

National Federation of ALMOs Annual Report 2005

YEAR TWO – ACHIEVEMENTS

In its second year of operation the NFA has:

Fostered communication within the ALMO movement through:

- The establishment of the NFA Board and officer steering group.
- The institution of regional meetings for ALMOs in the Midlands in addition to those already taking place in the London & Southern and Northern regions (the latter being organised by the Northern Housing Consortium). All ALMOs now have access to regular officer level meetings in order to encourage networking and the exchange of good practice.
- The regular production of a range of briefings, profiles and information items distributed through e-mail and placed on the dedicated NFA website.
- Publication of a newsletter.
- Provision of an advice service, particularly for new and potential ALMOs.
- Two NFA regional series on business planning and on developing effective Boards.
- Workshop for round 1 ALMOs on re-inspection.

Influenced government thinking by:

- Regular meetings with senior civil servants.
- Persuading the Housing Minister to establish a review group on a sustainable long-term future for the ALMO sector. The review will lead to the publication of a government consultation paper later in the year which aims to establish a regulatory and funding framework to ensure ALMOs long-term sustainability even when the Decent Homes funding has finished.
- Producing a number of submissions and responses to consultation papers including:
 - Home Affairs Select Committee on Anti-Social Behaviour.
 - ODPM revised consultation paper on re-inspection.
 - Housing Corporation consultation paper on Social Housing Grant.
 - Changes to the funding mechanism for round 2 ALMOs.
 - A number of detailed papers to the ODPM review.
 - ODPM draft guidance on payment to Board members.

In many cases the arguments put forward by the NFA have subsequently been taken on board by government.

Worked with others in:

- A major joint project with the Chartered Institute of Housing and HouseMark on the Future Viability of ALMOs that is also feeding into the ODPM review.
- Joint work with AON Tenant Insurance Services on the new financial services regulations in relation to tenant content insurance schemes.
- Joint press release with HouseMark on the improvement in service delivery by ALMOs as evidenced through the performance indicators collated by HouseMark for the ALMO Performance Improvement Club.
- Joint presentation with HouseMark in ODPM seminar for round 5 ALMOs.
- Protocols for joint working agreed with TAROE and HouseMark.

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Events during the year have included:

- As a result of the spending review a further £2.5bn is being made available for ALMOs over the next three years and two new rounds were announced.
- Round 1 ALMOs obtained their second tranche of funding with an increase of £74m over the original allocations and commenced re-inspections.
- Round 2 ALMOs also fared well with their second tranche of funding.
- Round 3 ALMOs faced the rigours of the new inspection regime.
- Results of the round 4 bids brought a further 12 ALMOs into the sector.
- Round 5 will bring 9 prospective new ALMOs into the programme, resulting in a total of 58 ALMOs managing 873,000 homes.
- Published inspection results at end March 2005 show there were 7x3*, 26x2* and 1x1* ALMOs within rounds 1-4.
- Membership of the NFA has increased to 60 ALMOs or local authorities considering the ALMO option.

Key tasks for 2005 will be:

- Completing the joint project with CIH and HouseMark.
- Influencing the final outcome of the ODPM review and lobbying government to institute financial and operational freedoms for ALMOs.
- Strengthening the relationship with the local authority and housing association sectors.
- Building on current practice to develop a support framework to enable ALMOs and potential ALMOs achieve and maintain at least a 2* inspection rating.

About the NFA

The NFA was established on 1 April 2003. It is the representative body for ALMOs and supports the development of aspirant ALMOs. The objectives of the NFA include:

- Securing a long term financial future for ALMOs.
- Persuading government to take account of the interests of ALMOs.
- Establishing a vibrant and innovative ALMO sector that will:
 - Provide decent homes.
 - Raise standards across the public rented housing sector.
 - Achieve excellence in service provision.
 - Promote tenant empowerment.
 - Help to deliver broader national and local policy priorities.

The NFA is a not-for-profit organisation and income received from subscriptions and events, less costs reasonably incurred, is invested in providing services to its members. Membership is open to ALMOs and to local authorities setting up or interested in exploring the ALMO option. The NFA is administered by HQN Ltd and overseen by a Board of ALMOs and an officer level steering group.