

A question was received from a Member of the Public for the Board Meeting of 10 March 2009 and is stated below:

Question 1:

What specific actions are the board taking to ensure that THH successfully achieves two star status and what lessons can be learnt from ALMOs that have failed to achieve two star status?

Tower Hamlets Homes has orientated its business planning process to becoming a customer-focused organisation. The Business plan on the agenda we considered sets out the high level vision, values, and objectives that we will set in place to achieve this.

As the Chief Executive has reported, we have now identified the priority areas and we have now put in place action plans to address those areas – action plans that will take time to deliver. The detail of some of these is included in the appendix to his report and would be too many to list in this answer; for example, under the first objective in our neighbourhood housing services plan, we have seven actions with nineteen milestones to clarify the role of housing officers, set standards, adjust resources to move from a ‘one size fits all’ approach, complete and publish the result of estate inspections, refresh our use of notice-boards, review the role of our community development workers, and recruit office managers to support housing officers.

We are also putting in place a culture change programme, supported by a new staff forum, and a focus on performance management; ensuring that we are looking at both what we do and how we do them. This is about building an organisation for the long term; about not just going for what are meant to be quick fixes but building a sustainable, value based organisation that is passionate about great services and neighbourhoods.

We have focussed our time working with successful ALMOs that have achieved two-star status, rather than those that have failed or moved backwards.

Question 2:

Does THH have any car-free properties on its books and what is its policy towards car-free developments both for its existing estate and for any new build property it may undertake or have transferred to it?

THH does not have a car free policy for its current estates, and where estate parking – spaces or garages - is available, it is let to maximise rental income. THH does not restrict the allocation of estate parking to THH residents only, where vacancies occur, spaces can be allocated to non residents and businesses at a higher weekly rental charge. Residents

of private car free developments can apply for estate permits, but not on street permits.

Boundary estate which is a Grade 2 listed estate in Bethnal Green has been identified as being car free, this is due to the design of the estate which does not allow for spaces to be created within the boundaries of the block as this would restrict access for refuse collection and emergency access. Signage on the estate indicates that parking is prohibited. Estates/blocks where there is no parking provision, will be due to the age/design rather than a car free policy restricting provision of spaces.

Any future THH developments for new build will be subject to planning policy guidance on car-free developments (defined as restrictions for parking permits). This is included in the Interim Planning Guidance (2007), Policy CP40.

Process of answering questions from members of the public

Questions to Board:

- Questions in writing 5 days before Board meeting – sent to Governance Team
- The question cannot be about an individual's circumstance/issues, but of a general nature on services provided by Tower Hamlets Homes. Individual issues must be taken up with officers.
- Response will be given verbally on the evening of the Board (if questioner attends), and a written response sent (or given) to the questioner.
- There is no right of reply to the response given at the Board.
- If a questioner wishes to pursue the issue they can submit a further question for the next Board, or take the issue up through the officer process.