Communications Plan
2016 /2017
The Northwards Housing Communications Plan sets out the key priorities for communication for the forthcoming year.

It follows the success of the 2015/16 plan, which contributed to Northwards successfully delivering on its business objectives.

The plan will ensure that all teams and directorates are aware of the communications goals for the organisation in order to better serve our collective aims and ensure that all Northwards communications are in line with our values:

**Putting people first**

**Spending money wisely**

**Supporting communities to be successful**

Planning also helps us to evaluate the success of communications campaigns, to ensure the best use of resources and provide value for money.

Good planning will be even more crucial in the forthcoming year; increased pressure on resources means communications will be even more focused on supporting the objectives set out in the Northwards business plan.

In putting together this plan, we’ve met all the heads of service to ascertain what the key drivers in their work are.
Our findings have been agreed by EMT and the Northwards board and will help the organisation deliver its key priorities.

Sue Abbott
Chair of the board

Robin Lawler
Chief Executive

Mike Stevens
Director of Neighbourhood Services

Fr Stephen Brown
Director of Business and Property Services
Key priorities

We will continue to deliver excellent communications to promote the good work Northwards is doing in north Manchester, and all our communications will reflect the Digital First and Customer Insight Strategies.

There are key corporate initiatives which will form the major priorities for the communications team in 2016/17. These are listed at the beginning of the plan and will form the bulk of work in the coming year. This has been done to ensure that resources are concentrated where they are most needed.

The plan also sets out the key priorities for each directorate, which the communications team will seek to support throughout the year. In addition to the priorities listed in the plan, the communications team will also be focusing on actions identified in the Communications Strategy.

We will be ready to deliver responsive and informative communications in times of emergency and crisis, and we will support efforts to enhance Northwards’ reputation.

These communications priorities reflect the Business Plan Year 4 Action Plan and reflect anticipated levels of resources for the year, in terms of both capacity in the communications team and the extent to which other parts of the business are resourced.
Key corporate priorities

• Design and implement a targeted communications plan which informs tenants about the changes to Northwards’ offices

• Lead on the delivery of the Customer Insight and Digital First strategies, using targeted communication to encourage behaviour change across all areas of the business

• Step up our campaign to encourage tenants to pay rent in more efficient ways, reducing the number of transactions made in the local offices

• Support resident involvement, by using the Northwards Network and other traditional methods (eg events) to canvass tenants’ opinions.

• Ensure that the launch of the new Aereon QL Housing Management IT System is communicated widely and to the right people at the right time

• Support the rent and money advice teams with the communication of changes to benefits

• Support the responsive repairs teams with targeted communications, including seasonal advice and communications which tackle the reasons behind common repairs.

• Actively promote work to be done under the capital programme, using targeted communications to make the most of the information

• Promote the newly launched employee BME forum and support its objectives

• Produce an annual report for Northwards Housing, in time for the Annual General Meeting.
Neighbourhood services

• Produce an annual update of the tenant handbook

• Continue to raise awareness and support our ageing population of tenants with the ‘Retired Not Expired’ campaign to tackle loneliness and isolation.

• Promote successful ASB court cases as appropriate

• Keep abreast of developments from Confident and Achieving Manchester and produce communications as appropriate

• Support Manchester City Council’s attempts to reduce the volume of litter on our streets

• Work with GMP and the GMFRS to highlight various campaigns

• Promote the Eric Hobin Fund, both internally and externally

• Support Manchester Move and rehousing with any campaigns

• Promote Eric Hobin Centre to ensure maximum footfall in the centre

• Actively promote our approach to domestic abuse
Property Services

- Following the Going Greener training, explore how we can continue to keep employees interested and involved in environmental issues

- Communicate the **new build** programme in Riverdale and Collyhurst

- Promote the progress and actions in the **climate change** action plan

- Promote the **regeneration** of Collyhurst, in partnership with Manchester city council and the Big Local project

- Continue to support communications around the **NEDO** project

- Actively promote the work done on capital environmental schemes delivered by **Your Environmental Team**, particularly to tenants’ and residents’ groups

- Promote and communicate the new role Northwards will have in delivering **adaptations** on behalf of the city council
Business services

- Develop a **self-service** portal on the website which integrates with the new Aeron QL system for launch during 2017

- Highlight and report on annual **performance** figures, including those found in the customer satisfaction survey

- Use effective communications to promote Northwards’ **equality objectives** for 2016/17, as set out in the equality and diversity action plan

- Develop an **e-bulletin** for employees

- Highlight the importance of the **Northwards board** and support recruitment when vacancies arise

- Promote the work of **Tenants’ View**, particularly in regards to recruitment and internal communication to employees

- Develop a **staff handbook** for new starters, which will be revised every three years

- Develop a communications plan to showcase the **benefits of working at Northwards Housing**

- Continue to promote the **Smarterbuys** initiative

- Promote the tenants’ home contents **insurance** scheme

- Promote a new enterprise initiative, jointly with **yes**, Manchester City Council and local schools, to help people develop their own businesses
Ongoing cyclical work

- Deliver on a the service level agreement with **yes** to produce high quality, effective communications
- Review the annual **rent statements** and **rent increase** letters
- Deliver an annual **staff conference** and **awards** ceremony
- Support the event management of the Northwards **AGM**
- Produce an annual update to the Northwards **business plan**
- Continue to support the HR team on the **Charity of the Year**