

## Hackney Homes Board

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19 May 2008

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## Presentation objectives



### To explain ...

- Changes since 2005
- The inspection judgements, including expectations of the Audit Commission on governance
- Inspection process & Board involvement
- Other guidance available

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## Hackney Homes re-inspection

- **Document list & self-assessment** – 4 August 2008
- **Return above to AC** – 21 September
- **On site – 17 to 27 November**
- **Deliver draft report** – mid-January 2009
- **Publish final report** – March 2009
- **Inspection Team**
  - 4 Housing Inspectors, 1 Tenant Inspection Adviser
- **We aim for ...**
  - Continuity - inspector from a previous team
  - Consistency - inspector from a different region

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## Some changes since August 2007

### AC changes

- Some KLOE changes
- Short notice inspections for HAs
- OfTenant on its way
- ALMO re-inspections now well under way
  - 22 re-inspections so far;
  - 7 up to 3\*
  - 1 down to 1\*

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## ALMO published scores – 15 May 2008

	0*	1*	2*	3*	Total
<b>All ALMO re-inspections</b>	0 0%	3 9%	21 60%	11 31%	35
<b>ALMO inspections</b>	1 2%	15 25%	35 58%	9* 15%	60
<b>Pre-ALMO/ 'indicative'</b>	1 2%	38 66%	16 28%	3 5%	58

\* Sheffield done as two - both 3\*

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## Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) framework (from April 2009)

- Area assessment – forward looking, identifying
  - Local needs/aspirations
  - Outcomes
  - Prospects
- Organisational assessment
  - Achievements of bodies in that area
  - Focus on value for money and rate of improvement
- Annual report, but not  
'everything, everywhere, every year'

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# THE ALMO INSPECTION

## The judgements and what is different about ALMOs

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## We Make Two Judgements:

- Is the service meeting needs of the community and/or users?
- Is the service delivering value for money?

- What is the service track record in delivering improvement?
- How well does the service manage performance?
- Does the service have the capacity to improve?

Prospects for improvement?

A good service?

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## KLOEs that will form the core of Hackney's re-inspection are:

- Cross-cutting - Access/customer care, Diversity and VFM.
- Stock investment and asset management
- Income Management
- Resident Involvement
- Tenancy and Estate Management
- Leasehold/Right to Buy, etc
  
- Prospects for improvement

*Others as they affect the ALMO (eg allocations and lettings)*

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## Judgement One How good is the service?



About here and now - Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent

### 1. What has the service aimed to achieve?

- For context only

### 2. Is the service meeting needs of community and/or users?

- Including access and customer focus, diversity, outcomes

### 3. Is the service delivering value for money?

- How do costs compare? How is value for money managed?

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## J1 –our concerns in 2007

- a lack of service standards for some core services and not all standards were measurable; high levels of complaints - particularly in relation to repairs;
- inconsistent consultation and feedback mechanisms, and customer satisfaction was low at 59 per cent;
- a significant weakness was the low level of customer profiling for some strands of the E&D strategy such as disability;
- a lack of integrated information on property condition internally including asbestos, inconsistency in delivery of cyclical painting, and inconsistent customer feedback mechanisms;

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## J1 –our concerns in 2007 (2)

- high level of variations in repairs orders and jobs not being completed right first time, conflicting performance information on the levels of emergency works carried out, statutory limited repairs offered to customers without recharge, and many disrepair claims and high settlement costs;
- the lettable standard was not being consistently applied and the quality of some properties offered to applicants for rehousing was poor;
- poor performance management arrangements to manage aids and adaptations;
- rent arrears were high; rent collection was in the bottom 25 per cent of London Boroughs, and there was inconsistent application of arrears procedures;
- resident involvement was not well developed with low levels of satisfaction and was not delivering clear outcomes for customers;

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## J1 –our concerns in 2007 (3)

- inconsistent application of tenancy management policies including new tenant visits;
- a lack of ASB procedures and customer service standards, lack of satisfaction monitoring and weak case management; weak procedures for the management of harassment cases, delivery of the domestic violence and hate crime services were not victim centred or supportive; support to vulnerable customers was mixed;
- variable service standards for estate management including window cleaning and estate walkabouts; and
- comparative costs were high, opportunities to ensure value for money was not demonstrated consistently; for example no recovery of rechargeable repairs, and the procurement of empty property maintenance.

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### Judgement Two

## What are the prospects for improvement?

*(now incorporating ALMO 'governance' issues)*

About the future - Poor, Uncertain, Promising, Excellent

#### 4. What is the service track record in delivering improvement?

- Track record, service user benefits, direction of travel inc VFM

#### 5. How well does the service manage performance?

- Service improvement planning, aims and priorities for the future, how service weaknesses will be addressed. Leadership, performance management and a learning culture to support continuous improvement.

#### 6. Does the service have the capacity to improve?

- Skills, tools and finances available to deliver improvement. Financial and human resource planning, procurement and partnerships.

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## Good governance

*'Ensuring the organisation is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner'*

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## Principles of good governance\*

1. Focus on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for citizens and service users
2. Perform effectively in clearly defined functions and roles
3. Promote values for the whole organisation and demonstrate the values of good governance through behaviour
4. Take informed, transparent decisions and manage risk
5. Develop the capacity and capability of the governing body and staff to be effective
6. Engage stakeholders and make accountability real

\* CIPFA/OPM Good Governance Standard for Public Services  
(January 2005)

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## 1. Focus on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for citizens and service users

- Be clear about your purpose
  - ensure ALMO supports wider council strategies
- Ensure high quality service
- Deliver value for money
  - Own and procured services
  - Modern procurement methods
  - How good are your SLAs?
  - Inappropriate charges to HRA

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## 2. Perform effectively in clearly defined functions and roles

- Be clear about the Board's functions
  - are Area boards & committees clear on their roles?
- Be clear about executive and non-executive functions
  - do not interfere in operational issues/ listen to officers' advice
- Be clear about relationships between Board and public
  - Directors are not 'representatives'
  - do residents understand this?

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### **3. Promote values for the whole organisation and demonstrate the values of good governance through behaviour**

- Put organisational values into practice
  - does Board reflect local community diversity?
- Individual Directors behave in ways that uphold and exemplify effective governance.
  - treat all service users/officers/other Directors fairly & do not discriminate
  - Codes of conduct in place?
  - Regular review of conflicts of interest?

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### **4. Take informed, transparent decisions and manage risk**

- Be rigorous and transparent about decision-taking;
  - public access to ALMO Board and committee meetings
  - do residents have easy access to information on decisions?
- Have and use good quality information, advice and support;
  - not all Boards seem to treat performance information as a high priority
- Make sure that an effective risk management system is in operation

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## 5. Develop the capacity and capability of the governing body and staff to be effective

- Make sure that Directors and staff have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well;
  - We have found gaps financial and legal expertise
- Develop the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluate their performance, as individuals and as a group;
  - Board appraisals and training programmes
- Strike a balance, in the membership of the governing body, between continuity and renewal
  - have you got any succession planning in place?

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## 6. Engage stakeholders and make accountability real

- Understand formal and informal accountability relationships;
  - need for formal involvement structure outside Board
- Take an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public, and staff;
  - how do you communicate with tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders?
  - how are your aims reflected in staff targets?
- Engage effectively with institutional and stakeholders and the ALMO's diverse communities.
  - you must identify and engage with hard to reach groups

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## J2 – ‘promising’ but our concerns in 2007

- aims and priorities were not clear with a lack of vision for the long-term;
- service planning was poor and uncoordinated with a lack of SMART action plans and service level agreements were not in place for some key services;
- inadequate consideration of risk for decent homes funding; and
- inconsistent and ineffective monitoring and evaluation processes to review impact of policies and procedures at an operational level.

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## ALMO re-inspection issues

- All ‘support service’ reviews complete – outcomes?
- More mature Board, looking at longer-term risks
- New organisations take time to ‘bed down’
  - but ALMOs set up for longer should have made more progress
- We would hope to learn much more about what works well from the re-inspection

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## The ALMO inspection – scoring

### As before ...

- **Judgement One - ‘How good is the service?’ - will determine the level of funding to be received by the ALMO/Council through CLG**
- **We will also deliver our judgement and recommendations on ‘Prospects for improvement’**
  - *CLG is interested in this judgement*
  - *it will contribute to how soon we re-inspect Hackney*

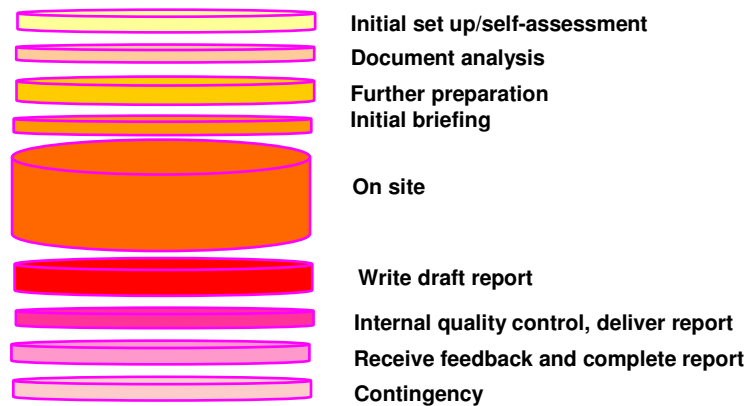
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## THE HOUSING INSPECTION

### What the process involves

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## A 'typical' ALMO inspection = c.67 days



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## Key stage 1 Document request and self-assessment



- **Self-assessment form**
  - using the KLOEs as reference points
  - Board/Chair sign-off?
- **List of key ALMO/Council documents**
- **Team carry out desktop analysis**
- **Postal or telephone survey work, office visits**

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## Self Assessment – key messages

- It's not a sales pitch – demonstrate self-awareness
- Don't mask weaker areas – we'll find them!!!
- Stick to the facts – should be focussed/to the point
- Demonstrate how services take account of local context and priorities
- Focus on the impact for users, the importance of the customer
- Outcomes are key – processes and structures are merely a means to delivery
- Be clear about areas you are looking to improve – including how you plan to address these
- Quality of self-assessment feeds into judgement 2

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## Key stage 2 Brief the ALMO/Council before the inspection

### **Board members can attend**

- **Tell you our initial impressions**
- **Share the focus of the inspection**
- **Present the inspection plan**
- **Opportunity for initial challenge and feedback**

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## Key stage 3 On site

- Gather evidence
- Collect information
- Record findings
- Regular feedback – ‘no surprises’
  - Board attendance?
- Discussion about ‘costed’ recommendations



File checks



Interviews inc Chair



Focus groups

inc Board



Shadowing



Observation (inc Board)/ mystery shopping



Talk to others

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## Key stage 4 Internal quality control

- Analyse and evaluate evidence as a team
- Tie up final evidence trails
- Agree score within inspection team
- Prepare draft report and finalise recommendations
- Present inspection findings to internal quality assurance team – ‘consistency panel’
  - a Head of Housing and the ALMO co-ordinator always present for ALMOs

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## Key stage 5 Deliver draft report

- **+ 4/5 weeks - deliver draft report to ALMO/Council**
  - brief explanation of score and key issues
  - we expect Board to be informed
- **+ 6/7 weeks - receive feedback from ALMO/Council**
- **'Round table' meeting**
  - Whole inspection team present - detailed discussion
  - Board members can attend
- **Option of presentation to residents, full Board, stakeholders**

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## Key stage 6 Receive feedback and complete report

- **Amend report if necessary**
- **+ 11/12 weeks - send final report to ALMO/Council**
- **Ten days to submit request for a 'review'**
  - ALMO alone cannot seek a review
- **Agree press release, send to ALMO/Council, 24 hours before publication**

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## After publication

- **Up to 2 months after publication, we will:**
  - invite your views on the inspection through a survey;
  - invite you to submit a 2 page response to the report's recommendations for posting on our website;
- **Fees**
  - we send invoice to the Council (£85,940)

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## And if that whetted your appetite ....



... there's plenty more to read

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## Audit Commission publications

- 'ALMO inspections and the delivery of excellent housing management services' (March 2003)
- 'Learning from the first housing ALMOs' (May 2003)
- 'Improvement drivers in local authority housing – evidence from inspection' (March 2004)
- Key Lines of Enquiry - AC website (July 2004 onwards)
- 'Compendium of inspection policy and practice' (June 2006)

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## Government ALMO guidance

- CHTF 'resource pack' on ALMO governance (Sept. 04)
- Guidance on Board members payments (Oct. 05)
- Re-inspection paper (Nov. 04, updated June 06)
- ALMO Support Framework (Oct. 05, updated June 06)
- Review of Housing ALMOs (June 06)
- Supplement to the 2004 Guidance on ALMOs (June 06)
- From Decent Homes to Sustainable Communities (June 06)
- A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation (June 2006 update)
- Learning from ALMOs – the first three rounds (Feb. 07)
- Contracting out of Anti-social Behaviour Order functions (May 07)

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## Other guidance for ALMOs

- ALMO Business Planning guidance (Housemark March 2004)
- CIPFA/OPM Good Governance Standard for Public Services (January 2005)
- Guidance on ALMO Efficiency Statements (Housemark May 2006)
- Current use of systems & technology by ALMOs (Housemark/Tribal March 2007)
- ALMOs Tomorrow – a guide to ALMO business planning beyond Decent Homes (Housemark/Tribal March 2007)
- Local partnerships & citizen redress (Local Govt. Ombudsman July 2007)
- NFA produces various guidance documents

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## Comments and questions?

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