



Transparency and Accountability Statement of Intent

NCHA Transparency and Accountability Statement of Intent

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1 Background

- 1.1 This statement sets out how NCHA is accountable to our customers and stakeholders and is the main means by which the Board, Chief Executive and Executive Team ensure that our business is undertaken in a transparent, responsive and proper manner.
- 1.2 The statement establishes the key mechanisms for demonstrating these accountabilities whether through formal reporting structures, use of committees or consultative groups or through internal procedures and processes. It describes the internal roles and responsibilities of key groups and individuals and demonstrates a clear audit trail of delegation and decision-making. It also sets out how NCHA will be as transparent as possible within legislative requirements.
- 1.3 The accountabilities, along with our financial and other regulations, are designed to ensure that the mission, vision and core values of NCHA are met in full.

2 Mission, Vision and Core Values

- 2.1 **Mission:**
"Homes and support by people who care". We concentrate our resources on people and communities and include housing care and support in our work."

In addition, we have a '**Commercial Purpose**', which we delivered through our subsidiary Pelham Homes, which has the key strategic objective of generating profit for the purpose of reinvestment into the Group's vision.

Underpinning everything the Association does is a commitment to equality and diversity, value for money, social responsibility, adding social value as well as upholding our corporate values of:

- Caring - we care about what we do and the way we do it
- Learn - we learn, improve and change to deliver great services
- Enthusiastic - we are engaged and motivated to make a difference

- Accountable - we are answerable for what we do and don't do
- Resilient – we are ready to respond to opportunities and challenges

3 Governance and Governance Structures

- 3.1 NCHA's legal status is a Community Benefit Society, registered with the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) and a charitable organisation. The Association has adopted Rules as drafted by the National Housing Federation which governs the objects, powers and obligations of shareholders, Board Members and the Association.
- 3.2 The Association is governed by the NCHA Board made up of 12 independent members including a Board Member who is a tenant. The Board contains a mix of skills, experience, competencies and knowledge and is well balanced in terms of equalities and diversity.
- 3.3 Certain other matters are delegated by NCHA's Board to Audit & Risk Committee, Governance Committee, Care Committee and the Customer Committee.
- 3.4 Pelham Homes is a separate company within the NCHA Group with its own Board responsible for the non-charitable, commercial activities of the Group.
- 3.5 NCHA is sole corporate trustee of Nottingham Community Almshouse Charity which comprises a number of constituent charities and also Blyth Cottages Charity.
- 3.6 In addition, see Appendix 1 – NCHA Group Structure.

4 Group Corporate Plan and Key Objectives

- 4.1 Our corporate plan is based on our corporate vision of 'More homes, great services, better lives'.

5 Accountability

In delivering the work of the Group we have accountability to:-

- Customers (tenants & leaseholders)
- Customers (service users)
- Customers (indirect)
- Colleagues
- Regulators, Inspectors and Commissioners
- Stakeholders
- Shareholders

5.1 **Customers (tenants & leaseholders)**

- 5.1.1 NCHA has a range of informal and formal mechanisms for customer involvement.
- 5.1.2 Customer Involvement is assessed annually against the Consumer Standards – Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard and every 3 years by the TPAS accreditation process.
- 5.1.3 The formal Customer Involvement structure includes a sub-committee of NCHA Board, the Customer Committee that supports the work of NCHA Board through the monitoring of performance relating to customer experience.
- 5.1.4 NCHA have their own Community Vehicle. This is used for events in the community, supporting front line teams and for supporting customers with wider social issues, such as fuel poverty. Further work is planned to develop informal involvement to reach a greater number of customers, and provide insight to the formal groups.
- 5.1.5 A STAR survey is undertaken every two years and an action plan is then developed with Customer Committee oversight. NCHA Care and Support complete a separate satisfaction survey annually for all service users, both tenants and non-tenants as well as exit interviews with all service users as they move on from our services.
- 5.1.6 Informal mechanisms for feedback include focus groups, telephone surveys and a virtual policy group.
- 5.1.7 Satisfaction feedback is sought from new customers, across all customer facing service areas and is used to improve service delivery. In addition, satisfaction is also sought on complaint handling. Quarterly survey outcomes are reported to the Customer Committee.
- 5.1.8 NCHA has established a Homes and Neighbourhood Panel that supports the work of the Customer Committee with oversight of customer facing service performance, changes to policy and service standards, and other areas affecting the customer experience.

5.2 **Scrutiny Panel**

- 5.2.1 NCHA has re-established a Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise performance and recommend improvements to services. The panel will explore several areas each year and their findings and recommendations are presented to the Customer Committee and NCHA's Board.
- 5.2.2 The Scrutiny Panel is NCHA's commitment to greater co-regulation with our customers. The Scrutiny Panel is funded by NCHA with administrative support and training opportunities for members.

5.3 Customers (service users)

- 5.3.1 Alongside the annual satisfaction survey of all service users and exit surveys as service users move on from our services, NCHA Care and Support is accountable to service users on an informal basis through structures such as project or house meetings all of which are designed to ensure all services are delivered through a person centred approach.
- 5.3.2 The NCHA Care Committee has a nominated 'expert by experience role' which is designed for an individual who is themselves or is a relative of a current or former NCHA Care and Support service user/ or is a customer who has direct experience in the receipt of adult social care services.

5.4 Customers (indirect)

- 5.4.1 Where people linked to customers contact NCHA, for example relatives, carers and external agencies, our accountability will be demonstrated through our monitoring of our related service standards such as telephone answering, responses to correspondence, complaints, and emails.

5.5 Colleagues

- 5.5.1 NCHA's accountabilities to its colleagues are formally governed by various policies and procedures, which are outlined within the colleague handbook and published on Igloo. Proposals and changes covering these areas are validated by the formal Joint Union Negotiating Group (JUNG) framework.
- 5.5.2 Managers have responsibilities for ensuring that our duties to our staff colleagues are fully complied with. Our People Team will assist managers in this requirement.

5.6 Regulators, Inspectors and Commissioners

- 5.6.1 NCHA has legal and contractual accountabilities to numerous external organisations and funders that are governed by a variety of mechanisms. Accountability to each body is determined by statute, code of practice, circular or contract, each with its individual requirements.
- 5.6.2 The Chief Executive and Executive Team are directly responsible in conjunction with the Board for ensuring these accountabilities are properly signed off: for example submission of returns to Homes England, the Regulator of Social Housing and commissioners.

5.6.3 These accountabilities are also subject to the scrutiny of internal and external audit as independent verification and the inspection regimes of the various funding agencies for example adult social care commissioning authorities.

5.6.4 Ultimately regulators such as the Homes England and the Regulator for Social Housing, HSE and CQC hold the Board responsible for compliance with all regulatory, inspection, investment and legal accountabilities.

5.7 **Company Regulations**

5.7.1 NCHA is also accountable as a company to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

5.7.2 Shareholders have the right to refer the Association to the FCA if they are unhappy with the way the organisation is run.

5.8 **Stakeholders**

5.8.1 Our stakeholders include Local Authorities, Homes England and the Regulator for Social Housing, Commissioners, Clinical Commissioning Groups (NHS, Public agencies such as the Police and Central Government bodies such as the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government).

5.8.2 Accountability to such bodies varies according to our relationship with them but will include the following:

- Contracts, Service Level Agreements or Management Agreements will specify how the relationship will be governed, frequency of meetings, exchange of information and returns.
- Meetings with elected members including the Leader of the Council, Executive Members for Housing or Ward members.
- Strategic level meetings attended by relevant Chief Executives / Directors of key organisations in a particular Local Authority Area.
- Responding to elected member enquiries in line with our specific policy for such enquiries ensures a swift response from a Senior Manager with the aim of doing everything to enable the elected member to help their constituent.
- Communication with local MPs.

5.9 Shareholders

5.9.1 All shareholders agree to be bound by the obligations set out in the rules. When acting as shareholders, they act at all times in the interests of the association, and for the benefit of the community, as guardians of the objects of the association which are:

"the business of providing and managing housing and social housing and providing assistance to help house people and associated facilities and amenities or services for poor people or for the relief of aged, disabled (whether physically or mentally) or chronically sick people AND any other charitable object that can be carried out from time to time by a Society registered as a provider of social housing with the regulator.

5.9.2 The Association shall not trade for profit nor shall anything be paid or transferred by way of profit to shareholders of the associations.

5.9.3 Shareholders may apply to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in the following circumstances: ten shareholders can apply to the FCA to appoint an accountant to inspect the books of the association, provided all ten have been shareholders for the 12 months immediately before the application.

5.9.4 And the shareholders may apply to the FCA in order to get the affairs of the association inspected, or to call a special general meeting. One hundred shareholders or one tenth of the shareholders, whichever is the lesser must make the application.

5.9.5 The Association publishes its rules for the appointment of shareholders, and all shareholders are invited to the Annual General Meeting each year which elects the Board of Management as required.

5.9.6 All vacancies to the Board of Management are advertised to existing shareholders and the wider public via local and regional media and the internet. Board Members are only appointed following an open and fair recruitment process. Board Members are accountable as shareholders and to shareholders at the AGM.

6 Delegated Authorities

6.1 NCHA delegates authority from Board through appropriate committees to the Executive team and colleagues through the Group's Financial Regulations and Standing orders. More detailed delegations are included in the specific policies and procedures relating to the various areas of the Group's activities.

7 Performance Monitoring and Reporting

- 7.1 NCHA's Group Corporate Plan sets out the high level KPIs to be achieved over the next 5 years. In addition there are business and individual targets set for sections and colleagues on an annual basis. These KPIs are monitored on a regular basis and performance is reported internally to the Executive Team, to the Board and to tenants and service users.
- 7.2 Individual colleagues are managed and their performance monitored through our performance management approach; with any formal meetings recorded on our HR system by the relevant line manager.
- 7.3 Homes England and the Regulator for Social Housing, requires certain certification to be reported to them on an annual basis, for example, the NROSH+ process, Financial viability and self-assessment.
- 7.4 The CQC conducts detailed performance audits using a risk based approach, the results of which are published, monitored and reported to applicable stakeholders. CQC reports and ratings are reported to the Care Committee as part of a suite of performance information they consider and monitor.

8 Internal Controls

- 8.1 There are a variety of internal controls and checks within NCHA which are designed to ensure our accountabilities are signed off in respect of:
- Financial and business risk
 - Knowing our Assets and Liabilities
 - Risk management generally
 - Service quality
 - Service delivery and standards
 - Communication - internally and externally
 - Health and Safety
 - Disaster recovery and business continuity
 - Data protection and GDPR
 - Business and Service Improvement
 - Procurement and management of supply chains
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- 8.2 The internal control framework includes the following:
- NCHA Board
 - Pelham Homes Board
 - Pelham Waterside & Pelham Waterside 2 Boards
 - Access Training Board
 - Audit & Risk Committee
 - Care Committee

- Customer Committee
- Risk Management Strategy and Framework
- Compliance and Risk Panel
- External and Internal Audit assessment
- ~~Service Improvement Team~~
- NCHA Care and Support Quality and regulatory Compliance Team
- Meeting Structures, for example, Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team
- Policies and procedures
- Corporate strategies and plans
- Budget setting and budget monitoring
- Business planning cycle
- Accounting procedures and systems
- Governance Framework
- Governance Committee
- Annual Company Secretary Checklist
- Annual Governance Action Plan
- Health, Safety and Fire Panel
- Fire Safety Forum
- ~~Homes and Wellbeing Health and Safety Forum~~
- ~~Development and Asset Health and Safety Forum~~
- Directorate Health & Safety Forums
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel

9 Funders

- 9.1 Accountability to funders is detailed within the various loan agreements for each of the lenders to the NCHA Group. They clearly detail the specific reporting requirements on a quarterly and annual basis including compliance with loan covenants. We review the loan covenants on an annual basis and use them as part of a suite of planning tools to inform our business planning budgeting and financial projections.
- 9.2 The formal accountability requirements of the loan agreements are supported by regular meetings with representatives of our major lenders.

10 Data Protection and Technology Services

- 10.1 The data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) require us to be accountable to all our data subjects. This means we should be able to explain to any stakeholder what data of theirs we hold and why. Over the past few years we have made significant progress in documenting NCHA's data and bringing our data protection documentation up to date. As well as these back office improvements, we've communicated privacy notices and continually train all staff, as

well as providing regular updates and reminders to staff of their obligations under the new regime.

- 10.2 NCHA utilises a range of communication channels both digital and analogue in order to maintain effective communications with customers and external stakeholders. The Group's external communications reporting is developed in consultation with customers and colleagues.

11 Development

- 11.1 NCHA's Development team considers itself to be accountable to the following external agencies and organisations:

- Local Authorities
 - LA support for bids to Homes England.
 - LA responsible for enabling role.
 - LA contribution to subsidy e.g. free land.
 - LA set policy framework for their area, and establish priority housing need.
 - Responsible for planning policies and process.

- Homes England
 - NCHA is a strategic partner with Homes England
 - Homes England sets Government policy framework.
 - Homes England sets programme targets, grant conditions and scheme work standards for Homes England funded schemes.
 - Homes England provides audit function for funded schemes.

- Blue Skies Consortium
 - NCHA is joint lead, with Longhurst Group, of the Consortium, providing expertise, judgement and advice to the other member RP's. Regular consortium meetings and information on performance provide the medium of accountability which is articulated through a Consortium Agreement between the parties.

12 Pelham

- 12.1 Pelham offers professional services including development and project management services to various clients including Local Authorities, other Housing Associations and Charities.
- 12.2 The Pelham Architects team offer professional services to various clients such as members of the NCHA Group (NCHA and Pelham Homes) other members of the Blue Skies Consortium as well as other external clients. We have branded the team under a registered

trademark, 'Pelham Architects', and deliver services to our internal and external Clients under this name.

12.3

Pelham is accountable to a number of stakeholders as follows:

- NCHA Group – Pelham is accountable at two levels; firstly to offer a reliable and professional service to the Group; secondly to provide a cost effective solution to the provision of professional services on the Group's development projects.
- Clients – Pelham is accountable to all of its Clients. The level and nature of accountability is governed by the Terms of Appointment or Service Level Agreement.
- Other stakeholders - accountability to other stakeholders comes in many ways. For example, we are accountable to planners in terms of the quality of new designs; to neighbours of our developments in terms of how we manage the building process and so on.
- Insurers - finally we are accountable to our insurers. We need to fulfil our duty of care to our clients and avoid negligent behaviour. We also need to design risk out of schemes.

13 Property Services

13.1 The Property Services (PS) team provide professional services to deliver the Group's maintenance programme (responsive, relet, cyclical, and planned) and also carry out some of the works utilising the Direct Maintenance Service (DMS).

13.2 Property Services are accountable to a number of stakeholders as follows:

- Tenants, residents, service users and leaseholders - PS are accountable to these customers as they need to ensure that their homes are effectively maintained, safe, secure and warm places to live. The Homes and Neighbourhood Panel and Scrutiny Panel provide resident involvement and accountability around maintenance issues.
- NCHA Group - the PS team are accountable to the Group regarding how they asset management budgets budget including the procurement approach and VFM as well as meeting targets against KPIs.
- The Board and Executive Team - PS need to adhere to all legislation, compliance and regulation so that the Board and Executive Team are not exposed to undue risk.

- Clients - the PS team deliver services to a number of internal clients (H&W, almshouse charities) and some external clients (e.g. gas servicing to leaseholders and other almshouse charities). The level and nature of accountability is governed by the Service Level Agreement and/ or contract.

14 NCHA Care & Support

14.1 NCHA Care & Support is accountable to the following agencies and organisations:

- Local Authority & CCG Commissioners
 - Provide tendering opportunities which carry performance targets and contractual requirements. Commissioning typically comes from Adult Social Care departments, Health (CCG) or occasionally through joint arrangements.
- Inspection Regimes
 - Care Quality Commission (CQC), environmental health (food safety) and infection control audits for regulated services.
 - Health for Health contracts.
 - Adult Social Care contracts.
- Consortium/Partnership Arrangements
 - NCHA enters into various partnership and occasionally consortia where members are jointly responsible for performance standards against the requirements of delivering care and support services. These arrangements are specified in partnership agreements which set out the roles and responsibilities of the parties.
- BSI
 - Accreditation under ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015, BS OHSAS 18001:2007
- Service Users (their circles of support)
 - NCHA Care & Support is accountable to service users on a formal basis through the terms of legal agreements such as tenancies, placement agreements etc. and on an informal basis through structures such as house meetings and a range of feedback mechanisms.

15 Communications and Engagement

15.1 NCHA follows a communications and engagement approach which delivers the organisation's key objectives for communicating and

sharing accessible information with its customers, colleagues and key stakeholders.

- 15.2 This approach focuses on ensuring that all principle customers, colleagues and stakeholders have appropriate awareness and receive a consistent message relating to:
- NCHA services
 - NCHA activities and performance
 - NCHA Service Standards
 - NCHA Corporate Strategy (including our accountability)

16 Human Resources and Diversity

16.1 NCHA has adopted a People Strategy which is updated biennially. The Strategy is aimed at ensuring that all human resources, and learning and organisational development are managed and delivered effectively and efficiently, are aligned to achieving the Association's Corporate Strategy and Business Plan Objectives, and are customer focussed and responsive to changing needs.

16.2 NCHA has also adopted an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and has an action plan based on the outputs of a review carried out by the Housing Diversity Network. This is supported by departmental operational plans, aimed at ensuring that each of the Association's direct and indirect service delivery areas supports the organisation's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.

16.3 Performance against the priorities identified in the strategy and action plan is reported to the Board and the Executive Team. This ensures NCHA's accountability to our diverse communities is fully delivered and progress is measured against specific targets.

17 Value for Money and Procurement

17.1 NCHA has implemented a Value for Money Strategy in line with the 2018 Value For Money Standard.

17.2 NCHA Group reports to Board on Value For Money progress and publishes as part of the published annual accounts, a Value For Money statement. This includes efficiencies which have been driven from procurement activities.

17.3 Procurement operations and rules are governed by Group Financial Regulations and the Financial Procedures Manual.

18 Environmental Sustainability

18.1 We are accountable to:

- Funders - we gain funding on the basis of meeting agreed criteria.
- Internal clients - we are accountable to internal clients and need to deliver services as agreed with them.
- External clients - we are targeted with improving NCHA's carbon footprint, community biodiversity and energy efficiency and specific targets set by Government and other external agencies.
- Tenants – we provide Home Energy Advice for our tenants with the objective of making their home as affordable as possible in terms of utilities' bills.

19 Transparency

19.1 As part of NCHA's commitment to openness and transparency we will publish information about the Group on our website. Such information will be subject to Data Protection and other legislative requirements but we will aim to be as open as possible to our tenants and to our wider communities and stakeholders.

- 19.2 We publish the following:
- Our Corporate Plan.
 - Our public-facing policies.
 - The remuneration of our Board and Executive Team.
 - Our governance and scrutiny arrangements.
 - Customer panel outcomes, including scrutiny recommendations
 - Annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
 - Our key governance policies
 - NCHA Group Structures and lines of responsibility.
 - All information relating to our landlord functions and tenant relationships.
 - Annual Value for Money statement
 - Annual Report and Group Financial Statements
 - Annual Reports to tenants, service users and stakeholders
 - Annual Comparison of local rents
 - How we Compare dashboard
 - NCHA Care and Support Service User satisfaction surveys
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Duty of Candour requirements
 - Gender Pay Gap

This list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

20 Conclusion – Transparency and Accountability

- 20.1 This statement is designed to be a working document that will be regularly reviewed and updated as the external environment changes.
- 20.2 It is for external and internal use as it demonstrates that NCHA is a fully accountable body in relation to everyone we interact with and that we act in an open and transparent fashion.

Appendix 1 - NCHA Group Structure Chart

