

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ALMOs' AWARDS

Report of the Director of Housing & Customer Service

1. SUMMARY

This report advises the Board of Derby Homes recent successes winning two national awards from the National Federation of ALMOs (NFA).

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Board notes these achievements and congratulates the staff members involved.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Each year the NFA holds a national awards ceremony to celebrate achievements in housing. This year Derby Homes had entries in three categories shortlisted as finalists:

- Best Community Initiative – Arboretum Community Project
- Best Use of Communication – 'It's Not Good Enough' DVD
- ALMO Team Member of the Year – Liz Wilcox, Youth Initiatives Officer.

3.2 We are very proud to announce that the Arboretum Community Project (ACP) and 'It's Not Good Enough' DVD won in their respective categories and Liz Wilcox a runner up in the ALMO Team Member of the Year category.

3.3 The Arboretum Community Project is led by Niki Johnson who is deaf herself and uses sign language. Niki had previously worked with Derby Homes and the Derby Association of Community Partners when she was employed by Dering an organisation that helps deaf people in the City. When Niki was made redundant in February 2010 her experiences as a jobseeker brought home to her the barriers faced by hearing impaired job candidates. With her previous links with Derby Homes she turned to us for help in tackling the problem.

3.4 Niki worked with Carl Willis, our Community Initiatives Officer to work out how the problem could be addressed. The vacant cafe outlet in the Arboretum Park provided the perfect opportunity, a friendly informal setting for both deaf and hearing people to gain confidence, work experience and qualifications.

3.5 Derby Homes has helped secure funding, including £180,000 from the Access to Work scheme, and the support of Derby City Council, Community Action, Derbyshire Consortium, and JET training.

- 3.6 The cafe opened in July 2010 and is run by 15 part-time volunteers, both deaf and hearing. Apart from giving participants practical and communication skills, work discipline and enhanced self-worth, ACP delivers many other benefits which include sign language lessons for local schools and the 'translate' service providing advice with forms and other correspondence that people need help with.
- 3.7 During 2010, the cafe hosted a number of awareness raising events which tackled cultural, deaf and disabled issues within the community.
- 3.8 The judges said "This project hits all the buttons. There are a huge number of deaf or hard of hearing individuals in the UK who often struggle to integrate." Michael Gelling, Chair of TAROE.
- 3.9 Most of our board members are already familiar with the 'It's Not Good Enough' DVD after it was performed at our AGM in October 2010. The judges said, "It doesn't matter if it rented or owned. A home should be somewhere where people can go to feel safe, warm and secure. This is a significant project which affects a lot of people." Michael Gelling, Chair of TAROE.
- 3.10 The DVD has been marketed to ALMO's and housing organisations. To date we have sold 39 copies at £49.99 each. The income from the DVD will be re-invested into training for our Neighbourhood Safety Team.
- 3.11 The Board is also advised of Liz Wilcox's achievement of being shortlisted as a finalist in the ALMO employee of the year award for her work with our Junior Wardens. We are extremely proud of the work that Liz does with young people from our housing estates.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

- Consultation
- Financial and Business Plan
- Legal and Confidentiality
- Personnel
- Environmental
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Health & Safety
- Risk
- Policy Review

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or Phil Davies, Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org – Phone: 01332 888528

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Supporting Information: None