



Our vision is
“to deliver excellent Housing Services”

Partnership and Inward Investment Protocol – 2008/9 – 2010/11

Newark and Sherwood Homes
Limited



1. Introduction

This Protocol has been developed to outline Newark and Sherwood Homes' approach to partnership working and inward investment.

The purpose of the protocol

- To outline the approach NSH will take. This gives a transparent standard approach to partners and staff to work with and improve.
- To emphasise the importance of gaining synergy and efficiency through focused added value partnership
- To maximise resources available to NSH to meet its objectives and vision

2. Context of the protocol

Newark and Sherwood Homes has a comprehensive strategic framework. This protocol within this framework settings out the strategic structure within which the Company operates.

The suite of policies and strategies which form the strategic framework are all operated and applied on a daily basis to ensure robust process and effective and successful delivery of actions, task and projects. The application of these applies equally when taking forward new initiatives to ensure risks are minimised and the new schemes support the Company core values, objectives and vision.

The items listed below are part of the documents forming the Company's strategic framework

- Value for Money Strategy
- Budget Plan
- Procurement Strategy
- Financial Regulations
- Code of procedures with respect to contracts
- Management Agreement
- Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Risk Management Strategy
- Access and Customer Care Strategy
- Resident Involvement Strategy
- IT Strategy

3. Financial Regulations and Governance.

Financial Regulations and the Code of Procedures with respect to contracts will be adhered to at all times. The management agreement and company constitution set down the powers and working parameters of the company and should be referenced when considering partnerships or inward investment. The company has a scheme of delegation outlining what can be progressed without board permission. Any matters outside of budget or setting a strategic direction or policy are reserved for the Board.

4. Potential Partners

Newark and Sherwood Homes encourages partnership working, it is recognised that value for money efficiencies can be secured, learning can be gained and there are opportunities to improve our customers experience through working closer with other service providers.

When considering potential partners we will ensure that the partner's aims and objectives are complimentary with those of Newark and Sherwood Homes, themes we will consider are:

- Commitment to Equity and Diversity Issues
- Sustainability Values
- Financial stability
- Reputation
- Tenant Involvement

Newark and Sherwood Homes embraces partnership working when adding value to our services and customers. An evaluation should be completed to identify the added value of a potential partnership, benefits could include

- Sharing of skills
- Financial gains
- Efficiencies
- Enhancement of services/quality
- Accessing new services for our customers
- Specialist resources secured
- Organisation of supplier chains
- Joint information systems

SMART targets and performance information should be agreed at the outset of a partnership to monitor whether the identified benefits are being realised.

Risks associated to joint working should be identified, considered and measures implemented to control and minimise risks. Newark

and Sherwood Homes policy on risk management is detailed in the Risk Management Strategy.

5. New areas of service and activities

One of Newark and Sherwood Homes Objectives is to have a sustainable financial future beyond 2010.

Opportunities to deliver services in different ways, to branch out into new service areas and offering our specialist services to others are all ways which the company can ensure sustainability.

Newark and Sherwood Homes encourages Improvement and innovation. Staff are supported to raise ideas in a safe environment through team meetings, one to ones and the suggestion scheme.

New projects requiring resource or a change in standard or direction are assessed using the Company innovation and improvement matrix. Such projects are approved by the Company's Executive Team and reviewed against projected outcomes by the Finance Team six months after implementation. Other new projects identified outside of the Company's improvement planning process are managed through the Company's performance management guide – which impact assess new projects and prioritises within the Company whole to ensure effective performance delivery to the company's overall vision and objectives.

Continuous improvement and leadership to move forward is a part of everyday business within NSH and all staff have a responsibility to look at new innovative ways of doing things, to benchmark, to option appraise, prioritise and find effective delivery mechanisms to deliver identified service improvements, Partnerships and inward investment are integral to this.

6. Inward Investment Schemes

To support a sustainable and financial future beyond 2010, Newark and Sherwood Homes wants to increase inward investment into the Company. This will be done through internal and external investment.

6.1 Internal Funding

- **Improvement and Innovation Scheme**

If the scheme requires internal funding and it has not been considered prioritised and funded for progression through the Improvement Planning Process then a bid can be submitted to the Improvement and Innovation Fund.

This fund is held to finance new schemes during the financial year where investment is identified after the Business Plan and budget has been approved.

The project is assessed within a matrix giving regard to the scheme impact in terms of the customer, equality and diversity and delivery of the company vision and objectives.

- **Virements**

NSH financial processes allow flexibility for the movement of funds within the approved budget in specific circumstances. The use of this facility enables priorities to be funded and funding to be moved if appropriate and enhanced gain can be made. This provides managers with the flexibility to transfer resources to support the business activity levels and customer requirements.

- **Investment to Save Schemes**

Internal funding is generated through efficiencies, which are recycled and made available through the fore mentioned Improvement and Innovation fund.

Efficiencies can be generated through investment to save schemes. These projects should be costed over a whole life basis with the associated ongoing revenue costs and efficiencies identified.

6.2 External Funding

There are a variety of external funding streams which should be considered to attract funding and include:

- **Grant finder**

An effective method of identifying grants available is through our Grant Finder Scheme. Specialist resource within the Company has been developed to raise the profile of available grants, eligibility and guidance on completing application forms.

Research into grant funding for new initiatives and innovations has also been introduced.

- **Government/Other Funding**

Government provide funding to encourage organisations to deliver on its targets and meet Government agenda. Other organisations can provide inward investment both through funding and providing resources. Newark and Sherwood Homes supports staff to keep themselves up to date on developments and new opportunities, which will secure funding for the Company and our customers.

Available tools include

Quality Newspapers and journals
Inside Housing
Audit Commission Website
House-mark website
Housing Quality Network Website
Courses and Training Events
Networking with other professionals

- **Partnerships and Sponsorship**

Working in partnership can secure resources and finances into Newark and Sherwood Homes. Our existing and new partners can also provide funding through sponsoring activities and events or supplying supplies and services which benefit our customers and the local community.

- **Loan Schemes/Borrowing**

Loan schemes are available through the Government and other organisations. Grant Finder identifies loans which are available (see above section) Loan schemes and borrowing options will be considered when identifying funding for investment schemes.

- **Fees and Charges**

We are continually changing our activities and delivery methods to reflect our customer needs which results in new and amended services being offered to existing and new customers. Fees and charges can be raised on new services and when amending

existing services, consideration should be given to aligning costs and service charges. The Government subsidy system governs some of our charges and therefore subsidy implications should always be considered when making changes to fees and charges.

7. Key achievements to date

A sample of the achievements made are:

- Local benchmarking partners identified for 2008/9 information sharing and learning
- Membership of Central England Procurement Partnership Group
- Membership of Procurement for Housing Group
- Securing of full Decent Homes Programme funding from the Government - £49.5m
- The delivery of the five-year Decent Homes programme was tendered as a joint exercise with A1 Housing. Our Strategic Partners, Connaught and Bullock are carrying out the work.
- Consortia arrangements to take advantage of purchasing power. These include County Supplies, Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation, Northern Housing Consortium,
- External funding secured for the Tenants Federation group – web site and newsletter
- Street Warden service – partnership arrangement with Nott's Community Housing and Ollerton and Boughton Town Centre
- Mediation service – partnership service with Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Services at Vale View Scheme through partnering with Notts County Council and Nott's Community Housing
- Sanctuary Scheme partnership delivery with Newark and Sherwood District Council and other organisations
- Level One Tasking Group – Partnership with the Police

- Joint Forums with Newark and Sherwood District Council, including
 - Gypsy and Travellers
 - Anchor Admissions Board
 - Safer Neighbourhood Groups
- Other small “win win” initiatives with Newark and District Council and other Partners.

8. Key actions for 2008/9

- **Implementation of Grant Finder Sharing Scheme**
Roll out of the grant finder information collating and sharing to all
- **Communication/training for officers**
Inward investment reference leaflet to be developed for use by staff, to promote different methods of securing funding.
- **Prospectus for Suppliers**
A prospectus will be produced for suppliers indicating significant items and areas where supplies are expected to be required in the future. This will include details of principles which are important to us when selecting partners.
- **Supplier Base**
Consideration will be given to our supplier base to ensure it is neither too large nor too small, and is sufficiently resilient to deal with changes in demand or new market developments. Efforts will be made to engage with suppliers in new innovative ways to enhance the supplier chain.
- **Area Based Grant/Local Area Agreements**
Newark and Sherwood Homes will work with the Newark and Sherwood District Council and other organisations to support the delivery of local, regional and national priorities in the area. Work is just starting to evolve and it is anticipated that new partnerships will be formed, different methods of procuring services employed and new methods developed to deliver services/outcomes.
- **Performance indicators development for 2008/9**
 - Innovation and Improvement Projects completed with agreed learning outcomes – target 100%

- % of HRA income paid to NSH as management fee in accordance with management agreement – target 100%
- % of investment resource available from NSDC on profile - target 100%
- Value of efficiency gains identified target £240,000 (3%)
- Positive movement in income to fixed overheads ratio
- Inward Investment project funding secured – target £30k
- Cost savings realised through partnership working – target 3%

9 Summary

Selecting appropriate partners and securing finance is only part of the business development process, this protocol aims to provide an outline and should be considered along with other decision making tools.

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