

TMO BOARD - 8th DECEMBER 2005

REPORT BY – DIRECTOR OF POLICY & DEVELOPMENT

ALMO SUPPORT NETWORK

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the TMO Board of the ALMO Support Framework and make recommendations concerning this.

FOR DECISION

- 1.2 The TMO Board is **recommended** to approve the proposals outlined in 8.2 below.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The ODPM, in conjunction with ALMOs, the National Federation of ALMOs (NFA), local authorities, the Local Government Association (LGA), Association of London Government (ALG), Housing Inspectorate and Government Offices, has developed proposals for an ALMO Support Framework.
- 2.2 The aim of the framework is to assist ALMOs that may have difficulty in achieving or retaining a 2 star inspection rating. Attached as appendix A is the “ALMO Support Network” paper from ODPM, and, as appendix B, the “NFA Draft Support Framework” from the NFA. These papers are both succinct and straightforwardly explain the proposal.

3 The views of the Executive Team

- 3.1 The Executive Team supports the concept of the support framework and has provided support to at least six authorities or shadow ALMOs during their options appraisals or set up phase including hosting visits and speaking at options meetings in other areas. The Board Chair has spoken at a number of events hosted by aspirant ALMOs. Two local authorities assisted, by way of example, are Lambeth, which is establishing an ALMO linking all its TMOs, and Southend-on-Sea, which is setting up an ALMO. Homes for Islington also had a regular dialogue with the TMO during its set up period. It is considered that involvement in this initiative would be good for the TMO’s reputation.

- 3.2 In respect of the proposal, the Executive Team feels that there should be guidelines regarding what should constitute free advice to ALMOs and what would more appropriately be considered as consultancy work, which would attract payment. Further, Executive Team would be in favour of the NFA establishing some guidelines in respect of the length of time before an inspection, within which an ALMO would not undertake support and in setting guidelines relating to fees.

4 Comments of the Director of Financial Services

- 4.1 The involvement of the TMO in this proposal would impact upon staffing resources. However, the Executive team would ensure that any resource made available was not to the detriment of the organisation. Any “higher level” work undertaken for another ALMO, would generate a financial benefit to the organisation. There is not considered to be any significant financial risk in being involved in this initiative.

5 Legal Issues

- 5.1 There is nothing within the TMO’s constitution that prevents the TMO from undertaking this work and indeed it is an area that has been the subject of discussion in respect of Grand Union Homes activities.

6 Equalities Issues

- 6.1 There are not envisaged to be an equalities impact issues within the proposal

7 Human Resources Issues

- 7.1 There should be little impact on staffing resources as a result of providing support to other ALMOs, and any possible impact will be strictly monitored. The benefits of interacting and supporting other ALMOs should offset any negative impact by providing TMO staff with positive practice experience from elsewhere. The TMO has already benefited in this way from its membership of various groups, such as the National ALMO Performance Improvement Club and the London wide ALMO HR Group.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The TMO, via its leading role within the NFA and its involvement in the ODPM ALMO Futures project, has played a key role in the

development of this proposal, which supports the sustainability of ALMOs as a long term measure.

8.2 The Board is recommended:

- to support the proposal to establish an ALMO Support Framework.
- to identify any comments or suggestions it would like to make to the ODPM and/or the NFA in respect of the proposals.
- to agree, as a 2 star ALMO, that it would be willing to provide support as outlined in the proposed framework.

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