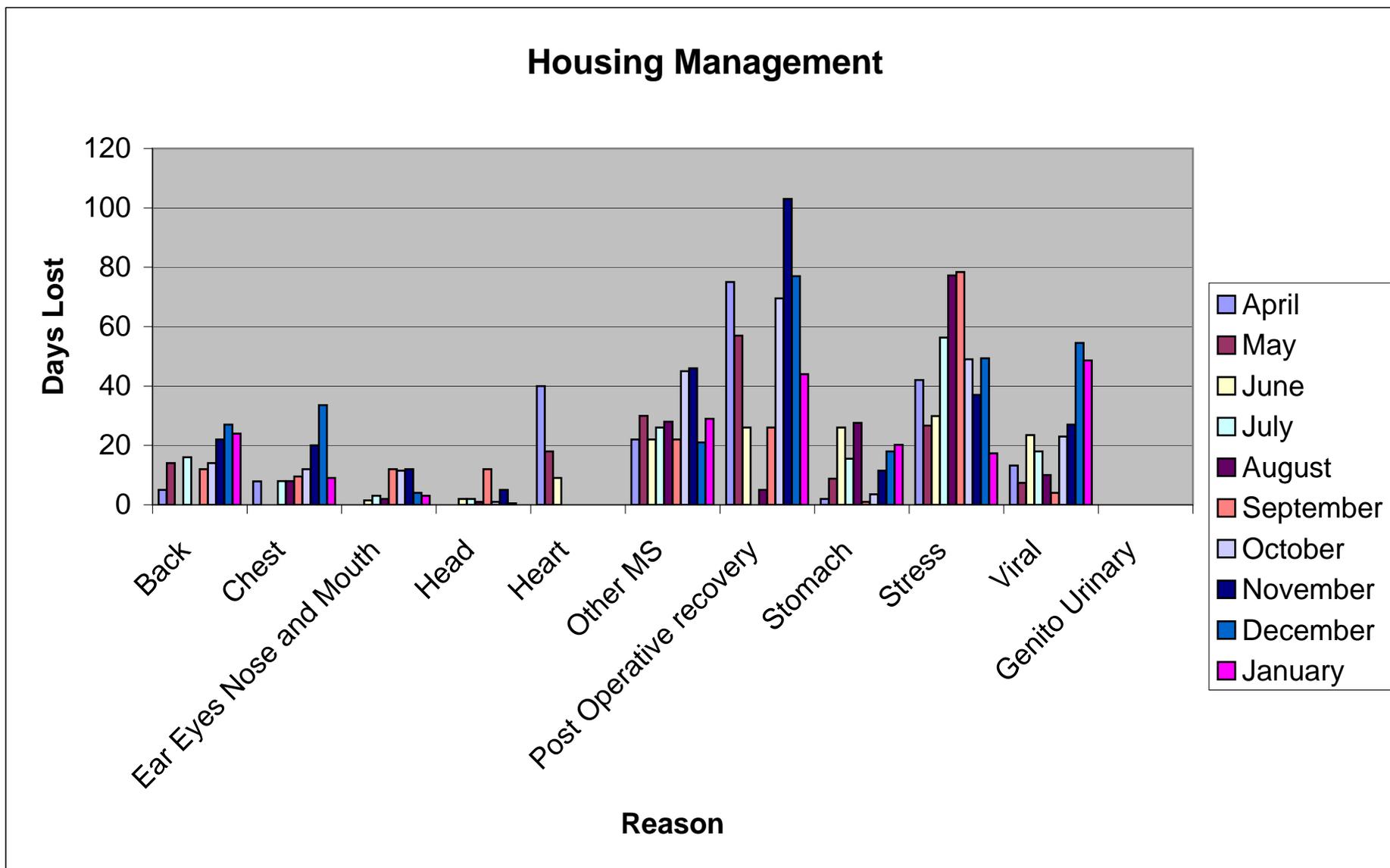
Actual Days lost per employee per month to date

2009/10	HM	Prop & Tech	Business Support	Finance & Ict	Group Man.	All employees TGHC	TGHC cumulative	DCLG & House Mark	No of Occurrences	Days Lost per month	Days Lost Short Term Absence	Days Lost Long Term Absence
April	1.79	0.40	0.50	1.16	0.00	0.98	0.98	0.79	50	365.20	0.40	0.58
May	1.14	0.82	0.30	1.05	0.00	1.01	1.99	1.58	57	380.60	0.35	0.66
June	1.15	0.68	0.00	1.28	0.00	1.00	2.99	2.37	52	391.40	0.40	0.60
July	1.01	1.41	1.45	0.56	0.00	1.09	4.08	3.16	54	421.50	0.45	0.64
August	0.97	0.74	1.64	1.40	0.00	0.99	5.07	3.95	50	387.00	0.30	0.70
September	0.93	0.54	0.16	1.15	0.00	0.81	5.88	4.74	47	317.70	0.07	0.74
October	0.79	0.60	0.17	1.78	0.00	0.78	6.66	5.53	59	303.10	0.51	0.27
November	0.87	0.53	1.17	0.34	0.00	0.79	7.45	6.32	64	305.20	0.49	0.30
December	1.06	0.31	1.10	0.04	0.00	0.78	8.23	7.11	52	303.00	0.47	0.31
Jan	1.03	0.34	0.11	0.08	0.00	0.70	8.93	7.90	55	269.40	0.40	0.30
Feb	0.88	0.4	1.48	0.00	0.00	0.69	9.62	8.69	42	262.80	0.30	0.39
March	0.74	0.85	1.82	0.18	0	0.75	10.37	9.48	49	279.5	0.38	0.37
Cumulative by service area	12.36	7.62	9.90	9.02	0.00	10.37			631	3,986.40	4.52	5.86

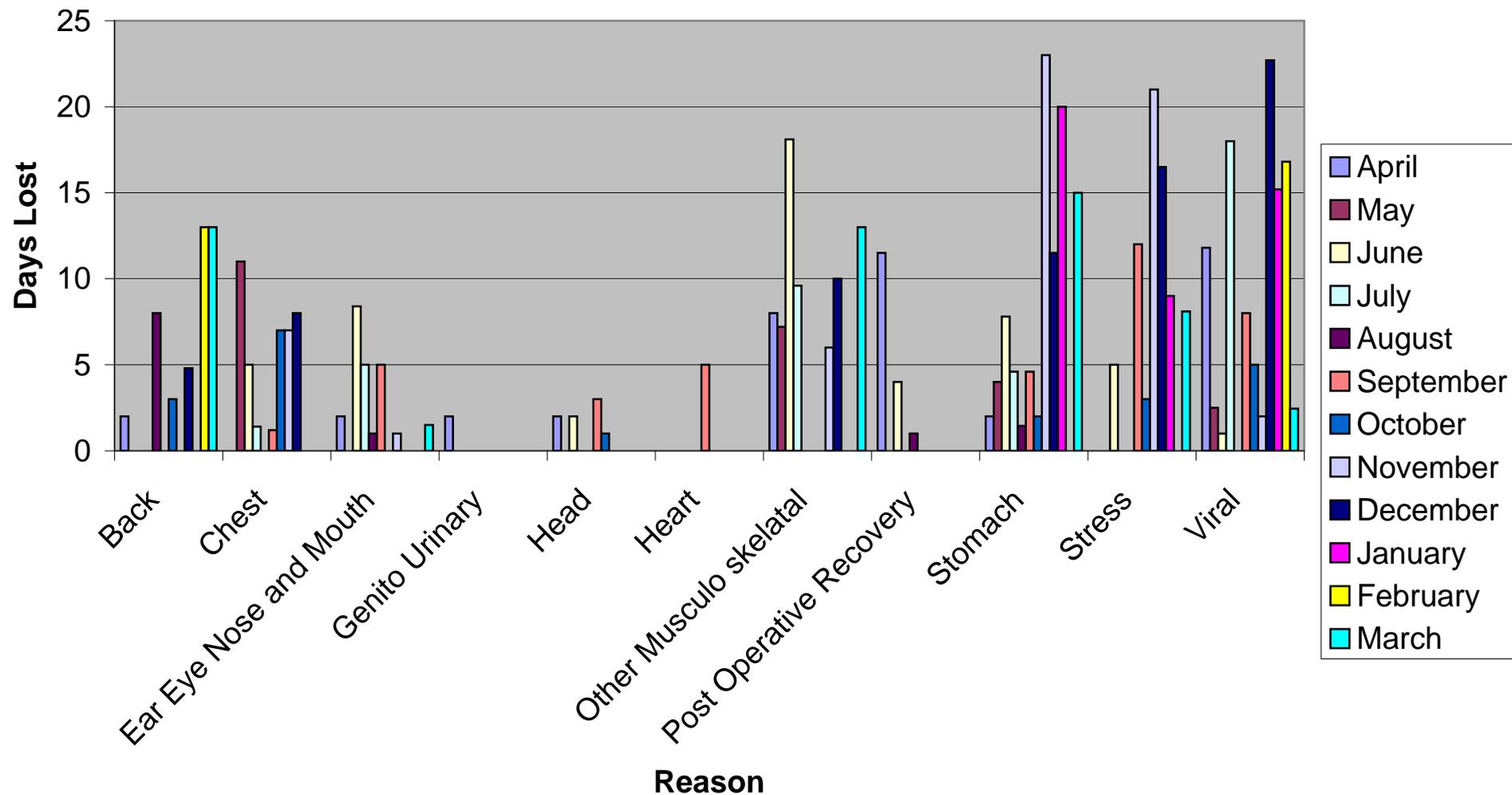
2010/11	HM	Prop & Tech	Corporate Services	Group Man.	All employees TGHC	TGHC cumulative	DCLG & House Mark	No of Occurrences	Days Lost per month	Days Lost Short Term Absence	Days Lost Long Term Absence
April	0.88	0.5	0.04	0	0.67	0.67		39	250.45	0.36	0.31
May	0.68	0.31	0.22	0	0.52	1.19		38	196.1	0.32	0.2
June	0.61	0.64	0.07	0	0.53	1.72		42	199.7	0.32	0.21
July	0.62	0.49	0.33	0	0.54	2.26		41	201.8	0.34	0.21
August	0.69	0.48	0.06	0	0.55	2.81		37	200	0.27	0.28
September	0.77	0.51	0.43	0	0.66	3.47		45	236.5	0.42	0.24
October	0.98	0.28	0.74	0	0.79	4.26		52	284.5	0.41	0.38
November	1.22	0.84	0.46	0	1.03	5.29		51	371.5	0.42	0.61
December	1.22	0.99	0.79	0	1.1	6.39		77	396.4	0.71	0.39
January	0.84	0.59	0.82	0	0.78	7.17		44	280.3	0.34	0.44
February	0.42	0.4	0.68	0	0.44	7.61		33	161	0.29	0.15
March	0.68	0.73	0.71	0	0.69	8.30		55	236.85	0.51	0.18
Cumulative by service area	9.61	6.76	5.35	0.00	8.30			554	3015.10	4.71	3.60

* Days Lost = No of days absence / FTE in the service

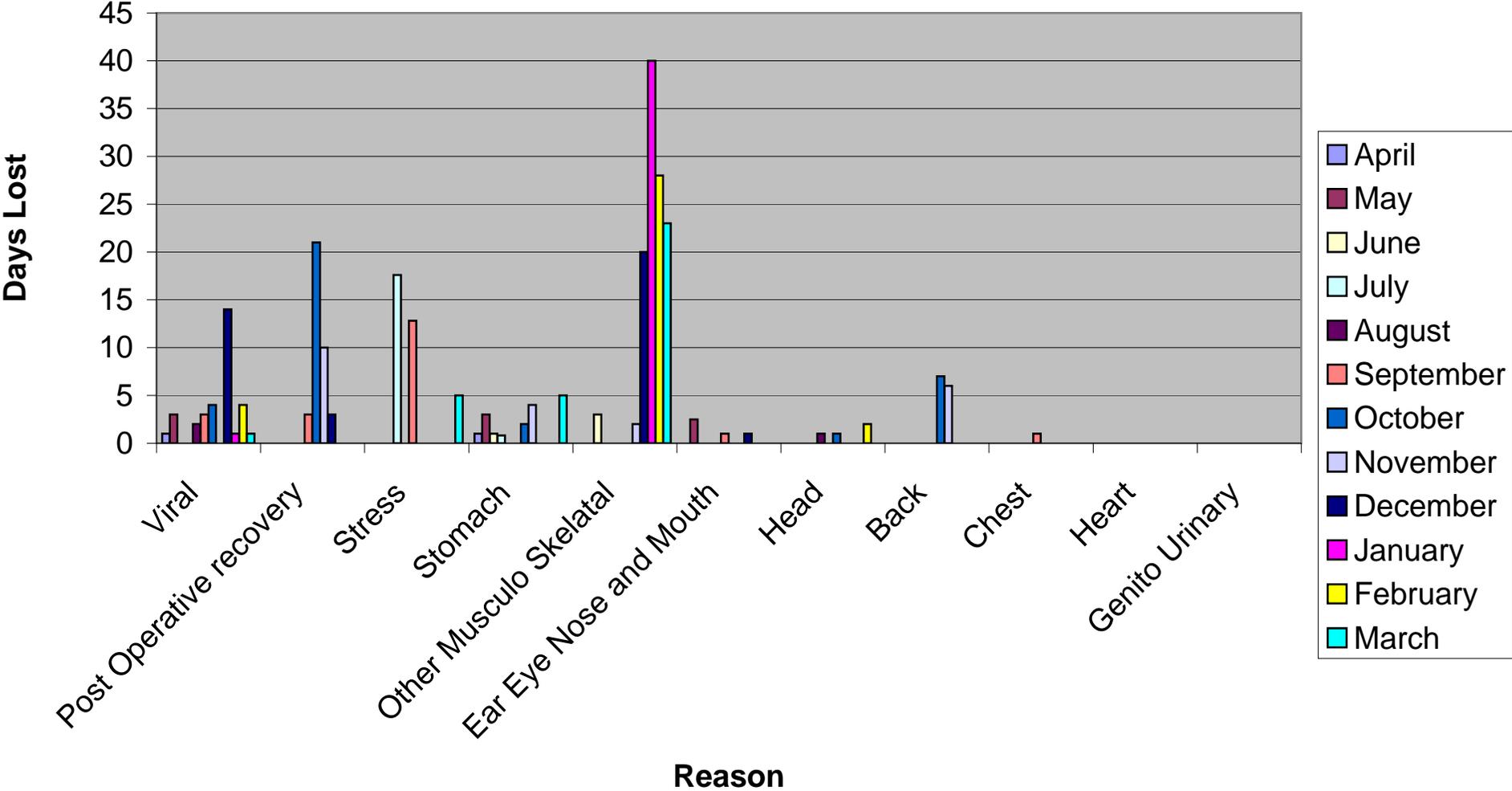
BV12
excludes temp employees with <12 months service



Property and Technical



Corporate Services



Employee Attitude Survey – Summary of Responses

Question	Response	Total
Strategic Planning		
1.The company's purpose and vision for the future is clearly defined and communicated	Strongly Agree	28
	Agree	97
	Disagree	27
	Strongly Disagree	6
2.I can explain the objectives of the organisation and my team	Strongly Agree	38
	Agree	106
	Disagree	15
	Strongly Disagree	1
3.I receive regular communication on how progress is being made in achieving the company business plan and the objectives within it	Strongly Agree	20
	Agree	92
	Disagree	40
	Strongly Disagree	5
4.I can confirm that there are constructive relationships with representative groups of employees	Strongly Agree	23
	Agree	102
	Disagree	23
	Strongly Disagree	6
5.Representative groups are consulted on when developing the company's business plan and strategies	Strongly Agree	14
	Agree	103
	Disagree	28
	Strongly Disagree	3

6. I understand the company's social responsibilities and what this means to the way I work e.g. recycling, fair trade goods	Strongly Agree	49
	Agree	99
	Disagree	8
	Strongly Disagree	3
Effective Management		
7. I believe managers are genuinely committed to making sure everyone has fair access to the support they need and that there is equality of opportunity for people to learn and develop	Strongly Agree	44
	Agree	91
	Disagree	18
	Strongly Disagree	6
8. I believe my manager is effective in leading, managing and developing me	Strongly Agree	49
	Agree	92
	Disagree	10
	Strongly Disagree	6
9. I receive constructive feedback on my performance regularly and when appropriate	Strongly Agree	47
	Agree	86
	Disagree	19
	Strongly Disagree	5
10. I am able to give constructive feedback to my manager and believe it is well received and acted on	Strongly Agree	49
	Agree	86
	Disagree	16
	Strongly Disagree	7
11. I believe my manager uses coaching skills to help me achieve my full potential	Strongly Agree	33
	Agree	85
	Disagree	33
	Strongly Disagree	4
12. My manager recognises and values my individual contribution to the company	Strongly Agree	58
	Agree	86
	Disagree	9
	Strongly Disagree	4

Culture and Communication			
13. I understand clearly my role and responsibilities and what is expected of me	Strongly Agree	70	
	Agree	83	
	Disagree	4	
	Strongly Disagree	2	
14. I am encouraged to contribute ideas to improve my own and other peoples performance	Strongly Agree	51	
	Agree	81	
	Disagree	20	
	Strongly Disagree	4	
15. I have confidence that the communication channels within the company support a positive culture of business improvement	Strongly Agree	20	
	Agree	92	
	Disagree	33	
	Strongly Disagree	11	
16. I believe I am encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for decisions, at a level appropriate to my role	Strongly Agree	46	
	Agree	91	
	Disagree	17	
	Strongly Disagree	4	
17. I am kept well informed about decisions that affect me	Strongly Agree	25	
	Agree	75	
	Disagree	47	
	Strongly Disagree	11	
18. I believe the reward and recognition strategy is fair	Strongly Agree	14	
	Agree	73	
	Disagree	50	
	Strongly Disagree	13	
19. I believe that The Gateshead Housing Company is a great place to work	Strongly Agree	40	
	Agree	93	
	Disagree	18	
	Strongly Disagree	5	

Developing People			
20. I feel that there is a genuine commitment by the company to develop people	Strongly Agree	36	
	Agree	94	
	Disagree	23	
	Strongly Disagree	4	
21. I am involved in identifying my learning and development needs as well as the activities required to meet them	Strongly Agree	39	
	Agree	103	
	Disagree	12	
	Strongly Disagree	4	
22. I am encouraged to develop leadership capabilities e.g. decision making, additional responsibilities, training etc	Strongly Agree	31	
	Agree	95	
	Disagree	26	
	Strongly Disagree	6	
23. I am aware of the company mentoring scheme and the opportunities available	Strongly Agree	29	
	Agree	103	
	Disagree	20	
	Strongly Disagree	6	
24. I know what my learning and development activities should achieve for me, my team and the company	Strongly Agree	32	
	Agree	103	
	Disagree	16	
	Strongly Disagree	2	
25. I understand how my development needs link to the company's overall objectives	Strongly Agree	33	
	Agree	99	
	Disagree	18	
	Strongly Disagree	5	
26. There is a clear learning and development plan for the future based on the needs of the company	Strongly Agree	26	
	Agree	85	
	Disagree	39	
	Strongly Disagree	4	

27. I feel the induction process helped me to perform effectively (new starters within the last 12 months only)	Strongly Agree	5
	Agree	19
	Disagree	11
	Strongly Disagree	2
28. Areas for development were identified during my induction (new starters within the last 12 months only)	Strongly Agree	4
	Agree	15
	Disagree	8
	Strongly Disagree	1
Managing Performance		
29. I believe my contribution to the company is recognised and valued and believe I make a positive difference to its performance	Strongly Agree	30
	Agree	97
	Disagree	24
	Strongly Disagree	4
30. I receive continuous feedback on my performance	Strongly Agree	26
	Agree	92
	Disagree	34
	Strongly Disagree	3
31. I believe that constructive feedback works and leads to continuous improvements being made in the company	Strongly Agree	41
	Agree	102
	Disagree	10
	Strongly Disagree	3
32. I believe that my career prospects have improved as a result of the learning and development I have received	Strongly Agree	25
	Agree	63
	Disagree	53
	Strongly Disagree	14
Health and Wellbeing		
33. I understand what support is available for Health and Wellbeing and believe it is provided in an appropriate and fair way	Strongly Agree	32
	Agree	101
	Disagree	18
	Strongly Disagree	7

34. Health and Wellbeing policies and the activities which support them are communicated regularly	Strongly Agree	36
	Agree	100
	Disagree	16
	Strongly Disagree	3
35. My manager discusses my Health and Wellbeing needs with me	Strongly Agree	17
	Agree	82
	Disagree	49
	Strongly Disagree	10
36. The resources available are effective in meeting the needs to our employees	Strongly Agree	24
	Agree	98
	Disagree	25
	Strongly Disagree	4
37. I am supported in balancing my work and personal life and believe that work life balance is part of the culture of the company	Strongly Agree	63
	Agree	77
	Disagree	13
	Strongly Disagree	5
38. I feel that the company's approach to Health and Wellbeing is improving the performance of individuals, teams and the company	Strongly Agree	35
	Agree	86
	Disagree	29
	Strongly Disagree	5
Overall		
39. I am satisfied with my employer	Very Satisfied	67
	Fairly Satisfied	58
	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	25
	Fairly Dissatisfied	3
	Very Dissatisfied	5



Report to Resources and Audit Committee

28 April 2011

Title: Health and Safety Update

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Committee with a report on the company's health and safety activities for the period January to March 2011.

Background

2. The Health and Safety ("H&S") team are responsible for a number of activities designed to eliminate, reduce and mitigate accidents in the workplace, safety of residents and members of the public who access our services and premises.
3. In addition to this the H&S team act in an advisory role to ensure companywide compliance with a number of statutory and regulatory requirements including: -
 - Occupational Health and Safety
 - Health and Safety Training
 - Occupational Hygiene.
4. They also have responsibility for the planning, management and monitoring of cyclical maintenance within non-domestic areas to ensure the company's compliance with statutory regulatory requirements as follows: -
 - Water Management - Risk assessments and water testing.
 - Electrical Safety - Cyclical electrical testing, fixed wiring, portable appliances testing, and emergency lighting testing.
 - Fire Safety - Risk assessment, maintenance, repair and testing of fire alarms and fire appliances.
 - Passengers Lifts Operations - Lift Repairs, maintenance, refurbishment and upgrade to DDA standards.
5. They are also responsible for the coordination and monitoring of health and safety on construction sites including:

- CDM Coordination (Construction, Design, Management) and Control of Contractors
- Site Waste Management Plans

Policy, Procedure and Safe Systems of Work Update

6. Management information reports are being developed to provide senior managers with information about compliance across key areas of activity to include risk assessment.

Accidents Update

7. There have been nine accidents reported in the period January to March 2011 as follows:
 - Five incidents of verbal abuse
 - One person slipped on stairs and suffered neck strain
 - Contractor cut their finger on Stanley knife
 - One person tripped and suffered facial bruising
 - One person tripped and suffered trauma to the shoulders and arm
8. Accidents are investigated by the H&S team and amendments made to risk assessments as appropriate.

Asbestos Management

9. The annual review of non – domestic properties is 95% completed. Priorities have been set for buildings identified with poor or damaged asbestos. The completion of inspections for medium and low-rise buildings is progressing.
10. A programme has been developed to remedy asbestos damaged or in need of minor works.
11. The Keystone Asbestos module contained on the Northgate system is currently being updated with the information obtained from the above review.

Fire Safety Management

12. An annual review of Fire Risk Assessments is underway for communal areas, high rise blocks and sheltered schemes.
13. A fire safety improvement programme is being developed to tackle deficiencies identified in the 2010 fire risk assessments for all 28 multi-storey blocks.
14. The programme will include works to communal areas including communal doors, fire detection and bin chutes as well as flat entrance doors.
15. A budget has been identified to carry out the high priority work. It is estimated that the programme of work will begin on-site in June 2011. Harlow Green Multi's and East Street Flats will be the first to benefit from the improvements works. The works are due to complete by March 2012.

Legionella Control

16. Monthly meetings with our maintenance contractor are ongoing and no significant risks have been identified. Water testing is ongoing in all buildings to determine bacterial levels.
17. No reported positive testing has been reported in the period January to March 2011.
18. The review of water hygiene risk assessments for the managed buildings is progressing. Areas of high risk identified will be rectified immediately and medium risk rectified over a period of 12 months as part of cyclical maintenance regime.
19. Legionella Risk Assessments has now been completed.

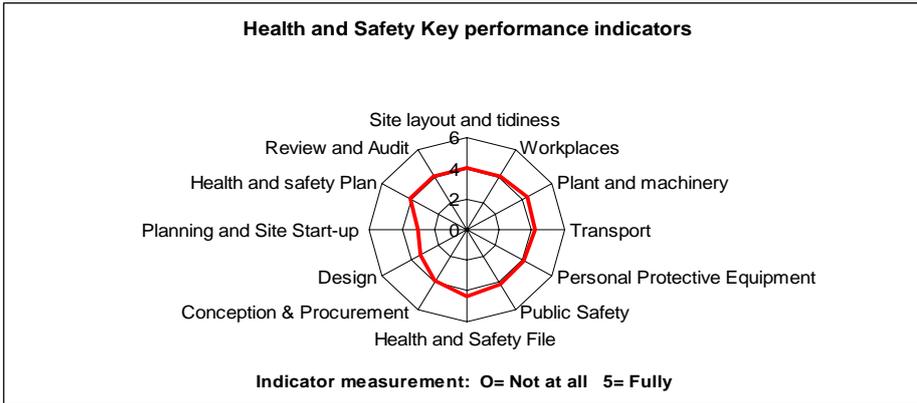
Cyclical Repair and Maintenance Update

20. The annual Cyclical Maintenance Schedule for all non domestic areas is carried out in line with the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with our contactors LES Construction Services.
21. A condition survey for all the bin chutes areas has been completed and immediate repairs completed. The survey has identified a number of issues with bin chutes hopper seals. A programme has been developed to remedy this.
22. The fixed wiring testing for sheltered schemes and multi storey buildings are 100% completed. The fixed wiring testing for low medium rise buildings are 95% completed.

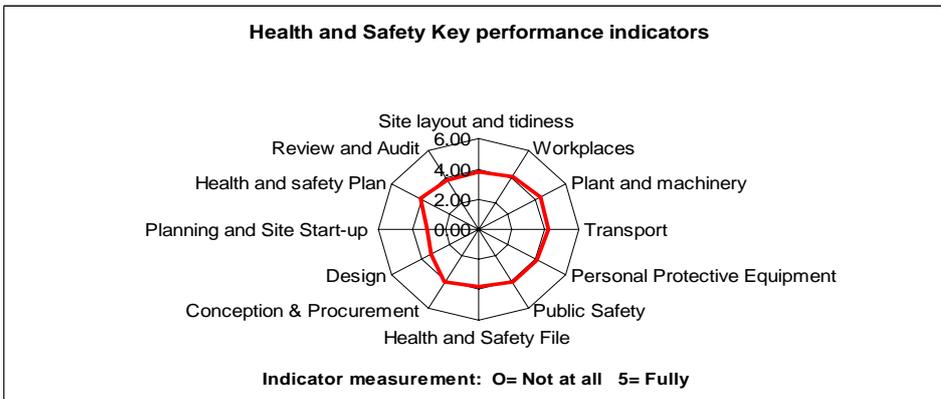
Overall Safety Performance Audit for the Partnering Contractors

23. The following five spider graphs highlight the Health & Safety performance of our three Decent Homes and new build partner for the period from January to March 2011
24. The safety performance has been constant across all contract sites and there are no changes to report.

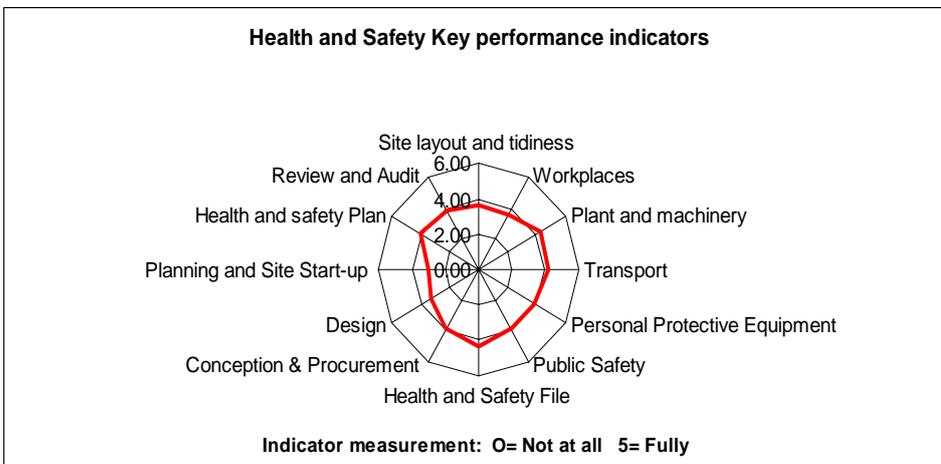
FHM Health and Safety Performance over one construction site
 No Major accident or HSE enforcement over this period



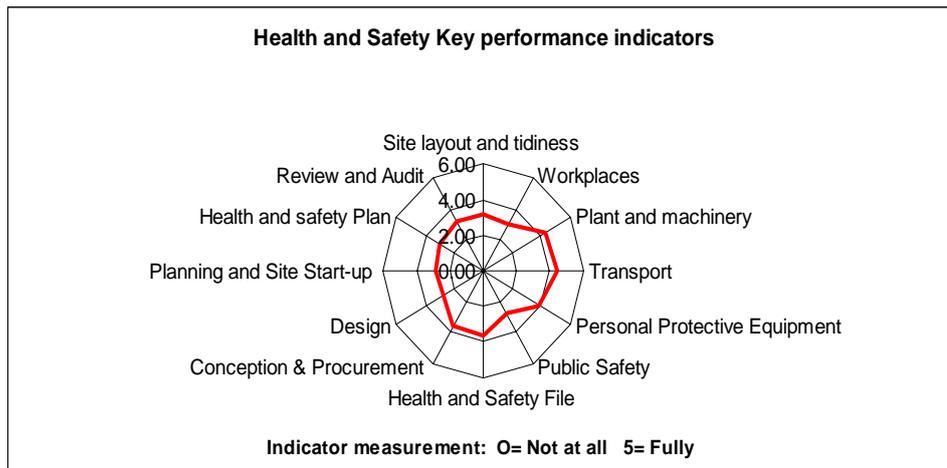
Morrison Health and Safety Performance over 7 construction sites
 No Major accident or HSE enforcement over this period



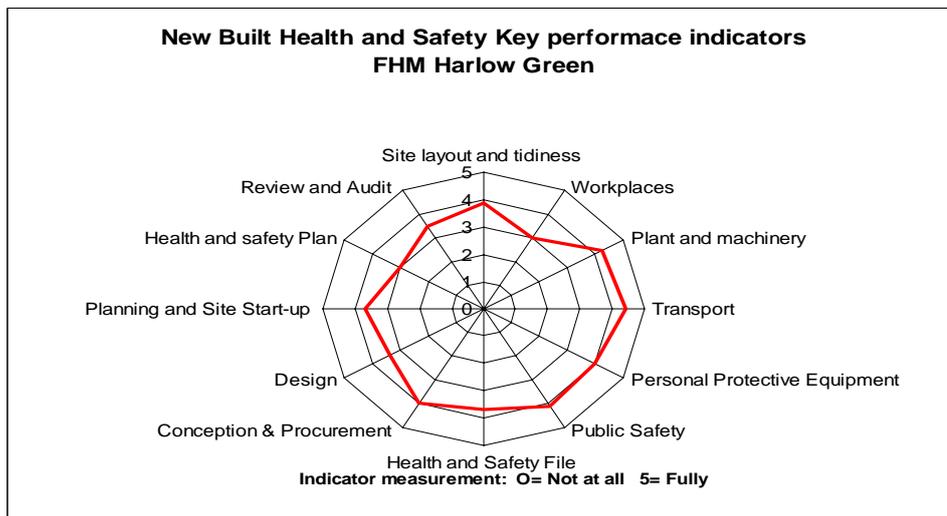
LES Construction Health and Safety Performance over ten construction sites
 No Major accident or HSE enforcement over this period



Newbuild FHM Kiblesworth Health and Safety Performance
 No Major accident or HSE enforcement over this period



Newbuild FHM Harlowgreen Health and Safety Performance
 No Major accident or HSE enforcement over this period



Links to Values

25. This report links to the following company values: -

- Being honest, accountable and transparent
- Being motivated, trained and committed across the company
- Being caring and respecting
- A commitment to all our employees
- Embracing equality.

Impact on Customers

26. The improvements identified and actions carried out will help us to provide healthy and safe environments for employees, residents and members of the public. Improvements carried out to multi-storey blocks and communal lounges will also increase accessibility to our services. This is in line with the aims to ensure compliance with a range of statutory regulatory requirements.

Risk Management Implications

27. Not meeting the requirement of current and new Health and Safety legislation has been identified as an operational risk for the company.

Financial Implications

28. The Director of Finance confirms that a budget is available to support the activities mentioned in this report through revenue or capital budgets.

Equality and Diversity Implications

29. Detailed Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on all Health & Safety policies and procedures to ensure that they do not adversely impact on any customers.

Value for Money Implications

30. Value for money principles are followed in all health and safety activity.

Health Implications

31. The company's approach to Health and Safety, embedded within everything that we do and the actions specifically mentioned within this report, ultimately will have a positive impact on people's health and overall wellbeing. By working to ensure that any services we provide meet the needs of the customers and of employees and do not cause undue stress to either party.

Environmental Implications

32. The work detailed in this report will be carried out to ensure we meet our ISO 14001 standards and principles. We will make choices that reflect our social responsibility to improve the environment in which we work and live.

Consultation carried out

33. The programme of work has been developed in consultation with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) and managers.

Recommendation

34. The views of the committee are sought on whether the committee is satisfied with the update on health and safety activities and developments.

Contact: Roberto Demidio Senior Health and Safety Adviser Tel No: 0191 433 5324



Report to Resources and Audit Committee

28 April 2011

Title: Equality and Diversity Update

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on key issues within Equality and Diversity affecting the company and report progress on the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

Background

2. Equality and diversity is at the heart of everything the company does, as highlighted in the specific company value of 'Embracing Equality'.
3. The company's Single Equality Scheme and accompanying equality and diversity action plan brings together all areas of our approach to Equality and Diversity into one document, providing a clear outline for all employees, customers and Board Members.
4. This action plan reflects recommendations highlighted in an external review of our approach to ensure that we meet our regulatory requirements and work towards achieving excellence in the Social Housing Equality Framework.
5. During the last twelve months there have been significant changes to equality legislation including the introduction of the Equality Act in October 2010 and as a result, a subsequent new Public Sector Equality Duty.

Progress against the action plan

6. In the last quarter a number of actions have been completed: -
 - The new Equality and Diversity e-learning package has been rolled out to all employees ensuring everyone understands their role and responsibilities. This includes a separate section on managing diversity for anyone with supervisory responsibility.
 - Providing information for all employees via HomeWork on current activities around E&D such as entering the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and providing all employees with copies of the Multifaith calendar to ensure that key activities organised by the company do not conflict with important dates in the faith calendars.

- Training on Equality Impact Assessments in two formats, workshops for managers responsible for drafting the assessments and training for Corporate and Senior Managers and the importance of EIAs being evidence based and quality checked to ensure that the process is meaningful and consistent.
 - Approval of a Board Recruitment, Retention and Succession plan aiming to have a board which is representative of the community it serves.
 - Refresh and expansion of customer profile data we hold on over 3000 of our customers via their rent statements, providing us with key information on disabilities, support needs, language requirements etc to make sure that we are providing the best service for our customers.
 - Continued checking and updating of customer profile information through other opportunities including sign ups, housing applications, customer contact visits and customer meetings.
 - A review of key employee policies has begun, commencing with the Absence management policy.
7. The full action plan can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.
8. The majority of actions within this action plan were due to be completed by the end of March this year. The action plan will be reviewed to ensure that the plan continues to provide the focus and direction needed to maintain this as an area of strength. This work will commence following the final release of the specific public sector duties so that any necessary actions can be reflected.

Public Sector Equality Duty

9. In previous reports to this committee it has been noted that the introduction of the Equality Act also led to the introduction of a new Public Sector Equality Duty, although guidance had not previously been available. The aim of the duty is to provide a framework to improve equality performance which is proportionate and evidence led.
10. The general duty came into force on 5 April 2011; however the date for the introduction of the specific equality duty has been postponed following further consultation on the proposals.
11. Although housing organisations aren't explicitly covered listed under the general duty, as the provider for the local authority receiving public funding, there is an expectation for ALMOs to follow the duty.
12. The general duty states that in exercising public functions, public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good relations – including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding
13. This applies to the protected characteristics or groups which are:
- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| • Age | • Religion or belief |
| • Disability | • Race |
| • Pregnancy and maternity | • Sex |

- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships (only in relation to the first part of the duty)

14. The new regulations refer to equality analysis rather than equality impact assessment. The change in terminology is intended to focus more attention on the quality of the analysis and how it is used in decision-making, and less on the production of a document.
15. However, it is suggested that where organisations already have an established tool for assessing impact, that they continue to use this for the equality analysis whilst also updating the tool to reflect the requirements of the new duty. Having recently carried out training on the company's current process, it is proposed that the process is retained.
16. This analysis should be carried out on any new or amended policy or service and for any major decisions. As a result, any report presented to the board or committees for decision should refer to this assessment.
17. In relation to advancing equality of opportunity, the EIA template has been updated to provide a clear section where lead officers can identify the positive practice already being undertaken to promote equality.
18. Our requirements in this area are to: -
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people with protected characteristics due to having that characteristic
 - Take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics that are different from people who do not have that characteristic (including steps taken to take account of a disability)
 - Encourage protected groups to participate in public life or where participation is disproportionately low
19. These requirements are supported by the work we already do through EIAs, the work carried out by the Disabled Persons Housing Forum and BME Housing Forum and targeted work with younger people and LGBT communities. However specific actions will be required when the E&D action plan is reviewed to ensure that this work continues to take place.
20. In relation to fostering good relations, as a partner of Gateshead Strategic Partnership, the company supports the objectives and principals of their Community Cohesion Strategy. This is currently under review and once a draft of the policy is produced, the company will prepare a response on how we will fulfil our responsibilities as a partner:

External Recognition

21. At the TPAS Northern Awards Ceremony in February 2011, the company was successful in winning the first Equality and Diversity Award for our Single Equality Scheme and the projects which support this. The company will now go into the national awards in July 2011.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Work

22. In the review carried out in 2010 on equality and diversity, an area for development was identified around having regular engagement with the LGBT community to understand the issues they face both as employees and customers.
23. Following this, in September 2010, the company entered the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, benchmarking our performance in terms of LGB equality against both public and private sector organisations.
24. Out of a possible 200 points, the company scored 79, which although appearing to be a low score, still showed us to outperform the average performance for a housing organisation or the Top 100 Employers in some areas.
25. In addition, the company has signed up to the Stonewall Diversity Champions demonstrating our commitment to achieving equality in this area.
26. Appendix 2 to this report shows the full report summarising the areas for development and proposed actions to address these. Whilst this focuses on LGB equality, it is however important to recognise that a number of the actions suggested would be bring wider benefits to all protected groups.
27. A key action to support this work going forward is the need to identify a Diversity Champion to promote the value and importance of equality and diversity and endorse key policies or initiatives in this area (not limited to LGBT equality).
28. It is proposed that a Head of Service take on this role as a key senior manager within the company, however it is recognised that there is considerable value in a Board member also taking on this role in a joint capacity and would therefore welcome a volunteer.
29. Subject to approval of the committee, the actions contained within Appendix 2 would be incorporated into the E&D action plan for 2011/12.

Links to values

30. This report relates to the following company values: -
 - Being a listening and learning organisation
 - Being motivated, trained, and committed
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional
 - Caring and respecting
 - Embracing equality
 - A commitment to all our employees.

Impact on tenants

31. Through gaining a better understanding of our customers, their needs and priorities, we are able to provide services which meet these needs ultimately resulting in increased satisfaction with our services.

32. The training carried out within this last reporting period for all employees gives staff the understanding and skills to deal effectively with people's needs and to be confident to challenge behaviour where it is inappropriate.

Risk Management Implications

33. Not meeting the requirements of current and new diversity legislation has been identified as an operational risk for the company, which if breached could lead to significant financial loss and risk of reputation.
34. All HR policies are in the process of being reviewed in line with the equality legislation.

Financial Implications

35. The Director of Finance confirms that any costs arising from this report can be met from existing budgets. Any other financial implications will be reported to this committee.

Equality and Diversity Implications

36. The Single Equality Scheme and action plan provides a focus for our approach to being an equal opportunities employer and service provider, promoting equality in relation to access to goods, facilities and services and helping us to ensure that no individual or group experiences direct or indirect discrimination.

Value for Money Implications

37. The actions outlined in this report will help us to understand the specific needs of our customers and employees and respond accordingly.
38. This ultimately results in value for money savings through getting things right first time rather than having to make costly changes at a later date, or by providing services that our customers or employees do not need.

Health Implications

39. The company's approach to equality and diversity, embedded within everything that we do and the actions specifically mentioned within this report, ultimately will have a positive impact on people's health and overall wellbeing by working to ensure that any service we provide meet the needs of the customer or employee and does not cause any undue stress.

Environmental Implications

40. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

41. The Single Equality Scheme was developed following consultation with employees, customers and stakeholders.

42. Focus groups for customers and employees took place during the review of our approach to equality and diversity and informed the recommendations in the final report.
43. The action plan was delivered with the input of Senior Managers, the E&D Working Group and incorporated comments and recommendations from external E&D Consultants Richard Seager and Joanna Jeffery.

Recommendations

44. The committee is recommended to: -
 - note the progress made against the Equality and Diversity Action Plan to date;
 - note the implications of the Public Sector General Equality Duty and agree to receive further information about the specific duties once published;
 - agree the actions proposed to progress the company's work on LGB equality.

Contact: Louise Taylor, Involvement and Diversity Manage Tel No: (0191) 433 5380

Equality and Diversity Action Plan

Objective	Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead
Provide training around Equality and Diversity for employees and board members	To ensure that the people leading, working for and representing the company have the skills and knowledge to provide the best service to our customers and employees			Jon Mallen Beadle
Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date
Arrange an update of the Equality and Diversity e-learning package in line with implications from the Equality Act and update internal policies	31-Oct-10	£1,700 to be met from existing budget	Louise Taylor	Refreshed version of e-learning completed reflecting the requirements of the Equality Act.
All employees to complete the refreshed version of E&D e-learning and new employees to receive as part of induction - progress on number of employees who have completed the training to be presented to the Equality and Diversity Group on a bi-monthly basis	31-Mar-11		Pamela Lamming	Training rolled out to all employees. Work ongoing to target those who are yet to complete the training or who need further support having been unsuccessful in the test.
All board members to complete the updated training	31-Mar-11	None	Stuart Gibson	Board members due to receive the training via CD.
Provide updates and evaluation to each Equality and Diversity Group on the numbers of employees who have completed e-learning training	31-Mar-11	None	Pamela Lamming	Update given in the last meeting about the roll out of the training. In future meetings, information will be provided on those still outstanding.
Identify any additional training needs relating to specific areas of equality and diversity following completion of the e-learning and through the appraisal process	31-Aug-11		Pamela Lamming	

Service Priority		Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead
Carry out a rolling programme of Equality Impact Assessments		To ensure that we routinely check our policies and procedures to identify potential impacts and put appropriate measures in place			Jon Mallen Beadle
Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date	
Work with senior managers to ensure that equality impact assessments for all services are reviewed and level of impact agreed	31-Mar-11	None	Louise Taylor	Assessments have already been carried out in some services. Template has been updated with a screening template which all services will now use. Training for managers on carrying out assessments carried out in February and outstanding assessments being completed.	
Develop a programme for when EIAs are due to be reviewed for individual policies and procedures	31-Dec-11	None	Louise Taylor		
Ensure any policy or procedure, or change to service passed to the Board for a decision, has an equality impact assessment carried out and referred to in the equality implications sections	31-Mar-11	None	Stuart Gibson	Checklist produced as guidance for managers developing policies. This includes ensuring that consultation is carried out and that an equality impact assessment is carried out prior to it going for approval.	
Report to Resources and Audit Committee annually on the outcomes from Equality Impact Assessments carried out during the year	31-May-11	None	Louise Taylor	Will provide information in the next report to Resources and Audit committee.	

Service Priority		Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead
Undertake external verification of our services as an employer and service provider		To continuously assess where are strengths are and identify area for development, contributing to the self assessment requirements for the regulatory framework			Jon Mallen Beadle
Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date	
Ensure the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index to assess how LGB equality is embedded in our employment practices	09-Sep-11	None	Denise Burlison	Company entered Equality Index in 2010, awaiting results and feedback to help inform future work on LGB equality.	
Refresh the log of evidence to demonstrate compliance with the CRE code of practice	31-Jan-11	None	Louise Taylor	Completed.	
Co-ordinate an assessment against the Social Housing Equality Framework	31-Mar-11	None	Louise Taylor	Date for assessment to be agreed to take place after the Customer Service Excellence assessment results.	
Annually demonstrate our commitment to employing people with a disability by achieving 'Positive About Disability' Symbol	30-Nov-11	None	Denise Burlison		
Undertake external validation against the Customer Service Excellence Standard	31-Mar-11	Existing Resources	James Moody	Assessment carried out in March, awaiting full report.	
Take part in benchmarking of equality and diversity through the North East Equality and Diversity Network	31-Mar-11	None	Louise Taylor	Benchmarking information provided via the E&D network. Results to be discussed at the May meeting.	
Service Priority		Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead

Provide clear guidance and leadership on equality and diversity

Employees given a clear message as to the importance of equality and diversity and will know who to contact for further advice and guidance

Jon Mallen Beadle

Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date
Provide an article in each issues of Homework relating to a specific area of Equality and Diversity	31-Mar-11	None	Matt Reilly	LGB article in October's edition gave employees information about the Northern Pride event. December issue included information on use of interpreters and the introduction of the new Equality Act.
Ensure the Equality and Diversity Working Group meets a minimum of 4 times during the year and minutes are shared with all employees via weekly Homework	31-Mar-11	None	Louise Taylor	A minimum of four meetings scheduled in.
Report progress on this action plan to Resources and Audit Committee every 6 months	31-Mar-11	None	Louise Taylor	Progress reported at each committee.
Work with Service Managers to ensure equality objectives /targets are included in service plans annually	30-Apr-11	None	Liz Simpson	
Produce an Equality and Diversity Annual report for 2010/11	30-Jun-11	Cost for design and print	Louise Taylor	Report being drafted.
Review the Single Equality Scheme and action plan to ensure compliance with the extended Public Sector Duty	30-Apr-11		Louise Taylor	The scheme will be reviewed following the release of the specific public sector duties.

Service Priority	Impact / Outcome	CMT Lead
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Ensure our commitment to equality and diversity is reflected in our procurement practices

Contractors working on our behalf reflect our own values regarding equality and diversity to provide the best level of service to customers and employees

Jon Mallen Beadle

Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date
Ensure that equality and diversity forms part of the Pre Qualification Questionnaire process and the formal tender process for the retender of our Repairs and Maintenance contract	31-Jul-11	None	Steve Cook	
Develop a performance framework for equality and diversity to monitor with contractor appointed through Repairs and Maintenance retender	31-Mar-12	None	Steve Cook	

Service Priority	Impact / Outcome	CMT Lead
Carry out targeted actions to improve the representation of the Board	To ensure that opportunities to join the board are available to all, and specific groups targeted to provided a Board which more closely reflects the community we serve	Jon Mallen Beadle

Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date
Review with customers the information pack on becoming a board member	31-Mar-11		Stuart Gibson	
Agree a succession plan to address underrepresentation	31-Jan-11		Stuart Gibson	Succession plan agreed.

Carry out a series of visits with existing board members to community groups to raise awareness of being a board member and what it entails	31-Dec-11		Stuart Gibson	
Provide an annual update to the Board on how the representation of the Board compares to our customer profile	30-Apr-11		Stuart Gibson	

Service Priority	Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead
Deliver a programme to review and expand the information we hold on customers	Ensure we have the information necessary to deliver services which meet the needs and priorities of our customers and meet our regulatory requirements			Jon Mallen Beadle
Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date
Produce a new customer profiling form to include sexuality and religion or belief	30-Jun-10		Louise Taylor	Form finalised.
Agree a prepopulated version of the profile form to attach to rent statements to review information held and capture additional information	30-Sep-10		Louise Taylor	Profile form agreed to be attached to the rent statement. Went out to all tenants with October rent statement. Once input of results has begun, a mop up exercise will take place with a future rent statement.
Agree a separate profiling form to be used specifically for leaseholders	31-Jan-11		Janice Adams	Profiling form agreed and will be sent with service charge statements at the end of March 2011.
Report progress on collection of profiling information to the Equality and Diversity Working group on a 6 monthly basis to identify collection issues	31-Mar-11		Louise Taylor	Update provided at the last working group, detailing estimated response to profile forms and current levels of input. Will continue to report the information to this group.

Include information in reports to SMT on the breakdown of complaints by equality strands	30-Jun-11		Andrea Foreman	
Expand the new approach to surveys to breakdown satisfaction information by all equality strands	31-Mar-11		Liz Simpson	ICT have been notified that all survey analysis should be broken down by the equality strands; this has also been discussed and highlighted at the Survey Monitoring Group who are responsible for overseeing the surveys conducted by the company.
Report to SMT and Resources and Audit Committee on the information learnt from the customer profiling exercise to identify potential areas for service development	31-Dec-11		Louise Taylor	
Consider the implications of providing customers with all information in preferred contact methods following gathering of profile information	31-Dec-11		Louise Taylor	

Service Priority	Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead
Continue to play an active role in partnerships	To ensure that the company contributes to the wider issues surrounding equality and diversity			Jon Mallen Beadle
Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date
Represent the company at the Council's Corporate Equality Working Group and feed issues into the housing company's Equality and Diversity Working Group as necessary	31-Mar-11		Louise Taylor	Attend meeting on a bi-monthly basis and feeds into corporate issues where necessary.

Contribute to the working groups of the Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership	31-Mar-11		Louise Taylor	Currently attend and contributes to the Service Reform sub group of this partnership.
Represent the housing company on the Gateshead Strategic Partnership's Community Cohesion strategy working group	31-Mar-11		Louise Taylor	Currently attend the Monitoring group and also took part on the stakeholder event to refresh the strategy.
Continue to work as part of the Safer Gateshead partnership	31-Mar-11		Deborah Ewart	On going contribution made via various meeting attendance and development of Safer Neighbourhood groups.
Represent TGHC and contribute to operational Hate Crime fortnightly meetings	31-Mar-11		Laura Bell	All fortnightly meetings have been represented by TGHC. These meetings have now changed to monthly and re-named to the hate crime steering group. Regular attendance is ongoing to discuss cases and identify trends.

Service Priority	Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead
Ensure the services we deliver and the premises we use are accessible	To make sure that we are offering services which our customers need in a way which allows them to access them			Jon Mallen Beadle
Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date
Incorporate the complaints system into the new CRM system to allow more effective monitoring of complaints by customer profile	31-Mar-11		Samantha Devlin	Build to be complete by end of April 2011. Phase 1 to go live June 2011
Deliver the plan to make all buildings with communal areas accessible (or make reasonable adjustments)	31-Mar-11		Roberto Demidio	

Transfer the gas servicing database to Northgate to allow interaction with customer profile information	31-Dec-10		Tim Vince	Process ongoing to look at importing information from gas servicing database into Northgate. Due to be complete by end of June 2011.
Discuss with the BME Housing forum possible reasons for low take-up of BME customers in sheltered housing and agree actions in improve awareness and information	31-Mar-11		Michelle Muldoon Smith	Older persons housing manager due to attend the May meeting of the forum to discuss this.
Review the criteria for gardening scheme	31-Jan-11		James Moody	

Service Priority	Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead
Work with customers shape services and challenge the company's performance	Provide opportunities for our customers to challenge our performance			Jon Mallen Beadle
Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date
Hold a minimum of 4 Disabled Persons Housing Forums during the year	31-Mar-11		Helen Watson	BME forum held 26 May, 11 Aug. DPHF held 21 April, 28 July.
Hold a minimum of 4 BME Housing Forums during the year	31-Mar-11		Helen Watson	BME forum held 26 May, 11 Aug. DPHF held 21 April, 28 July.
Agree a plan for engaging with LGBT community a minimum of 4 times during the year	31-Mar-11		Helen Watson	<p>Attended Northern Pride on 17 July to show the company's support to our LGBT community. Event well attended and more customers attended our stand from Gateshead this year.</p> <p>Following feedback from Stonewall Workplace Equality Index benchmarking</p>

				a range of actions to engage with LGBT people have been proposed.
Carry out a review of the MyPad website with young people	31-Dec-10		Helen Watson	Attended college freshers' fayre in September 2010 and carried out sample survey about whether young people continue to need the website and whether they would continue to use it. Some indication that it could be moved onto the main website to prevent duplication of information. Have identified young people who would be interested in working with us on the review of the main website once a decision has been made.
Include an article in TGHC news, annually to summarise progress against this action plan	31-Mar-11		Ian Clarkin	Article in the April edition of the newspaper about the E&D award the company won which was based on the work outlined in this action plan.
Develop a performance report to be used with customers	30-Sep-10		Liz Simpson	LH 16/8/10. Internal performance report has been developed and will be shared with customers via SIG's.
Work with the ITO project group to develop an independent tenants organisation in Gateshead	31-Dec-10		Louise Taylor	Work ongoing to contribute to the project group. Company is represented on the steering group and supporting the consultation with tenants on the structure of the organisation. Project completion delayed, new target is for structure to be up and running by start of the financial year.

Service Priority	Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead
Maintain a commitment to tackling hate crime and supporting vulnerable tenants	Both victims and perpetrators of hate crime and antisocial behaviour have access to the necessary agencies to support them or address the issues affecting their behaviour			Neil Bouch
Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date
Develop Barnardos parenting work plan incorporating Housing Challenge fund post	31-Jul-10		Mandy Huston	Parenting Officer, Action Plan 2010-11 has been developed in partnership with Barnardos to include the additional post secured via the Housing Challenge Fund.
Develop a promotional work plan for the Brief Intervention Alcohol worker	31-Jul-10		Mandy Huston	Action complete workplan agreed by BI Steering Group on 15.7.10
Develop mental health floating support in partnership with Nomad Housing Association	31-Aug-10		Mandy Huston	Partnership Arrangements have been developed with Nomad E5 to provide floating support to customers who have identified mental health issues. This partnership arrangement will support the MHLW post within TGHC and will commence once new MHLW has been confirmed in post.

Develop a repeat victims of ASB protocol in partnership with Safer Gateshead to help support vulnerable tenants	31-Aug-10		Mandy Huston	Meeting held with Northumbria Police to discuss their approach to Repeat Victims 16 July 2010. External Learning carried out relating to other Housing Organisations and their approach to Repeat Victims. Currently Drafting Victims & Witness Protocol, to include our approach to supporting Repeat Victims. Revised Target Date agreed with DE 30 October 2010. Draft protocol out for consultation with partners MH 28.10.10
In partnership with the council and other agencies contribute to the launch of the ARCH hate crime reporting system	31-Oct-10		Mandy Huston	TGHC participated in the ARCH official launch 6.10.10. Training programme developed for all front line staff to commence October 2010. Staff guidance notes and team brief also delivered in November 2010
Roll out ARCH hate crime reporting system to front line staff	31-Oct-10		Mandy Huston	TGHC participated in the ARCH official launch 6.10.10. Training programme developed for all front line staff to commence October 2010. Staff guidance notes and team brief also being developed to be delivered November 2010
Roll out repeat victims of domestic abuse training to tenants and residents	31-Jan-11		John Meldrum	Two NRO's now trained to facilitate training and programme to be delivered during Jan 2011 for 14wks. JM Aug 2011

Service Priority	Impact / Outcome			CMT Lead
Have policies and procedures in place which reflect the new equality act	Ensure that we meet our legislative requirements as an employer			Jon Mallen Beadle
Action	Target date dd/mm/yy	Resources	Lead Officer	Progress + date

Consult with EEF on all HR policies to ensure that they will comply with the legislative requirements of the new Equality Act	31-Mar-11		Denise Burlison	Absence Management policy complete. Disciplinary, Grievance, Leave, smoking with Unions. Code of Conduct to be finalised. Capability policy to start.
Communicate with all employees via Homework on the changes to HR policies and how this may effect them	31-Mar-11		Denise Burlison	Links to all new policies are sent via email and weekly Homework
Review and develop workforce representation against current data	31-Mar-11		Denise Burlison	A workforce representation report is produced and shared with the E & D working group. Data from partners not available until end of the financial year. Data from tenants shows we are on target apart from the age group 65+ as we have more tenants in this category.

Background:

1. The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index is a benchmarking tool assessing organisations work on Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) equality. To enter the index, organisations complete a detailed questionnaire assessing their performance and providing evidence in areas covering areas such as written policies, leadership, staff and community engagement and supplier policies.
2. Stonewall produces an annual Top 100 Employers, recognising the organisations doing the most to create workplaces where LGB people can reach their full potential.

TGHC Performance:

3. TGHC entered the index for the first time to provide a benchmark on how we are performing in this area and what actions we need to put in place to improve as our work around LGBT equality was highlighted as an area for development in the review we commissioned in 2010.
4. Out of a possible score of 200, the housing company scored 79. Although this score is relatively low, there were a number of areas where we achieved full marks and in some areas actually outscored the entries in the Top 100. We also self assessed ourselves within 2 points of the final scoring we were awarded by Stonewall showing that we are self aware understanding our strengths and our potential areas for development.
5. The breakdown of marks is attached to report comparing our performance against the Top 100 and the housing average.
6. Key areas of strength for the company included a set of clear written policies including the Single Equality Scheme and the Equal Opportunities Policy, an officer and resources dedicated to diversity and the training we provide to all employees on Equality and Diversity, including specific references to sexual orientation.
7. In addition to this, there were a number of areas where the housing company could look to improve our score by carrying out some specific actions during this year and in the longer term.

Areas for development:

8. **Lead Champion** – An area of the assessment focuses on whether the organisation has someone at a Senior level in the organisation promoting the value and importance of diversity, validating and endorsing specific initiatives or work in this area. Currently this is an area for development with the need to identify someone at either Director level or Head of Service level to champion to demonstrate clear leadership in this area, demonstrating the importance of these issues to the company as a whole.

Suggested action

- **Identify one of the new Heads of Service to be the Diversity Champion**
 - **Consider approaching a member of the board also to take on this role**
 - **Agree what the role of the champion would include e.g. endorsing new policies, opening engagement events, quotes in relevant press releases etc**
9. **Equal Benefits** – The assessment identified that all our benefit policies such as flexible working, special leave and adoption leave have been vetted to make sure that they are open to anyone regardless of their sexuality. However, some of them are not explicit in

their descriptions of who can benefit from them and LGB people may not be aware that the policy applies to them.

Suggested actions

- **Ensure Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on all policies as they are reviewed.**
- **Consider identifying what is meant by 'partner' in some of the policies so that it is easily identifiable that this relates to same sex partners.**
- **Publicise the policies available to people linked in with specific events in the calendar such as Bullying month, IDAHO (International Day Against Homophobia).**

10. **Bullying prevention** - Currently there is a Bullying and Harassment policy in place which states that the policy links to discrimination by any characteristic including sexuality. However, the policy does not give specific examples of what bullying behaviour might look like in relation to sexuality or any other characteristic. The role of workplace contacts as a confidential point for someone to initially discuss a situation involving bullying are key to people have to confidence to raise issues with someone they feel comfortable with. The Whistleblowing policy also provides access to a confidential email address that only a nominated officer has access to.

Suggested actions

- **Support the bullying policy with examples of the type of behaviour that this could include, for example racist jokes, homophobic language etc. This would help both individuals and also line managers to understand what type of behaviour this could entail.**
- **If the company develops an LGBT network a further action could be to train some of these members to be workplace contacts, offering another point of contact.**

11. **Staff network group** – Currently the housing company does not have any specific staff network groups such as for BME, Disabled or LGBT employees. The council have well established groups in these areas which our employees are able to attend and contribute to, however it is unknown how many of our employees attend, and also we do not work with these groups when looking at our employment practices.

Suggested actions

- **Make better links with the existing networks, finding out how many of our employees attend and also what issues these groups have raised to see if these link into to our work.**
- **Consider the possibility of contributing to a virtual LGBT network with other local housing providers.**
- **Raise awareness with employees about the networks existing for them to be part of.**

12. **Staff Engagement** – Currently, we include information in the induction on equality and diversity as well as people completing the E-learning on the day of training. We have also had articles in the HomeWork magazine relating to LGB issues during the year and have published articles in OutNE the local LGB magazine.

Suggested actions

- **As the level of external recruitment will be very small consider what induction staff transferring internally get and whether there is an opportunity to reaffirm our messages around diversity**
- **Use the Diversity Champion logo on any internal communications**
- **Raise awareness of LGB issues and to make all staff comfortable with LGB issues through a poster/plasma screen campaign, using pop ups to make staff aware of events in the diversity calendar and continuing to promote via the local LGB press.**
- **Consider holding short breakfast or lunch sessions to discuss LGB (and other diversity related) issues and give managers the opportunity to ask questions in a safe environment**

14. **Career Development** – Currently we have in place a mentoring scheme although there is no specific LGB element to this. Also all employees have access to counselling through an external provider, however they have not been asked specifically about how they would deal with issues from different groups such as LGB or BME employees.

Suggested Actions

- **Work with the counselling service (NHS Occupational Health) to discuss what they have in place to ensure their counsellors do not discriminate against anyone based on any characteristic and are trained to deal with LGB enquiries**
- **Monitor take-up of professional training opportunities and other training opportunities to identify if there are any trends in terms of people applying then whether they are accepted**

15. **Monitoring** – Currently we are able to monitor trends from job applications through to exiting employment with the housing company by characteristics including sexuality. We currently refresh the personal details a minimum of every 3 years and in January 2010 we expanded this to include questions on sexuality and religion.

Suggested actions

- **Consider refreshing the data on a more regular basis, or look providing articles in HomeWork and on plasmas about the importance of the company having up to date information, and responsibility for employees to tell us if any of their details have changed.**
- **Report back to staff via internal publications on what we have used this monitoring data for.**
- **Prepare for the next details audit, providing regular information in the lead up to explain why we collect it, what we do with the information etc to encourage a higher response.**

16. **Monitoring: Follow Up** – Currently we use the monitoring information we have collected on our staff to look at the representation of our workforce and where we need to make efforts to make this match more closely to the community we serve.

Suggested actions

- **To ensure that we feedback to employees what we use this type of information what and what actions it may have led to**

17. **Staff Attitude Survey** – When entering the equality index, the last staff attitude survey had been carried out more than 2 years previously and therefore could not be considered as part of the assessments. Since then a new survey has been carried out with employees and results are being finalised, although this did not ask for any

monitoring data and therefore cannot be broken down to see if there are any trends in particular for LGB employees.

Suggested actions

- **Feedback the results from the staff attitude survey and any follow up actions to all employees.**
- **Consider incorporating monitoring questions into a stress questionnaire to identify if there are any links between levels of stress and different groups.**
- **Make employees aware of when the Stonewall staff attitude survey is available for them to complete and encourage them to do this.**

18. **Supplier Policies** – Currently we have a suppliers guide on ‘How to sell to The Gateshead Housing Company’ which sets out our approach to equality and diversity and our requirement that our contractors also work to the same values and principles. Our pre-qualification questionnaires ask specific questions around compliance with equality legislation and whether the organisation has had any claims brought against them under equality legislation. In addition tender documents place specific requirements on organisations depending on their size such as ensuring they have an equality and diversity policy, monitoring the profile of job applicants and successful candidates and providing training and guidance to managers to effectively carry out their roles as a contractor of the housing company.

19. **Community Engagement** – We have had some success in engaging with LGB people and making them aware of us as an employer and service provider. Over the last 12 months we had articles in OutNE the local LGB magazine, attended and sponsored Northern Pride and took part in a joint event with other local housing providers and the LGBT to look at issues around employment.

Suggested actions

- **Continue to advertise in OutNE including information around the community fund to raise awareness with LGB community groups who could benefit either through a grant or in kind support**
- **Continue to support Northern Pride but raise awareness both internally and more widely externally about our presence there to attract more people to come and speak to us**
- **Look at ways of having a more regular form of engagement with LGB communities to identify and act on their issues**
- **Look at how our Diversity Champion could support LGB community events to show our commitment to this area**



Report to Resources and Audit Committee

28 April 2011

Title: Management Accounts – Fourth Quarter 2010/11

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with an update on the management accounts for the fourth quarter of the financial year 2010/11.

Background

2. The Accounts Team produces monthly management accounts which detail the actual charges for the month, the year to date charges and the budget year to date. This shows the variance and the forecasted budget. This report has been included in the Appendix to this report.
3. The Board agreed the budget for 2010/11 at its meeting on 17 March 2010.

Management Accounts

4. Following the budget that was approved by the Board in March 2010 and the Decent Homes – employee implications paper that was approved by Resources & Audit Committee in May 2010, a breakeven budget has been set. This budget as previously highlighted assumes that we can reduce staff numbers within the Decent Homes team from 44 to 34 by the end of September 2010. We substantially met this reduction by the end of September.
5. The management accounts for the fourth quarter of the financial year 2010/11 are included within the Appendix to this report. The Management Accounts include the income and expenditure in relation to both revenue and repairs up to the end of March 2010.
6. The Management Accounts shows a draft over spend of £5,723.
7. The Management Accounts provide the draft year end position of the Company; however, we are still awaiting some information from the Council in relation to our interest received and our outstanding insurance provision. Therefore, the final position will not be known until these figures are received.

8. The audit of the Financial Statements will take place at the beginning of June and the finalised Financial Statements will be brought to the meeting of Resources and Audit Committee on 7 July 2011 for approval.

Link to values

9. This report is in line with the following values of the company :-

- Being honest, accountable and transparent
- Being motivated trained, and committed across the company.

Impact on tenants

10. Appropriate financial monitoring and control will ensure efficiencies are maximised and redirected to services that directly impact on tenants.

Risk Management Implications

11. Regular and accurate monitoring will ensure that the strategic risk within the business plan (Insufficient available financial resources) is effectively controlled.

Financial Implications

12. The financial implications are contained within the report and appendices.

Health Implications

13. There are no direct health implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report.

Value for Money implications

15. Regular financial monitoring and control will ensure efficiencies are maximised and then utilised in the most appropriate manner.

Environmental Implications

16. Environmental consideration is given during the day to day management of financial resources through the drive to ensure that purchasing methods are sustainable and through the reduction of energy costs through energy efficient measures being introduced in working practices.

Consultation carried out

17. None directly for this report.

Recommendation

18. The committee's views are sought as to whether the committee are satisfied with the financial management of the Revenue and Repairs budgets for fourth quarter of the 2010/11 financial year and for the year overall.

Contact: Sarah Thompson, Finance Manager

Tel No: (0191) 433 5350

**The Gateshead Housing Company
Management Accounts – March 2010**

Revenue and Repairs Executive Summary

1. The management accounts for the fourth quarter of the 2010/11 financial year are shown below:

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
Management Fee				
Income	17,812	17,802	10	17,802
Employee Costs	12,232	11,979	(253)	11,979
Overhead Costs	5,529	5,823	294	5,823
Surplus/(Deficit)	51	0	51	0
Repairs Fee				
Repairs Management Fee	19,957	21,273	(1,316)	21,273
Repairs Costs	20,014	21,273	1,259	21,273
Surplus/(Deficit)	(57)	0	(57)	0
Overall Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	(6)	0	(6)	0

2. Overall, the fourth quarter position shows an overspend of £6,000. This is the draft result for 2010/11 and we expect that the final figures will not greatly increase the deficit shown.
3. The annual budget has increased by £10,000 due mainly to £7,000 from the Council's Local Community Fund monies which were awarded to a number of our Sheltered Schemes to use for equipment and furnishings to benefit residents of the scheme.
4. Following the budget that was approved by the Board in March 2010 and the Decent Homes – employee implications paper that was approved by Resources & Audit Committee in May 2010, a breakeven budget was set. This budget as previously highlighted assumes that we can reduce staff numbers (by redeploying staff) within the Decent Homes team from 44 to 34 by the end of September 2010; we substantially met this reduction programme by the end of September.
5. Within the fourth quarter we undertook a programme of voluntary redundancies which was agreed with Gateshead Council. It was agreed that the Housing Company would fund £250k of the costs of these voluntary redundancies with

the Council paying the balance of these costs for those individuals who left in March 2011. Therefore, employee costs are overbudget by this funding amount.

6. The overheads budget came in under budget due to savings made in the central and area budgets and this saving was used to fund the voluntary retirement costs.
7. Repairs costs have reduced from £23m in 2009/10 to £20m in 2010/11, which has enabled us to reduce the capital funding needed to support the repairs budget from £4m in 2009/10 to £2.5m in 2010/11. Further analysis is provided later in the report.

Income

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
INCOME				
Management Fee	14,118	13,890	228	13,890
Officer Costs	2,922	3,422	(500)	3,422
Lettings Review	75	75	0	75
External Funding	65	65	0	65
Local Community Fund	7	0	7	0
Performance Fee	625	350	275	350
Total Income	17,812	17,802	10	17,802

8. Overall income for the fourth quarter has come in over budget for the year due mainly to funding from the Council's Local Community Fund which was not budgeted for at the start of the financial year.
9. The Management Fee is in relation to the everyday management of Gateshead Council's properties and is calculated based on the staffing structure and prior year overhead costs plus an efficiency target of 4% savings. An increase in the management fee is due to the voluntary redundancy costs Gateshead Council agreed to fund over and above the £250k to be funded from the Housing Company.
10. The Officer Costs are for the work carried out in relation to the Decent Homes Programme as well as the management of the New Build Projects which are ongoing in 2010/11. We reduced the level of management fee taken in relation to the Decent Homes Programme due to the reduction of the number of partners managed in 2010/11 from three to two.
11. The Lettings Review is in relation to the lettings policy review which was conducted on behalf of Gateshead Council, this income was agreed by Gateshead Council in the prior year and this element relates to income which was carried forward from 2009/10. This work has now been completed.

12. The External Funding is in relation to monies to fund Neighbourhood Relations Officers from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and the management fee from Tees Valley Housing Association for the management of their properties.
13. The Performance Fee is in relation to the work that the rent and income teams undertake in the collection of rent and service charges. We have reached an agreement with the Council that if the rent and income teams collect rent and service charges over and above the national collection rate target we have a profit sharing arrangement where we receive 50% of the income collected over and above this target. We exceeded the target that we expected to receive in relation to rent collection which led to an increase in the actual income received from the Council.

Employee Costs

14. Employee Costs are broken down as follows:

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
Employee Costs				
Housing Management	3,143	3,292	(149)	3,292
Business Support	474	639	(164)	639
Property & Technical Services	2,514	2,853	(338)	2,853
Finance & ICT	2,824	1,715	1,108	1,715
Central Sub Total	8,955	8,499	456	8,499
Area Costs	3,277	3,480	(203)	3,480
Total Employee Costs	12,232	11,979	253	11,979

15. Salary costs are over budget for the year due to the funding of the voluntary redundancies. We agreed to fund £250,000 of the voluntary redundancies and agreed that the Council would cover the remaining costs associated with the redundancy programme.
16. All of the redundancy costs have been shown against the Finance & ICT section above. The savings shown in Property & Technical are due mainly to the achievement in the reduction in staff numbers within the Decent Homes team through redeployment of staff. We will look to deliver Phase 2 in the forthcoming months. Staff within this team have been given preference when internal vacancies have occurred and to date this process has been successful.
17. During the year we have spent £127,000 on agency staff; this is in comparison to spend in 2009/10 of £88,000. The spend on agency staff this year has been partly offset in the month end figures due to a number of vacant posts being held.

Overhead Costs

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
Overhead Costs				
Central Total	4,452	4,689	(237)	4,689
Area Costs	1,077	1,134	(57)	1,134
Total Overhead Costs	5,529	5,823	(294)	5,823

18. Overhead costs are underspent overall for the fourth quarter; this has enabled the overspend on the salary budget due to the voluntary redundancy costs to be covered.
19. Central overhead costs are underspent due mainly to spend on depreciation being lower than anticipated as fewer large assets were purchased than had been anticipated, savings were also made on the rental costs as we moved out of the old Dunston office, and we have spent less on legal services than we had previously budgeted for.
20. Due to good budget management we managed to save over £20,000 on the Choice Based Lettings 'HomeChoice' newspaper and through a renegotiation of the contract in conjunction with the council we saved over £40,000 on the costs associated with our cash collection and giro stationery in our housing offices.
21. We were unable to participate in the social housing equality framework pilot through out tenant involvement team due to delays in the provision of guidance from central government. We did not carry out a separate assessment against the Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing as this was assessed by our advisor on equality. This has meant that spend was lower than originally budgeted.
22. Area costs were slightly under budget which was due to a rebate received for electricity costs we had previously paid.
23. An analysis of overhead spend against budget is included within Appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows a pie chart of areas that the Central Overheads have been spent on.
24. Budget holders are now more accountable for their budgets enabling them to review their spend in more detail and overhead spend is monitored in detail by the Finance Section to ensure that these costs are controlled as much as possible.

Repairs Summary

25. An analysis of the repairs costs is provided below. Overall spend was £1.2m less than originally budgeted for – this was due mainly to savings in the relet and painting budgets. This enabled the Company to reduce the level of capital funding used to cover the major work repair and relets carried out by £1.5m. This saving was used as additional funding in the capital budget.

	YTD Budget £000's	YTD Actual £000's	Variance £000's
REPAIRS			
Fixed Costs (Contractors' Preliminaries)	3,500	3,399	101
Responsive	8,528	8,504	24
Relets	5,000	4,343	657
Cyclical Repairs	500	496	4
Water Hygiene Testing	150	48	102
Painting	1,000	568	432
Gas Servicing	2,000	2,009	(9)
Electrical Circuit Testing	50	34	16
Solid Fuel Testing	10	3	7
Lift Maintenance	135	183	(48)
Security	150	179	(29)
Environmental Works	200	212	(12)
Energy Performance Certificates	50	36	14
	21,273	20,014	1,259
Insurance Funded Repairs	0	184	184
Repair Management Fee Income	21,273	19,773	(1,500)
Income Total	21,273	19,957	(1,316)
REPAIRS TOTAL	0	(57)	(57)

Responsive Repairs

26. Responsive repair costs are slightly under budget overall, however, the contingency was fully utilised in this budget heading. The increase in jobs during the winter period and due in particular to the bad weather that was experienced has led to an increase in the costs for this area. However, we have been able to fund part of this cost from the insurance fund where gutters required repairs due to the falling snow. £184,000 has been claimed through insurance for these repairs.
27. For the fourth quarter of 2010/11, the average cost per job for responsive repairs was down to £107.82 from £109.74 in the third quarter – the average repair cost in 2009/10 was £96.62. This increase is partly due to a number of renewals being undertaken as a responsive repair rather than as programmed works, whereas in the prior year renewals were included within the programmed works. Also, the removal of gas repair jobs which are now included within the Gas Care Plan has increased the average costs of other repairs. The removed gas repair

jobs were generally large numbers of small value jobs which brought down the average cost of a repair in the prior year.

28. The number of responsive repairs invoiced in 2010/11 was 63,661 in comparison to 73,210 in 2009/10. This is due to the removal of the gas repair jobs from the responsive repairs, there were 11,988 gas repair jobs invoiced April 2009 – March 2010. We now provide a full gas care plan service to tenants where we pay an annual charge per property for the gas service and repairs to that appliance (with an additional charge for any additional appliances). This is funded through the gas servicing budget.
29. Repair satisfaction for the year end is 98.13% (against a target of 97-100%); this has increased from the third quarter. 99.2% of repairs have been completed within the timescales (against a target of 99-100%); this has slightly reduced from 99.23% in the third quarter.
30. An analysis of the type of responsive repairs carried out in the third quarter is included in Appendix 3 and a comparison of responsive repairs costs and number of jobs in 2010/11 to prior years is included within Appendix 4.

Relets

31. The relet costs are lower than budget as we negotiated fixed costs for relet works which has had a positive impact on our spend. We also introduced a new category of relets in relation to clearances only. This has had a positive impact on reducing the costs of relet works.
32. Overall the average relet cost for the third quarter was £2,242.75 and between April and March 2011, 1,765 relets were carried out and invoiced. In 2009/10, the average cost was £2,806.87 and there were 1,967 jobs carried out and invoiced.

Painting

33. The painting programme is under budget for the year as the original full programme was not able to be delivered in the year due to staffing shortages at our contractor. Therefore, we have reprofiled the painting programme going forward.

Gas Servicing

34. As previously discussed a new Gas Care Plan has been implemented where we pay a one-off charge for the gas servicing and repairs to an appliance within the property, any additional gas appliances will incur an additional one-off charge. Therefore, this budget is largely on target and we expect this to come in as predicted. This will remove some of the unpredictability which often occurs during the winter months particularly with the increasing repairs and therefore, costs incurred in relation to boiler breakdowns.
35. Gas appliances are required to have a gas service carried out every 12 months, at the end of the year 100% of our properties had a gas service within the

previous 12 months. We have met our annual target by undertaking focused work on those tenants who have previously refused access by trying to gain access to these properties earlier than required.

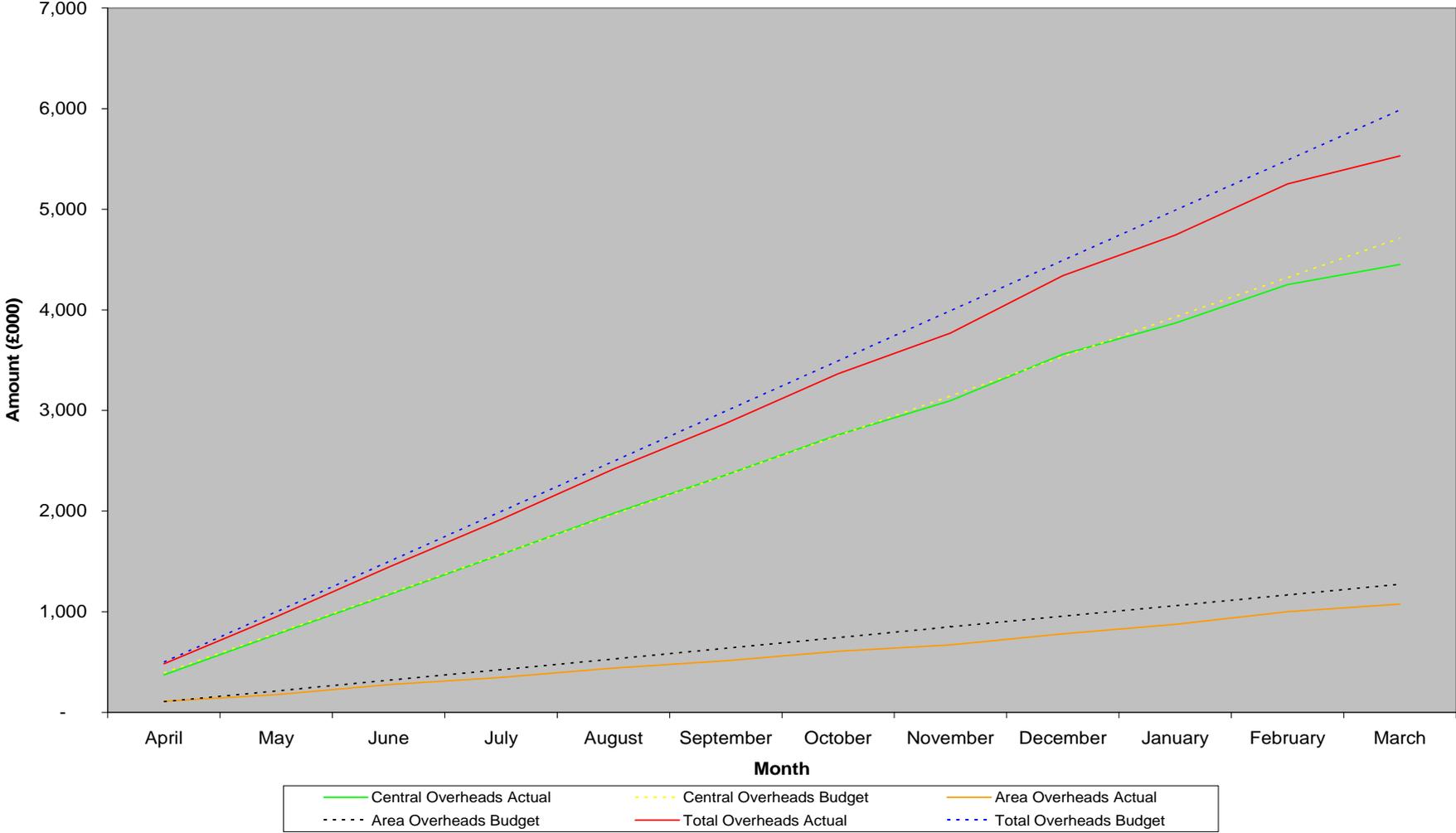
Cyclical Maintenance

36. There are a number of repair costs in relation to the cyclical maintenance programme which has been developed for our properties, particularly in relation to cyclical repairs, water hygiene testing, lift maintenance, environmental works, electrical circuit testing and solid fuel testing.

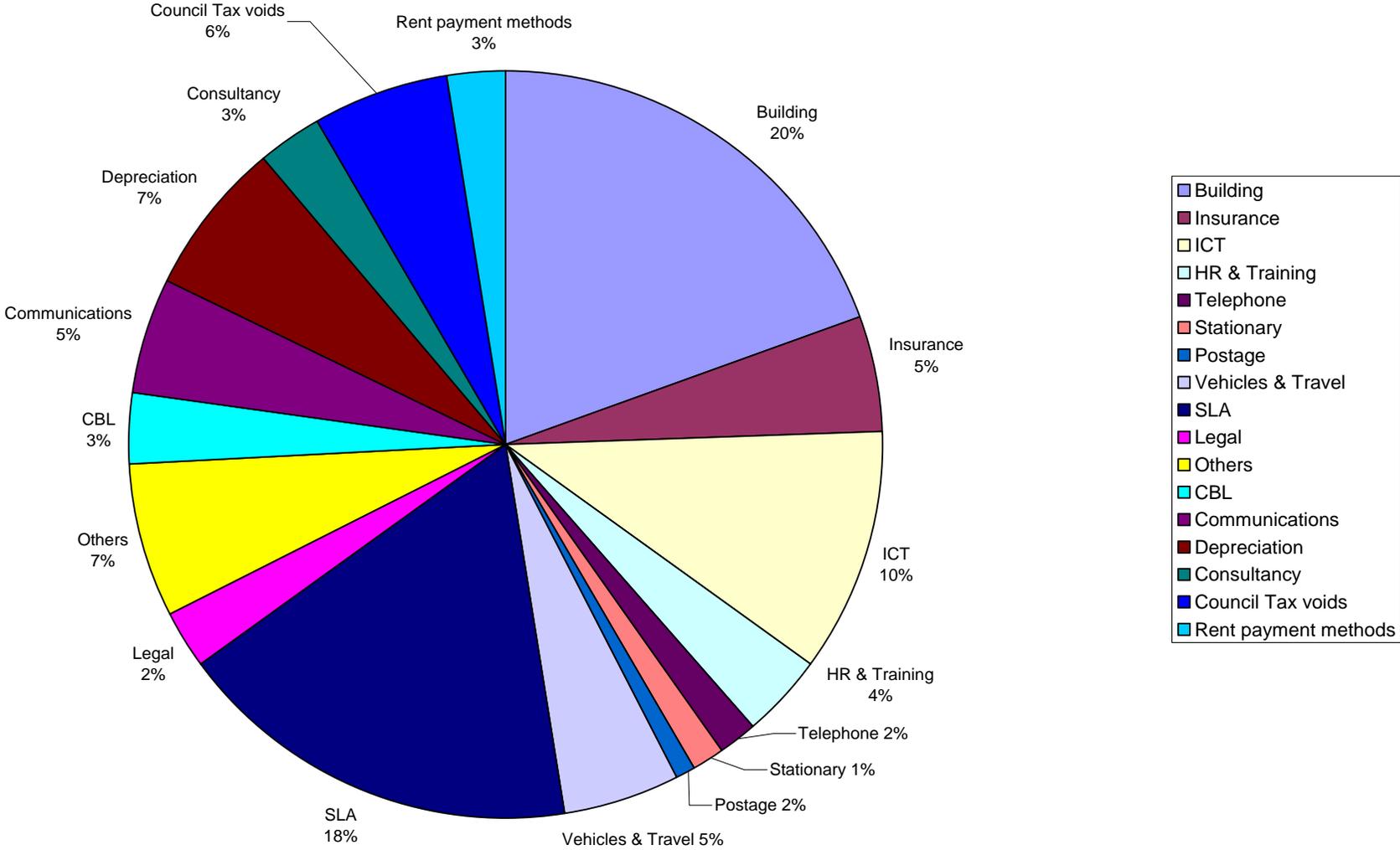
Detailed Management Accounts

	YTD Actual £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Annual Budget £'000
Income				
Management Fee	14,118	13,890	228	13,890
Officer Costs	2,922	3,422	(500)	3,422
Lettings Review	75	75	0	75
External Funding	65	65	0	65
Local Community Fund	7	0	7	0
Performance Fee	625	350	275	350
Total Income	17,812	17,802	10	17,802
Employee Costs				
Housing Management	3,143	3,292	(149)	3,292
Business Support	474	639	(164)	639
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Finance & ICT	2,824	1,715	1,108	1,715
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Area Costs	3,277	3,480	(203)	3,480
Total Employee Costs	12,232	11,979	253	11,979
Overhead Costs				
Central Total	4,452	4,689	(237)	4,689
Area Costs	1,077	1,134	(57)	1,134
Total Overhead Costs	5,529	5,823	(294)	5,823
Management Fee Surplus/(Deficit)	51	0	51	0
Repairs Fee				
Repairs Management Fee	19,957	21,273	(1,316)	21,273
Repairs Costs	20,014	21,273	1,259	21,273
Repairs Fee Surplus/(Deficit)	(57)	0	(57)	0
Overall Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	(6)	0	(6)	0

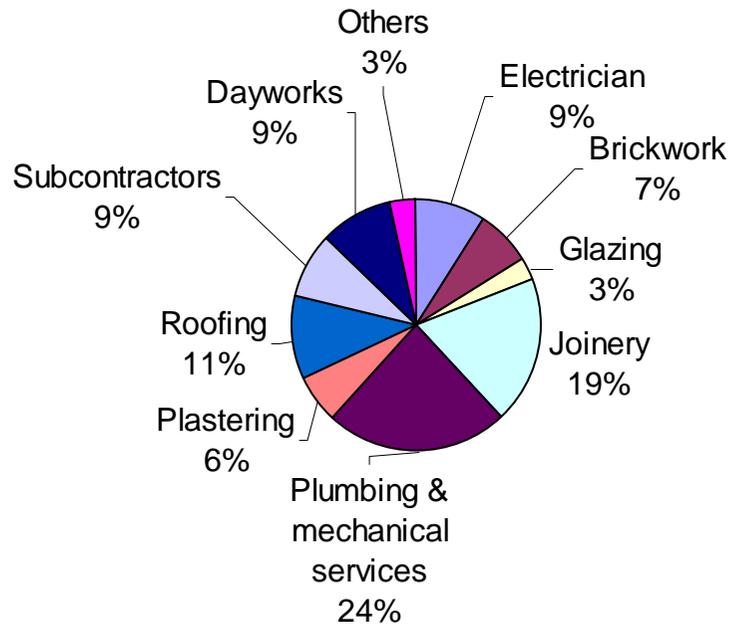
TGHC Overheads Budget 2010/11



Central Overheads expenditure cumulative 31st March 2011



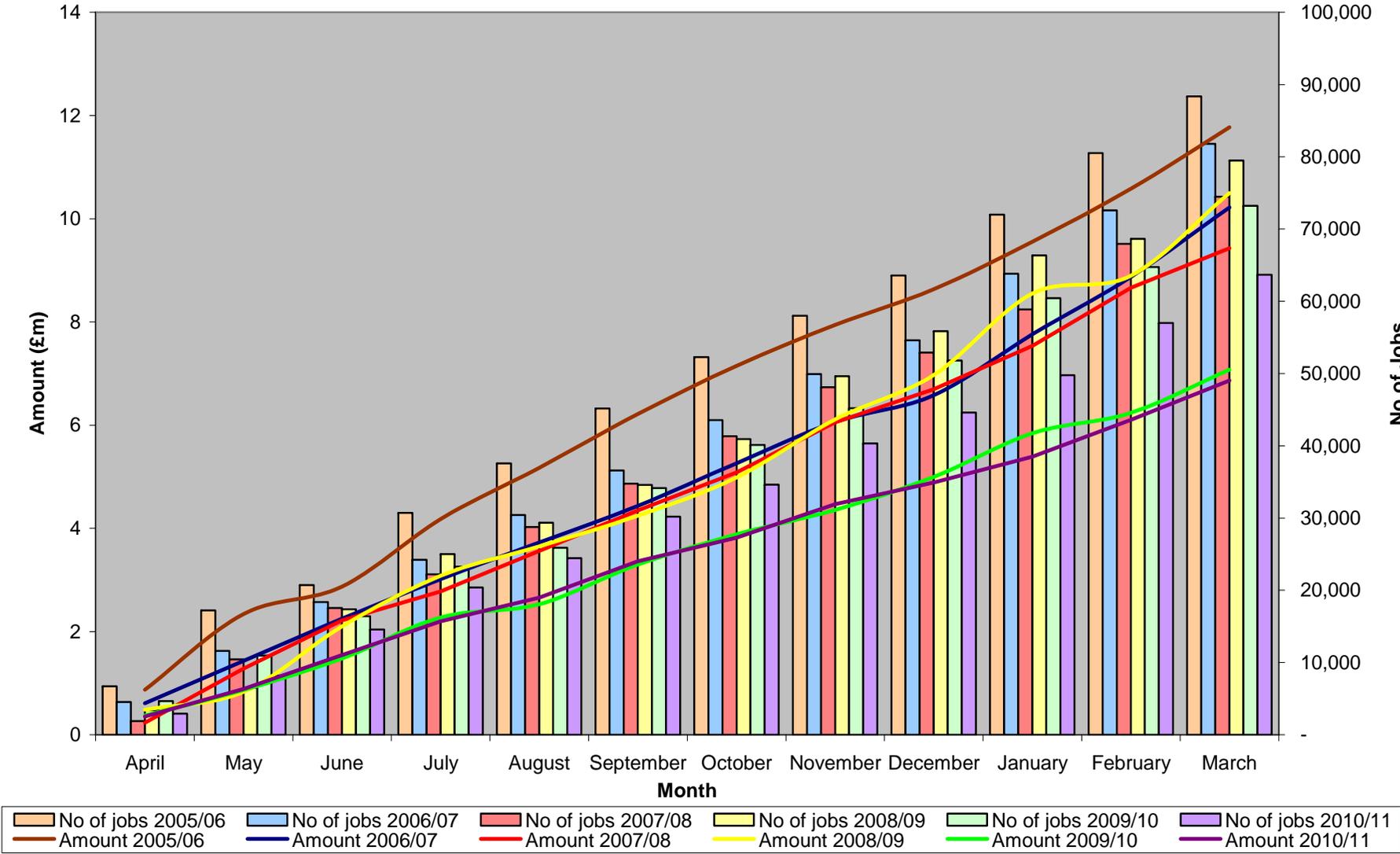
Morrisons invoiced Repairs by trade for the period April 2010 - March 2011



Appendix 3

Trade	2009/10	2010/11
Electrician	648,662.65	577,602
Brickwork	286,285.98	437,475
Glazing	187,321.77	185,072
Joinery	1,138,015.14	1,168,630
Plumbing & mechanical services	2,749,142.92	1,476,400
Plastering	345,699.17	394,905
Roofing	351,594.27	661,282
Subcontractors	213,257.81	544,972
Dayworks	377,560	583,305
Others	54,783	216,174
TOTAL	6,352,323	6,245,816

Comparison of Responsive Repairs to Previous Years



Report to Resources and Audit Committee

28 April 2011



Title: Value for Money Year End Update

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with an update on the value for money (VFM) activities carried out by the company throughout 2010/11.

Background

2. The Board approved the company's updated VFM Strategy in May 2008.
3. Value For Money (VFM) reviews are carried out in line with the programme plan which is included within the VFM strategy. We have developed a toolkit for undertaking the VFM reviews which provides a step-by-step approach. Each report is presented to the VFM Service Improvement Group who scrutinise the results and provide challenge to those areas which do not represent value for money.

Value For Money Activities

4. Our efficiency target for 2010/11 was set at 4% and we met this target and saved over £1.3m.
5. During 2010/11 we have undertaken a number of value for money activities which have been reported to the Value for Money Service Improvement Group (VFM SIG). Some of the achievements we have made over the last year are detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.
6. In January 2010 the VFM SIG agreed that it should also consider any environmental implications associated with the Company's drive towards obtaining ISO14001. Therefore, their name was changed to the Value for Money and Environmental Management Service Improvement Group (VFM&EM SIG).
7. We have undertaken a VFM survey with employees to review their understanding of value for money. The results of this survey found that: -
 - 72% of employees were aware of the VFM Strategy which was a significant increase compared to 41% in 2009.

- 40% of employee understood the three Es of VFM which is an increase of 15% since 2009.
 - 66% of employees considered that The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC) was a VFM Focused organisation.
8. The survey has also led to the development of a VFM on-line training programme which has been launched in April and is mandatory for all employees. We will be monitoring those employees who have not yet completed the training and providing any support they may need.
 9. In August 2010, we launched the Value for Money Suggestion Scheme – TGHC Suggests. This scheme enables employees to submit any value for money suggestions they may have, these are then scrutinised by officers to determine whether they could realistically be implemented and are then taken to the VFM & EM SIG for approval. We have had 31 suggestions submitted to date and of these 12 have gone to the VFM & EM SIG.
 10. An example of a recent TGHC Suggests led to the SIG requesting further investigation of a suggestion to produce the quarterly employee magazine 'HomeWork' electronically rather than a paper version. The Service Manager presented costs for both versions, the SIG considered the costs versus the benefits of each production plus the benefits to the organisation in keeping employees informed of changes and developments effecting them and customers. After consideration the VFM & EM SIG agreed the costs were justified.
 11. The VFM Suggests scheme awards high street vouchers are on a quarterly basis of £25 to suggestions that are implemented, suggestions that are put forward but not implemented go into a quarterly draw for a £10 voucher which are funded out of the Finance budget. At present, two £10 vouchers have been awarded for suggestions received but not implemented.
 12. Suggestions received by employees have covered all areas of the organisation and some examples are: -
 - Electronic payslips
 - Home working
 - Stationery procurement
 - Room booking
 - Virtual meetings
 13. In February 2011, the Finance Manager presented to the HouseMark Northern Region group on The Gateshead Housing Company's Approach to Value for Money. This presentation was endorsed by the VFM&EM SIG and the presentation is available on HouseMark's website alongside a case study which has been produced.

VFM & EM Service Improvement Group

14. The VFM & EM SIG have met six times in 2010/11, a programme of work is included in Appendix 2 to this report. During this time they have undertaken a variety of work from approving the value for money reviews undertaken by the value for money officer, to agreeing whether the VFM suggestions should be

investigated further. They also provided information which was used in the Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders for 2009/10.

15. Their workplan for 2011/12 has been agreed and is included at Appendix 3 to this report. This consists of approving the Value for Money Strategy and undertaking more detailed analysis of the performance data, as well as reviewing the VFM suggestions.

VFM Strategy

16. The VFM Strategy was originally agreed in 2008 for a 3-year period. This strategy is coming to the end of its useful life and a review is currently underway to update and refresh the VFM Strategy. This will be presented to a future Resources and Audit Committee for approval.
17. The Programme Plan attached to the strategy will be updated in line with the changing structure of the Housing Company and to take into consideration any new developments from central Government.

Link to values

18. This report links to the following corporate values: -
 - Being motivated, trained, and committed across the company
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being a listening and learning organisation.

Impact on tenants

19. Whilst there is no direct impact on tenants, any VFM savings are re-invested into the tenant's priority areas.

Risk Management Implications

20. These initiatives are seen as part of the toolkit to ensure that service improvements are affordable which will ensure the associated strategic risk (Failure to sustain service improvements) is correctly managed.

Financial Implications

21. The financial implications arising from this report are addressed through the monthly monitoring and budget setting process as the company looks to re-invest savings into tenants' priorities.

Equality and Diversity Implications

22. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

Value for Money Implications

23. The development of these initiatives by the company link into the overall objectives of the VFM Strategy.

Health Implications

24. There are no direct health implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

25. Environmental implications form part of the VFM&EM SIG's remit and they receive regular reports from the Environmental Management Working Group on how the group are meeting our ISO14001 requirements.

Consultation carried out

26. Any savings reinvested are done so after consultation with tenants and leaseholders as to their priorities.

Recommendation

27. The committee is asked to note the update.

Value for Money Achievements

ICT - Cost of ICT per User

- The ALMO average to provide an ICT service which includes all computer systems, infrastructure related costs plus all telecommunication costs are £4,085. Our average costs are £3,395 showing that we are providing an effective service which is good value.

ICT - Compressed hours

- Use of compressed hours in the ICT Section has allowed the department to support the business beyond the period offered by the SLA from Gateshead Council. The department is now able to provide cover between 7:00am and 6:00pm Monday to Friday. This has also benefited the individuals involved in their work life balance, all at no extra cost.

Caretaker Review

- Changes to the Caretakers working hours means Caretakers are on duty for a full working day which has enabled Caretakers to carry out additional duties such as small repairs to communal areas of the blocks at no additional cost to the service.

Tenant Involvement

- Employees and board members are currently completing the new E&D e-learning programme
- Training on Equality Impact Assessments has taken place with Corporate and Senior Managers and members of the Equality and Diversity Working Group, to ensure that the assessments we carry out are robust and effective
- Both of these training activities will result in value for money savings through getting things right first time rather than having to make costly changes at a later date, or by providing services that our customers or employees do not need.

HR

- The total sickness absence for the period April to March 2011 equated to 8.3 days this reduced by 45% from 2006/07 when sickness absence was 15.1 days. This ensures that we deliver an efficient and effective service to customers.

Administration

- The Company's Administration Officer has renegotiated a number of contracts with our suppliers which have reduced annual overheads at Keelman House, including savings on our maintenance contract for the air conditioning service and savings on our contract to dispose of our confidential waste.

Training

- The repairs service has been part of a pilot programme of NVQ training which has had an excellent success rate. The NVQ's are delivered by Sunderland College and are fully funded securing VFM saving for the company. VFM efficiency and effectiveness are secured as employees are able to provide a better service to customers.

VFM & EM SIG Workplan and Outcomes 2010/11

May 2010

- Agreed SIG meeting timetable for 2010/11
- Formalised and approved VFM & EM SIG Work plan 2010/11
- Endorsed HMA & Recruitment VFM Reviews

July 2010

- Approved Asbestos and Concierge Services VFM reviews
- SIG was consulted on the Tenant Services Authority VFM Standard for the Annual Report, their comments were used to develop the VFM Section of the Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders 2009/10

September 2010

- Authorised HomeChoice VFM Audit
- Signed off Admin VFM Review
- Approved VFM Officer to launch VFM Employee Suggestion Scheme
- Scrutinised Performance Indicators for Quarter 1, 2010/11

November 2010

- Agreed the VFM Reviews conducted for HR, Training and Admin
- Scrutinised Performance Indicators results for Quarter 2

January 2011

- SIG agreed group achievements for 2010/11
- Approved the RAIT VFM Audit
- Agreed VFM Officer shouldn't pursue VFM Suggestion to produce quarterly HomeWork publication via email and the magazine should remain a paper copy
- Approved VFM Presentation to be delivered to HouseMark group in February

March 2011

- SIG signed off VFM & EM SIG Work plan for 2011/12
- Agreed not to pursue VFM Employee Suggestion to sell excess furniture within the organisation
- Approved Budgets for 2011/12
- Approved draft annual survey 2011 to be issued to customers

VFM & EM SIG Workplan 2011/12

May 2011

- Value for Money Training – Principles of Value for Money and benchmarking housing services
- TGHC Suggests received from employees

July 2011

- TGHC Suggests received from employees
- Value for Money Strategy – Draft
- Service Standard Performance information 2010/11 – relevance of standards/measuring the right areas
- Outcome of ISO 14001 inspection
- Caretaker and Concierge Service – Service presentation

September 2011

- TGHC Suggests received from employees
- Value for Money Strategy – Final
- Annual Survey – Results and learning from what customers have told us
- Gas Servicing - Service presentation

November 2011

- TGHC Suggests received from employees
- Service Standard Performance Information, Quarter 1 & 2, 2011/12 – Relevance of standards/measuring the right areas
- HouseMark – Benchmarking results
- Corporate Services - Service presentation

January 2012

- TGHC Suggests received from employees
- Service Standard Performance – Target Setting for 2012/13
- Draft Budget for 2012/13
- Handymen - Service presentation

March 2012

- TGHC Suggests received from employees
- Finalised Budget for 2012/13
- SIG Work Plan for 2012/13
- Customer Service - service presentation



Report to the Resources and Audit committee

28 April 2011

Title: Contract for Printer Consolidation – Review of First Year of Operation

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the committee with an update on the first year of operation of the three year contract for reprographic equipment awarded to United Carlton to establish if the projected savings have been achieved in the first year of the contract.

Background

2. In August 2009, the printing facilities of the company (TGHC) were put out to tender to find a more efficient and cost effective printing solution for the company. Up until that time, employees used equipment of a low specification with limited functionality. There was limited use of duplex (double sided) printing and little ability to use colour printing. The equipment in place was expensive to run in terms of pages printed despite the initial purchase price being modest in most cases.
3. An invitation to tender was issued for the procurement of 16 multi functional devices and 16 laser printers to replace 81 old devices across the company.
4. The Board, at its meeting on 12 November 2010, awarded the three year printer contract to the Gateshead based company United Carlton.
5. The lease agreement was based on a monthly leasing charge for the equipment (2 brands of multi function printer were utilised, a Sharp high volume unit printing in colour and mono as well as a desktop based Kyocera printer printing in mono only) supplied along with monthly billing of the print volumes involved, the agreement includes all support, repairs and consumables.
6. Based on estimates and projections of printer usage cost savings of approximately £8500 per annum over the 3 year agreement were estimated.

Summary

7. A return on investment on the tender has been carried out after the first anniversary of the contract to allow a full years printing usage to be compared. The results of this can be summarised as follows: -

Printing Volumes across TGHC in 2010

Colour Sharp MFD	162,274
Mono Sharp MFD	1,136,398
Mono Kyocera Desktop	254,771
Total	1,553,443

8. This compares to the estimated print volumes across TGHC in 2009 used for the tender.

HP Colour	30,600
HP Mono 44%	755,160
Canon Mono 56%	956,040
Total	1,741,800

9. The figures show an 11% decrease in overall printing volumes. This is an encouraging result overall because at the same time that the printers were replaced there was increased publicity for employees about the cost of printing and a drive to reduce printed materials. This was also relevant to the successful ISO 14001 environmental accreditation, successfully achieved in 2010.
10. There was also a significant rise in the use of colour across the organisation, it increased by 530% over the year. As discussed the ability to print colour was very sparse across the organisation, the increased capability of the printers installed can be seen in this statistic.

Page Costs

11. Printing under the old model was based on a cost per page and a consumable purchase model (consumables being toners and cartridges). Analysis of the old model revealed the following cost per page for the different devices used: -

Old Model

Model	Per Page Cost
HP Colour	0.25
HP Mono 44%	0.0395
Canon Mono 56%	0.0141

New Model

Model	Per Page Cost
Colour Sharp MFD	0.039
Mono Sharp MFD	0.0039
Mono Kyocera Desktop	0.006

12. To put these figures into context printing a 100 page mono document on the old model would cost £1.41, to do so on the new model would cost £0.39, a 72% cost saving.

Overall Cost Comparison

13. When the total print volumes of TGHC in 2010 were calculated based on the new model of printing compared to the prior model the results showed significant savings in printing costs compared to the old model of printing across the organisation. In 2010 this equates to a saving of £62,175 in the first year of the agreement. The estimated cost reduction featured in the business case was approximately £25,000 over three years.
14. In addition to saving money, power and carbon emissions, the devices offer much higher capabilities which includes A3 printing, colour printing, desktop faxing, professional finishing, booklet finishing and bulk scanning in multiple file formats to the network.

Link to Values

15. This report links to the following company values: -
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional
 - Being a listening and learning organisation
 - Embracing equality.

Impact on tenants

16. There is no direct impact on tenants, however increased service levels of equipment have an inevitable positive effect on customer support. They also open up possibilities for use with document management and the potential for print on demand to negate large print volumes of certain documents.

Equality and Diversity Implications

17. The contract has ensured that all staff have access to high quality printing equipment across the company.

Health Implications

18. There are no health implications directly arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

19. The install of new equipment under a managed service contract has brought with it high levels of support including a four maximum response to faults and a guaranteed replacement of equipment if a problem cannot be resolved in 24 hours. The number of printers was also chosen to ensure redundancy throughout the business in the event of a single machine failure. Previous the only arrangements were a small number of spares. Risk has been significantly reduced.

Financial Implications

20. The significant savings which exceed the original estimates are detailed within the report.

Value for Money Implications

21. The significant savings detailed within the report demonstrate very good value for money.

Environmental Implications

22. The new equipment also brings the benefit of a reduced cost in electricity consumption and associated carbon emissions. This has been estimated at 72241Watts a cost of £5,201. This cost savings is in addition to the headline saving of £78,404.

Recommendation

23. The views of the committee are sought on whether it is satisfied with the first year of operation of the three year contract for reprographic equipment awarded to United Carlton.



Report to the Resources and Audit Committee

28 April 2011

Title: 2010/11 Internal Audit Update – Progress Report

Report of: Chief Internal Auditor, Gateshead Council

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines progress made by the Internal Audit Service against the audit plan for the financial year 2010/2011.

Summary

2. The Audit Plan for 2010/11 was agreed by this Committee on 9th March 2010. Progress against the plan is detailed in the Appendix. As at April 2011 twenty-eight out of thirty-one audits are either complete or substantially complete, two audits are currently in progress and one IT audit is no longer required. As at 31 March 2011, 94% of the audit plan in terms of actual audit days against planned days was achieved by the Internal Audit Service.

Link to values

3. This report links to the following company values: -
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being motivated, trained and committed.

Impact on tenants

4. No impact directly from this report.

Risk Management Implications

5. The perceived risk of each audit is based on a twelve point assessment taking into account such areas as materiality, complexity of the system, potential for fraud and sensitivity. Based on a score derived from the assessment, audits are categorised as high, medium and low priorities. This informs the frequency in which audits will be carried out.

Financial Implications

6. The cost of the internal audit work plan is fully provided for in the 2010/11 budget.

Equality and Diversity Implications

7. There are no Equality and Diversity implications associated with this report.

Value for Money implications

8. The delivery of the 2010/11 audit plan and the implementation of internal audit recommendations will assist in identifying efficiencies and achieving value for money.

Health Implications

9. There are no Health implications associated with this report.

Environmental Implications

10. There are no Environmental implications associated with this report.

Consultation carried out

11. The plan was developed following consultation with all relevant stakeholders within the company.

Recommendation

12. The committee is asked to note this report.

Appendix

THE GATESHEAD HOUSING COMPANY - 2010/11 AUDIT PLAN

<u>Housing Management</u>	<u>Progress</u>
1 Void Management	Final Report Issued
2 Rent Arrears (incl former tenant arrears)	Final Report Issued
3 Tenancy Allocation & Lettings	Final Report Issued
4 Housing Offices	Final Report Issued
5 Furnished Tenancies	Final Report Issued
<u>Corporate Services</u>	
6 Main Accounting	Final Report Issued
7 Company Payroll	Draft Report Issued
8 Creditors	Draft Report Issued
9 Budget Setting and Monitoring	Final Report Issued
10 Rent Collection	Final Report Issued
11 Governance	Final Report Issued
12 Procurement	Draft Report Issued
13 Corporate IT	Final Report Issued
14 IT Audit (Northgate)	Draft Report Issued
15 IT Audit (CRM)	No Requirement for Audit
16 Risk Management	Final Report Issued
17 Administration Functions	Final Report Issued
18 VAT Procedures	Final Report Issued
19 Insurance Arrangements	Final Report Issued
20 Business Continuity Arrangements	Final Report Issued
21 Leaseholder Service Charges	Draft Report Issued
<u>Property and Technical</u>	
22 Repairs	Draft Report Issued
23 Gas Safety and Servicing Arrangements	Draft Report Issued
24 Asbestos	In Progress
25 Capital Programme / Partnership	Final Report Issued
26 Access	Final Report Issued
27 New Build	In Progress
<u>Keelman Homes</u>	
28 Main Accounting	Final Report Issued
29 Creditors	Final Report Issued
30 Budget Setting and Monitoring	Final Report Issued
31 Governance	Final Report Issued



Report to Resources and Audit Committee

28 April 2011

Title: Forward Plan

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of report

1. To approve a forward plan of reports which will be presented to Resources and Audit Committee during the next year.

Background

2. The committee agreed, at its meeting held on 27 January 2011 that a forward plan of reports it will receive at future meetings become a standing item on every committee agenda.
3. Attached as an Appendix to this report is a forward plan of reports that will be presented to meetings of this committee during the next year. This will not be an exhaustive list of reports and there will clearly be a number of other items of business that the committee will be required to consider during the course of the next year. It will however give the committee an idea of forthcoming business. It will also assist officers when planning in business and meetings to avoid when there is a lot of business.

Link to Values

4. This report relates to the following company value of being honest, accountable and transparent.

Risk Management Implications

5. The forward plan will mitigate the risk of reports not being planned into the committee cycle.

Value for Money Implications

6. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

7. Equality and diversity implications will be addressed separately in future reports.

Financial Implications

8. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Health Implications

9. There are no health implications directly arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

10. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

11. Lead officers within the company have identified reports for future meetings of this committee.

Impact on Customers

12. There is no impact on customers as a result of compiling this report.

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that the forward plan be noted.

Resources and Audit Committee Forward Plan

Resources and Audit Committee	Issues to be discussed
Thursday 7 July 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audited Accounts
Thursday 28 July 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Directors Report and Financial Statement – 2010/11 • Equality and Diversity Annual Report
Thursday 27 October 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Training Update
January/February 2012 (date still to be agreed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Audit Strategy and Planning Memorandum
April/May 2011 (date still to be agreed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Training Update
<p>The following reports are taken to every meeting: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational Risk Register (different directorate at each meeting) • Management Accounts • Sickness Absence and HR Update (including learning and development) • Health and Safety Update • Equality and Diversity Update • Internal Audit Reports (always confidential) 	