

**REPORT FOR: EMPLOYEES'
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

Date of Meeting: 27 October 2010

Subject: INFORMATION REPORT -
Housing Peer Review

Responsible Officer: Lynne Pennington, Divisional Director
Housing

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Appendix 1 – Housing Peer Review –
Action Plan

Section 1 – Summary

This report was requested by ECF at the meeting of the 26 January 2010 to set out progress against the actions that were agreed to form the basis for working arrangements between housing services and the unions.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

Better working relationships between housing services and the unions since ECF met in January 2010 has led to an improved service and feedback from staff at recent Housing Ambition Events and from the Unions has been very positive. Unfortunately at the time of writing this report there are two issues of concern between the Unions and Housing but hopefully these will be resolved and will not have a long term negative effect on the much improved relationships.

Options considered

A number of options were considered to improve relationships and the table set out in appendix 1 highlights the actions that were agreed at the Peer Review in order to do this. The table sets out housings' view of progress against those actions. In addition to the actions recorded in the table, Union colleagues, particularly from Unison have regularly attended the housing management team, housing ambition events and special events to consider other aspects of the service, e.g. the results of the Lean review of leaseholder services.

Background

The original peer review was initiated following concerns raised by staff and unions in mid 2009 following the introduction of HARP. The concerns were not in connection with the HARP concept; they were more about perceived inadequacies in the consultation and communication processes that took place in connection with its introduction.

The review consisted of a number of meetings chaired by the Corporate Director of Place Shaping; a staff survey carried out by the unions of some staff in Resident Services and a number of meetings between housing management and the unions.

An action plan was agreed and progress against it is recorded in Appendix 1.

Current Situation

At the time of the peer review there was an independent root and branch service improvement review being carried out as well as a corporate staff survey. The findings from each of those reviews have been combined in the Housing Ambition Plan that was approved by Cabinet in July, 2010. The Plan is complemented by a communication and engagement calendar which was designed to ensure the regular and meaningful involvement of staff in the delivery and development of housing services.

All members of staff within housing services have committed to contribute to the plan and the vast majority either strongly agreed or agreed to commit to its delivery.

The HAP is a two year change plan designed to improve services and improve satisfaction of customers and staff.

The Unions have been very positive about the Housing Ambition Plan (HAP) and its associated processes and have been extremely helpful in supporting colleagues who have taken on different duties from those they have traditionally delivered in order to achieve the HAP objectives.

The implications of the recommendations from the previous ECF report were designed to improve relationships and improve services and the department has demonstrated that this has been achieved through tracking performance and asking staff what they think at every opportunity.

Housing believes this has been achieved in partnership with the Unions and is very grateful for the support and positive contributions that have been received from the Unions.

The implications ongoing for relationships and services can only be positive providing the ongoing issues that will inevitably arise from a public service that is subject to the pressures arising from the national and local financial climate are discussed openly and in a spirit of trust and mutual respect. It is hoped that the relationship improvements that have been developed during and since the peer review continue.

Financial Implications

There are no additional financial implications of this report as all of the costs have already been discussed and approved as part of the Housing Ambition Plan process and previous consideration at Cabinet.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

The risk register has been updated following the introduction of the Housing Ambition Plan.

The risk associated with this progress report is that there are two current issues of concern between the unions and housing which could have a detrimental impact on the improved relationships if they are not resolved to the satisfaction of the unions and housing.

Corporate Priorities

Housing contributes to all corporate priorities and the Housing Ambition Plan sets out the specific tasks that enable this to happen.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Milan Joshi



On behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 15 October 2010

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Lynne Pennington, Divisional Director of Housing Tel: 0208 424 1998

Background Papers:

Housing Ambition Plan
Communication and Engagement Calendar