

**A message from the NFA Chair**  
**Included in the *ALMOs in action* NFA newsletter, Winter/Spring 2012 issue**

As the ALMO sector approaches its 10-year anniversary we find ourselves in changing times. The Localism Act has now received Royal Assent, the implications of the Welfare Reform Bill and changes to housing benefit, the introduction of self-financing and changes to regulation – all of these present both challenges and opportunities. As managers of some of the most intractable council housing stock in some of the most economically deprived parts of the country it is incumbent on us to face up to these issues and do the best we can to help our councils and their tenants in these difficult economic circumstances.

It is not at all surprising that the sector is demonstrating its usual resilience and ingenuity and that ALMOs are developing in different ways and doing different things according to local circumstances. While some ALMOs are going back in-house or down a stock transfer route the majority are having their contracts extended and are taking on additional functions on behalf of their councils. It is this ability to adapt to the needs of our communities that is a strength of the sector along with our other key aspirations of resident empowerment and delivering excellent services and value for money.

While we should celebrate the sector's diversity and innovation we must also recognise that the NFA itself needs to adapt and change in order to ensure that it is able to represent its members and deliver a suite of services that will meet the sector's needs in years to come and that provide value for money. As part of this evolution the NFA Board has decided that this copy of *ALMOs in Action* will be the last one. In future we will make greater use of electronic communication with members through letters from the chair and good practice notes.

Next year we need to put the role of the NFA managing agent out to tender and we will be seeking expressions of interest from ALMOs to lead the procurement process. However, we also need to be sure of the services we wish the managing agent to provide. As a first step the NFA carried out a membership survey earlier this year and full details of the results of the survey are included in the papers considered by the NFA Board in November which can be found on the NFA website under Meetings - <http://www.almos.org.uk/meetings>

Following on from this over the upcoming months the NFA Board intends to have further discussions with its members over the future role of the NFA prior to taking any proposed changes to the AGM in July. Key issues that we wish to look at will include:

- Whether we should encourage other bodies that share the same values to become full members of the NFA
- Whether we should change our name from the National Federation of ALMOs to something that reflects the changes and diversification of the sector

- Defining the services that NFA members are entitled to
- Encouraging ALMOs to host and resource additional regional or sub-regional activities themselves.

The NFA is a member-led organisation so I hope that all our members will fully engage in these discussions so that we can ensure that the NFA has a clear strategic vision and policy objectives that will meet the sector's needs for the future.

Sue Roberts MBE  
NFA Chair

18 January 2012