

Title: Preparation for Inspection Update	Meeting: Board	
Report authorised by: Gavin Cansfield, Chief Executive	Date: 29 September 2010	Item No: 7
Report author: Jamie Carswell, Director of Strategy and Performance	Classification: Open	Report type: Discussion & Decision
<p>Business Plan Objective</p> <p>All Business Plan objectives are referred to in the self assessment.</p>		
<p>Financial Implications</p> <p>Preparation for Inspection 2010 has a dedicated budget.</p>		
<p>Risk Management</p> <p>2. Outside Political and/or Regulatory Change. Impact of change in central government, regulatory or housing policy.</p> <p>Failure to ensure a Two Star inspection result in 2010 will jeopardise securing Decent Homes funding and the overall mission of Tower Hamlets Homes.</p> <p>The inspection is a mission critical activity. Oversight will be provided by the Board, PMC and SMT (Programme Board).</p>		
<p>Linkages to Strategies</p> <p>All THH strategies.</p>		
<p>Summary</p> <p>The self assessment is the baseline document for the Audit Commission's inspection of Tower Hamlets Homes in November 2010. The document has been through an extensive consultation process with the Board involving two committee cycles and a week long review of the final draft. This involvement has undoubtedly strengthened the document and, in particular, increased how well we demonstrate our self-awareness.</p> <p>The agreement of the self-assessment by the Board will add a final reinforcement of appropriate governance to the document.</p>		
<p>Recommendations</p> <p>That the Board review and note the report; and agree the self-assessment for submission to the Audit Commission.</p>		

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Tower Hamlets Homes must submit a Self Assessment to the Audit Commission by 30th September, to support the November Inspection. This deadline is an explicit and agreed extension of 27th September, to allow the 'full involvement of the Board in the process'.
- 1.2. The drafting of the self-assessment will be complete by close-of-play on Friday 24th September. It will necessarily therefore be a late dispatch due to the specific circumstances.
- 1.3. The Self Assessment is our opportunity to demonstrate to the Audit Commission where we believe we are in meeting our strategic objectives (*Three Star in 2012*) and our current level of performance against the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs). It must be:
 - an honest appraisal highlighting both the journey travelled and what still lies ahead;
 - a slight understatement of what the Inspectors will find, to ensure they can build on our assessment, rather than chip away at it;
 - focused on outcomes not just on actions delivered or our processes; and
 - concise and written in a straightforward style, supplemented by a range of source documents and supporting evidence, hyperlinked into the body of the document.
- 1.4. The Self Assessment does not form part of the Inspection. The level of realism projected is, however, noted in the second judgement – Prospects for Improvement.

2. Involvement in Self Assessment

- 2.1. Drafting of the Self Assessment has involved:
 - regular reviews being held with Service Leads and Departmental Management Teams to develop the narrative;
 - an SMT/OMT workshop which reviewed the evidence for the four cross cutting KLOEs (Access and Customer Care, Diversity, Engagement and Value for Money);
 - reviewing positive outcomes from initiatives developed since the indicative inspection such as *Getting To Know You*, the Overcrowding Toolkit, Financial Inclusion options and Neighbourhood Action Plans;
 - ASB evidence has been reviewed by Ian Walker (Safety Net Associates);
 - performance against service standards, direction of travel against business critical indicators, and resident satisfaction data is being collated;
 - two SMT line-by-line reviews of the document in its final stages;
 - defining and preparing hyperlinked evidence; and

- the latest performance information (August 2010) and resident satisfaction information (STATUS 2010, referred to elsewhere on the agenda).
- 2.2. The self-assessment was considered by PMC in July and September, at which constructive and robust feedback was made. All Board members were invited to these meetings and both were attended by members from beyond the committee.
 - 2.3. The final draft was sent to all Board members on Monday 13th September, with a week for feedback by Tuesday 21st September. Four Board members made detailed comments on this final draft.
 - 2.4. Board members have also given very helpful feedback on earlier drafts and the Chair of FAC spent half-day on-site reviewing our overall Value for Money narrative and the evidence being prepared for the Self Assessment.
 - 2.5. In addition, we have used an external critical friend to challenge the document and our inspection preparations. He was on-site for two days to walkthrough the document with the Inspection Lead and Service Heads. This will provide a high level of assurance of our approach and narrative, the quality of our evidence and will highlight areas of focus/quick wins in the run-up to inspection.
 - 2.6. The Client Team is providing support in setting out the Strategic Housing context overall objectives and THH' role in their delivery, Council outcomes from joint initiatives such as overcrowding reduction and Community Hall management, and performance monitoring.
 - 2.7. The report has been agreed with the Client and individual Corporate Management Team members from LBTH have been given the opportunity for briefings on the document.

3. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.1. The Self Assessment outlines the progress we are making in delivering improvements to ensure services are accessible, inclusive and fairly provided.
- 3.2. Focus on equality and diversity will be maintained through specific deliverables themed against overall objectives related to both diversity and vulnerability. These are:
 - Roll-out and monitor vulnerability offer
 - Establish and monitor *Here to Help*
 - Deliver Diversity Action Plan and track outcomes
 - Deliver Overcrowding Toolkit and pilot.

4. Implications

4.1. VfM Implications

The focus on VfM is concentrated in this section of the self-assessment. Its production has been strengthened by the close involvement of the Chair of Finance and Audit Committee (FAC).

4.2. Legal Implications

None.

5. Customer Insight

5.1. Consultation

5.1.1. Residents and representative groups must be fully aware and play a full role in the inspection. A Communications Plan has been developed to achieve this – for example, an invitation to sit on the resident focus groups was in the latest edition of Open Door, currently in distribution.

6. Councils Views

6.1. The Council will be full partners in the delivery of the inspection. Clear lines of responsibility have been established with the Client team and CMT.

7. Conclusion

7.1. The review and sign-off process involving all key stakeholders and a critical friend has ensured that the Self Assessment is fit-for-purpose for submission on 30th September, and will provide a strong platform on which to prepare for the inspection.