



With the Chancellor reacting to the NFA's and others' lobbying for extra investment in new council housing this week and announcing £1billion worth of additional headroom for high demand councils what do you need to do to be ready and able to meet the challenge and successfully develop your own new council housing?

**Rebecca Rance**, our chief executive, shares her thoughts on the recent announcements recognising her as a Visionary and True Transformational Leader in an important industry list.

So how do you get to be recognised as a visionary and true transformational leader?.....

Since being held up in Inside Housing's Who's Who in LA Development list recently in the category of visionaries and true transformational leaders, I have found myself reflecting on the journey we have been on at Newark and Sherwood Homes. I was also wondering if I could give some tips to the younger me to keep me motivated, find a short cut or at the very least identify the keys to success.



Not surprisingly there isn't a short cut, but perhaps in sharing some of our experiences others can go forward with eyes wide open, knowing that both local authorities and their housing companies such as Newark and Sherwood Homes do have a critical and significant role to play in the delivery of housing to meet the needs of our communities.

Being clear of the outcome and planning for success with a can do attitude has been central. This has meant that company strengths have been built in financial forecasting, risk management, due diligence as well as influencing and relationship management to name a few. These internal skills have been on a long slow build up; we know we are an organisation that is not awash with resource so our road started in being prepared to contribute to the wider agenda and putting our shoulder to the wheel. Lobbying for a self-financing HRA, hosting ministers and treasury officials, tripping to meetings to develop ways to benefit the sector and building our expertise to push the agenda that could make a difference were all progressed along with being successful in core service delivery. So I guess tenacity and passion to make a difference in housing is evidently important too.

Determination to do the right thing, requiring high standards and commitment from all your colleagues is essential too, but must be linked inextricably with taking the time to explain to staff who give their all every day, that we can do this and they make a difference. This can never be underestimated or undervalued and the staff at Newark and Sherwood Homes have continued to learn, grow, dig deep and deliver for their tenants and communities no matter how hard the challenge. I am immensely proud of them.

While recognising that we wanted to embed the skill in our staff, we also wanted to avoid excessive reliance on external advice and costs that would be prohibitive to our participation and delivery in increasing the supply of housing. That's why we knew that due diligence would be critical. We supported, mentored and coached our people to have confidence; to develop tools to shape our





contribution and ensured they were fit for purpose through external validation. Using external expertise in this way as validators of our work, rather than outsourcing the full project, which was outside our purse (sorry to all the consultants who rely on this as a source of income) meant we learned and could participate in making a difference too.

At Newark and Sherwood Homes we are all still learning and growing to enable us to continue to make a difference. With the support of our shareholder Newark and Sherwood District Council and their clear vision, we will keep up our momentum, take up the mantle and deliver the much needed multi tenure housing our communities need. Increasing the housing supply is not by itself a solution to the housing crisis; however we have done a lot of work to put our best foot forward and to harness our staff's drive, passion and tenacity.

It's really positive to see that the government is increasing the HRA borrowing capacity and we look forward to progressing discussions to access the additional resources. Because of the work that we have done in the recent months, we are in a good position to respond when we have the detail on how we can work together to build more homes for local people, ensuring they reach rural and district areas as well as city and city regions.

