



GOLD AWARD 2007

THE HOUSING CORPORATION'S
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

**Environmental
Sustainability**

**Empowering
Communities**



Application Guidance

The Housing Corporation's Gold Award was established to allow housing associations to support each other as they work to improve the services they deliver. The first round of the Gold Award generated a great deal of interest with over 70 applications received in 2006. Five worthy winning applicants are now delivering a varied programme of knowledge sharing to support improvement for other housing providers. We are now embarking on a new round of the Gold Award and I hope that many associations will again rise to the challenge and submit an application for the two new themes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Dixon', written in a cursive style.

Peter Dixon
Chairman
Housing Corporation

Contents

Section I	Foreword	02
Section II	Introduction	03
Section 1	About the Gold Award	04
Section 2	2007 themes	09
	Part A Empowering communities	10
	Part B Environmental sustainability	13
Section 3	How to apply	17
	Part A Applicant details	19
	Part B Award theme	19
	Part C Application title	20
	Part D Submission summary	20
	Part E Meeting the criteria	21
	Part F Dissemination plans	22
	Part G Validation	23
Section 4	Next steps	24

SECTION I - FOREWORD

The Gold Award was launched last year and was greeted with enthusiasm by people and organisations throughout the social housing world. Housing associations submitted a plethora of superb projects and initiatives for consideration by our judges.

We are now working alongside colleagues at the Chartered Institute of Housing to share the key learning points from our first five winners and seven finalists with the rest of the sector. There are a number of events and mechanisms planned by which housing associations can adapt or emulate the successful practices demonstrated by the first cohort of Gold Award holders.

I am pleased to add my voice of encouragement as we invite applications for the Gold Awards 2007. Two brand new themes have been developed with expert support to allow us to find more examples of best practice associated with areas of our work that are vitally important and have particular value in enhancing the prospects for residents and communities long into the future.

In these pages you will find all the information you need to help you submit a good application for this year's Awards. Our Gold Team is on hand to provide any further support you may need and our panel of judges and experts is waiting to consider the applications and face the difficult task of selecting this year's winning entries.

I wish you well with your application, and while only six entries will receive a Gold Award, the very process of applying for an Award is a useful opportunity to take a valuable, objective view of your work to date.



Jon Rouse
Chief Executive
Housing Corporation

SECTION II - INTRODUCTION

These guidance notes have been compiled to help housing associations considering applying for a Gold Award in four ways:

- Understanding the Gold Award;
- Making a decision on whether or not to apply this year;
- Completing the application process correctly;
- Explaining the process for selecting winning entries.

The Gold Award guidance notes are shorter and easier to use than those issued for the Gold Award 2006. If you cannot find what you want to know in this document, please feel free to contact the Gold Team using the contact information provided on page 28.

Tips for better applications

- Read this guidance fully before you start
- Focus on what you have achieved (outcomes) and what you actually did to get there (processes and actions)
- Involve other people who helped develop your approach
- Be concise, honest and positive
- Avoid unnecessary detail such as people's names, locations, dates etc
- Proof read your final submission and cut out all superfluous text

SECTION 1 - ABOUT THE GOLD AWARD

How the Gold Award works

The Gold Award competition runs annually. Each year two new themes are chosen, focusing on operational housing practice. The themes are selected to be relevant to prevailing national and sector priorities. Housing associations, or partnerships of associations, are invited to apply for an Award in one, or both, of the competition themes. Applicants are required to complete an application form with the help of these guidelines. A panel of Gold Award judges selects a short list of the most suitable applications with the support of independent theme experts. The finalists host an assessment visit for the judges, allowing an opportunity to validate the claims made in applications.

The judges then announce their final decision and up to three winners in each theme are presented with an Award along with £50,000 each to support dissemination of their key messages. In addition, Award holders are encouraged to display the Gold Award logo on their stationery and website, allowing residents, peers and others to recognise their success.

Most importantly, the winners make a commitment to the Housing Corporation to engage in a nine-month programme of dissemination designed to allow others to learn from the winners' best practice, adapt their innovative ideas and improve their services (see Dissemination on page 08).

Golden note: The purpose of the Gold Award

The Gold Award was launched by the Housing Corporation in 2005 as an initiative with four core objectives:

- Identify innovation and excellence;
- Share these widely;
- Raise performance standards across the sector;
- Encourage future innovation.

The Award's ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life for residents and communities throughout England.

2007 Timetable

Applications open	18th September 2006
Applications close	15th December 2006
Short list announced	16th February 2007
Assessment visits	March 2007
Presentation of Awards	24th May 2007
Dissemination programme	June 2007 to March 2008

Conditions of entry

The following conditions of entry must be met to ensure that applications will be considered:

- All the key criteria listed in these guidance notes must be addressed in your application form (see section 2);
- Winners agree to take an active role in disseminating their best practice;
- Entrants agree to work alongside the Housing Corporation and its contractors to deliver a coordinated programme of dissemination;
- Applicants agree to use the prize money for the sole use of funding dissemination activities;
- Each housing association may submit only one application per theme;
- A valid entry must be signed off by an authorised signatory.

Golden note: Eligibility

Applications for the Gold Awards 2007 are invited from:

- Social landlords registered with the Housing Corporation that comply with the Corporation's regulatory requirements;
- Joint applications by groups of up to six housing associations (each of which must meet the above eligibility requirement).

If you are in any doubt about whether your association or group of associations is eligible to apply – please contact the Gold Team before proceeding, by e-mailing gold@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk or calling 01223 272 574.

Joint applications

The Housing Corporation welcomes joint applications for consideration in the Gold Award. In order to submit a joint application, the following stipulations must be met:

- Each joint applicant must independently meet the eligibility criteria set out above, i.e. each party to the application must be an association registered with the Housing Corporation currently complying with the Corporation's regulatory requirements;
- Each joint applicant agrees to be bound by the conditions of entry, i.e. that they each agree to work with the Corporation to deliver a dissemination programme;
- One of the associations involved in the bid must be nominated 'Lead Applicant'. This association will provide the lead contact and for all correspondence relating to the application;
- If a joint application is successful, a single prize of £50,000 will be payable to the lead applicant to be shared with each of the parties in accordance with agreements that the applicants must make between themselves and which must be submitted to the Housing Corporation;
- If an association applies under one theme in a joint application, it may NOT also apply under the same theme independently (even if the projects or initiatives being submitted are significantly differently).

Gold Award themes 2007

The themes for the Gold Award 2007 are:

Empowering communities – see page 10

Recognising that housing associations can play a pivotal role in building and supporting vibrant and sustainable communities, winners in this theme will have done more than provide homes. They will have helped people in local communities to achieve what they want from their lives.

Environmental sustainability – see page 13

Recognising the absolute imperative of protecting our natural resources for the security of future generations, winners of Gold Awards for environmental sustainability will have done the most to reduce the impact of housing and communities on the environment, while providing homes that are more efficient and cheaper to run.

Success criteria

The number of success criteria against which applications will be measured has been reduced from nine to five. This will make the process of applying for a Gold Award simpler while maintaining the rigour which is essential to the integrity of the Award scheme. The criteria for 2007 are:

1. Positive outcomes;
2. Innovation;
3. Efficient use of resources;
4. User involvement;
5. Working in partnership.

For each theme there are a number of specific descriptors provided under each of the criteria shown above. These are not a comprehensive 'shopping list' of essential expectations, but serve to indicate the qualities and characteristics the assessors will be looking for in the best applications. Applications will be eligible for an Award even if they are not able to demonstrate that they meet every descriptor given in these guidance notes. Alternatively, additional indicators of performance not addressed in the descriptors might be relevant.

Dissemination

Up to six entries will receive a Gold Award at a celebration event to be staged in London on 24th May 2007. These winners will then begin working alongside the Housing Corporation and its contractor to plan a nine-month programme of knowledge dissemination.

Events and activities will be staged in locations throughout England, giving social housing providers the opportunity to hear at first hand about the excellent practice and new ways of working for which the Gold Award winners were given their prize.

At the same time, winners will develop additional methods to share their key messages. These will include:

- Open days;
- Joint seminars with other theme winners;
- Information leaflets / guidance booklets;
- Websites;
- Interactive CD-ROMs / toolkits;
- Workshops at industry conferences and events;
- One to one advice, peer support and mentoring.

The Housing Corporation will devote significant resources to encouraging housing providers and their partners to participate in the wide range of learning opportunities that the winners will present.

Policy influence

Winners will be encouraged to make use of a number of opportunities to influence developing policy. They will be invited to participate in discussion and policy implementation groups representing government, agency and other policy organisations.

SECTION 2 - 2007 THEMES

Introduction

The two themes chosen for the second round of the Gold Award are both high priorities for the Housing Corporation, government and the social housing sector at large. They are: **Empowering communities** and **Environmental sustainability**.

This section of the application guidance presents the criteria drawn up for each theme along with a sample of specific descriptors giving an indication of the types of practice that the judges will be interested in seeing. The criteria exist to help the theme experts and the Award judges select the most suitable applicants to be short listed. By asking associations to describe their best practice against a set of standard criteria, the Housing Corporation can be sure that each bid is assessed on an equal footing.

Additional information for applicants

While applications are required to address all of the criteria set out on the application form, the descriptors shown for each of the criteria below are for illustrative purposes. It is unlikely that any submission will meet all of the descriptors listed. The descriptors are given to show some of the potential characteristics of a successful and effective submission. They are not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Overview

The Housing Corporation is committed to the creation of strong, safe and prosperous communities through its work with housing associations. It is crucial that people and groups are empowered so that they and their communities fulfil their potential, get things done and are able to address the challenges they face.

Awards will be made to the housing associations that have done the most to achieve community empowerment, by turning principles into practice and practice into changes in people's life experiences. Specifically, we are looking for examples of best practice that demonstrate evidence of some or all of the following:

- A tangible contribution to the development of social cohesion across a specific location, community or communities;
- Outcomes that demonstrate measurable improvements in people's lives and opportunities; these should include evidence of how this improvement has manifested itself in relation to key socio-economic indicators and experience of key issues such as crime, jobs and skills;
- An increased engagement by citizens in the local community and in democratic processes;
- Devolution of power and responsibilities to the community to allow them to take decisions and get things done;
- Achievement of greater economic inclusion;
- The long-term sustainability of the gains that have been achieved in relation to empowering communities;
- Effective partnership working (with a range of agencies) with outcomes focused from a community perspective. Winning associations will provide evidence of their role in leading change, in facilitating partnership and their contribution to the projects that have resulted in positive change;
- An understanding and proactive commitment to addressing the needs of diverse and changing communities.

Criteria

Key criterion 1: Positive outcomes

- Shows evidence of a clear contribution to the Government's agenda for community empowerment including the creation of and participation in community empowerment networks and other local partnerships;
- Can prove measurable, long-term and demonstrable outcomes directly linked to the association's approach, such as increasing community capacity to influence local policy and increased engagement in governance processes;
- Can demonstrate evidence of changes that have a tangible impact on individual's lives by contributing to meeting one or more of the Government's Public Service Agreement floor targets for: employment, education and skills, enterprise, health, community safety, liveability, greener and more sustainable neighbourhoods;
- Demonstrates a contribution to increased economic, financial or social inclusion;
- Encourages active citizenship;
- Demonstrates an exemplary approach to building cohesive and sustainable communities.

Key criterion 2: Innovation

- Demonstrates an innovative approach to empowering people, groups and communities;
- Demonstrates innovation in funding;
- Goes beyond normal performance or service expectations;
- Creates new, replicable models for community engagement and empowerment, including models for neighbourhood governance and developing active citizenship.

Key criterion 3: Efficient use of resources

- Demonstrates creative, effective and efficient use of human and other resources. This includes use of information technology, land and/or buildings that represent value for money;
- Maximises available funding and leverage to increase efficiency;
- Invests own resources;
- Attracts funding from a range of sources;
- Trains and develops staff and members of the local communities;
- Demonstrates a planned approach to use of resources;
- Incorporates a productive use of monitoring and evaluation leading to continuous improvement and increased effectiveness.

Key criterion 4: User involvement

- Supports and encourages citizens' involvement in local democracy, representative bodies and special interest and action groups;
- Addresses community needs, involving the community in decision making as a stepping-stone to community control or ownership;
- Instigates or supports projects that are tailored to peoples' needs and developed in conjunction with users and residents;
- Addresses the needs of diverse communities and of harder to reach people and groups;
- Demonstrates evidence of change from users' perspectives, with continuous assessment and validation from users.

Key criterion 5: working in partnership

- Demonstrates responsiveness and understanding of local needs;
- Works in partnership with others, taking a lead role where appropriate and delivering outcomes from a community perspective;
- Enables an active role in partnerships for communities in order to be effective and valued by other stakeholders;
- Effectively engages a range of partners necessary to deliver planned outcomes;
- Enables proactive and innovative liaison with statutory and voluntary agencies and/or agencies charged with developing community empowerment;
- Pursues communication methods both internally and across partners that ensure full knowledge exchange and maximises the effect of the initiatives and projects;
- Attracts local authority and / or other third party endorsement;
- Encourages diversity and accessibility in partnership working.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Overview

The Housing Corporation is committed to the creation of environmentally sustainable communities through its work with housing associations. It is crucial that the sector works to reduce the environmental impact of both new buildings and existing homes. Awards will be made to the housing associations that have done the most to achieve environmental sustainability, by turning principles into practice. Specifically, we are looking for examples of best practice that demonstrate evidence of some or all of the following:

- Organisational commitment to sustainable development;
- Reduction in the environmental impact of existing homes and new build;
- Measurable achievement against action plans ;
- Achievements significantly in excess of normal performance or service expectations (e.g. 'climate change proofing' of housing stock);
- Working in partnership by involving others, such as residents, suppliers and other stakeholders in the process to reduce environmental damage.

Criteria

Key criterion 1: Positive outcomes

- Can provide evidence of reduced environmental impact of existing homes and new build. This will include improvements in carbon emissions, water use, biodiversity, waste reduction (household and construction) and reduced car use;
- Can provide evidence of a reduction in the environmental footprint of the organisation's own operations. This might include having environmental management systems in place (e.g. ISO 14001 or EMAS) and / or a systematic approach to reducing energy used to heat and light offices, reducing water use, operating a 'green travel plan', reducing emissions from fleet vehicles and promoting teleworking programmes;
- Contributes to Government and sector policy agendas such as the Government Sustainable Development Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, Sustainable Communities Plan and the Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal;
- Has a systematic approach to the incorporation of the lessons learnt into the mainstream work of the association;
- Can show constructive engagement in and a valuable contribution to other industry and sector initiatives such as Sustainable Homes and Constructing Excellence;
- Disseminates best practice to the wider housing sector;
- Has appointed a 'sustainability champion' (or equivalent) to the Board;
- Has a 'sustainability champion' (or equivalent) on the senior management team;
- Has a corporate sustainable development strategy and action plan for both existing housing stock and new build;
- Demonstrates measurable progress on the action plan and / or has adequate monitoring systems in place (e.g. independent annual audit of plan).

Key criterion 2: Innovation

- Adopts new / sustainable technologies and materials in both new build and existing housing (including evidence of a systematic approach to choice of appropriate solutions);
- Goes significantly beyond normal performance or service expectations (e.g. 'climate change proofing' of housing stock);
- Demonstrates an innovative approach to supporting tenants and residents in reducing their environmental footprint (e.g. energy / water services and waste reduction / recycling);
- Utilises innovative mechanisms of finance to improve environmental sustainability in both new build and existing housing;
- Demonstrates an innovative approach to processes and delivery mechanisms (e.g. early design team integration);
- Demonstrates an innovative approach to post occupancy monitoring and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Key criterion 3: Efficient use of resources

- Achieves, or, is close to achieving EcoHomes Excellent for new build;
- Has been awarded a high EcoHomes XB score, or scores well on a range of alternative performance indicators such as average SAP energy rating, for existing stock;
- In addition to EcoHomes excellent, achieves Energy Efficiency for Homes 'Best Practice' or Advanced 'Standard';
- Produces an annual statement of CO₂ emissions/m² of building stock;
- Monitors and minimises waste from all activities in relation to new and existing stock (e.g. implements an effective recycling policy in the maintenance programme);
- Adopts a systematic approach to the identification of opportunities for improving existing housing stock (e.g. through an appraisal of heating systems to identify potential sites for the installation of renewable energy / CHP systems);
- Ensures effective use of all building materials, including sourcing materials locally whenever possible, use of green procurement guides, use of certified products such as timber (for new build and maintenance / refurbishment of existing stock);
- Can demonstrate a rigorous approach to reducing CO₂ emissions and water consumption (e.g. reducing energy demand before introducing renewable energy sources, use of water efficient fixtures and fittings and, where

- appropriate, appliances);
- Undertakes whole life-cost and life-cycle analysis of alternative technology and materials options appropriate for development sites (new build and refurbishment);
- Attracts funding from a range of sources, ensuring effective links between different programmes (e.g. Decent Homes and the energy suppliers' Energy Efficiency Commitment).

Key criterion 4: User involvement

- Gains the trust and involvement of residents and measures the success of this involvement;
- Successfully involves residents in the design process;
- Residents are involved in long term management of projects;
- User involvement is demonstrably standard practice for the association;
- Can demonstrate that residents understand and respond to the environmental principles / innovations / improvements in their homes;
- Addresses non-building related issues to do with more sustainable living, quality of life, health and well-being.

Key criterion 5: working in partnership

- Can provide evidence of input to schemes and the development of strategies for existing stock from other relevant stakeholders including: community representatives, the Housing Corporation, Local Authorities, English Partnerships, other Housing Associations, health organisations, social services and utility companies;
- Demonstrates effective utilisation of other resources (financial and human) to ensure value for money, delivery of schemes and implementation of strategies;
- Involves housing management and maintenance colleagues in project / strategic planning, design and maintenance considerations;
- Involves contractors and other supply chain partners in project / strategic planning, design and maintenance consideration;
- Operates systems to measure the benefits of partnership working.

SECTION 3 - HOW TO APPLY

Introduction

There are just two stages to applying for a Gold Award:

- Completing and returning a notification of entry form;
- Completing and returning an application form.

Application forms must be correctly completed before they will be considered by the assessors. The notes in this section will help you to complete your application properly.

To be most effective, applications forms should be completed with input from all staff, partners and users who can enhance your submission.

Before making a full application, please ensure that you have shared this decision with all your relevant teams so that everybody is committed and you have access to all the evidence you need to support your bid. This will also ensure that the Corporation does not receive more than one application from a single association which would invalidate each entry.

Notification of entry

In order to help the Housing Corporation plan effectively for the assessment and short listing of applications, please complete a 'notification of entry' form and return it by e-mail to the Housing Corporation by no later than 5pm on **Friday 17th November 2006**.

Submitting a notification of entry does not constitute an obligation to apply in full by the December deadline. Similarly, applications can still be made even if you are unable to submit a notification of entry by the deadline shown.

The form is available on the Corporation's website at www.housingcorp.gov.uk. It is similar to the first sections of the application form and you should refer to the notes below on how to complete Parts A and B.

Golden note: Notification of entry

All 'Notification of entry' forms must be returned by e-mail to the Housing Corporation by 5pm on Friday 17th November 2006

Application form

The only way to apply for a Gold Award is to complete the standard application form according to the guidelines provided in this document. The application form can be downloaded from the Housing Corporation website at www.housingcorp.gov.uk. If you are unable to download the form, please contact the Gold Team and we will endeavour to meet your needs.

Once downloaded the form should be saved to an appropriate local or network drive where it can be worked on securely over a period of time.

- The form is in Microsoft Word format and has embedded form fields for ease of completion.
- You can navigate around the fields using the 'Tab' key to move forward, and 'Shift + Tab' to move backwards.
- Each field has a limited length.
- Dates should be completed in the form dd/mm/yyyy.
- All sections of the form must be completed and all five key criteria must be addressed.
- Please be sure to indicate under which theme you are submitting your application.
- If you wish to apply for both themes, please complete a separate application form for each theme.
- Please do not include any images or diagrams, only text may be submitted on the application form.

Submission of further evidence and materials

No supporting evidence is admissible other than the information you provide on the application form. Please do not include any additional pages, brochures, reports or extra statements of any kind. To ensure a fair competition, entries will be judged on the basis of the content of standard application forms alone.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

PART A – APPLICANT DETAILS

Name and RSL code of organisation(s)

In the first column, please enter the Housing Corporation registered number (RSL code) for your organisation. This is normally in the format of one or two letters followed by four digits – e.g. LH0000. In the second column please give the full name of your housing association.

For joint applications, please give the lead organisation's RSL code and full name on row 1 of the table, followed by the other parties to the application.

- maximum of six partners per application.
- lead association is for administrative purposes only – all parties to a joint application will be regarded as being of equal significance.

Main contact

Please give the name, job title, telephone number(s) and e-mail address of the individual who will lead on the application. This person will be the primary contact for the duration of the application and assessment phases of the Gold Award.

- Please inform the Housing Corporation immediately if the person leading on the application changes.

PART B – AWARD THEME

Please tick (by clicking with your mouse) the box corresponding to the theme you are applying for.

- If you intended to apply for both themes, please complete a separate application form for each theme.

PART C – APPLICATION TITLE

Use this space to give a meaningful title to the project or approaches that you are presenting in the application form. This should be as short as possible but tell the assessors as much as possible about exactly what your submission is all about. This should be a maximum of 40 words.

- A total of 250 characters have been allowed, but you should limit the title to 40 words.

PART D – SUBMISSION SUMMARY

In this section we would like you to give us a brief summary of the good practice and/or innovation that you wish to be considered for a Gold Award. This is your opportunity to tell us the story of your exceptional work. We would like to know:

- The challenge that was faced;
- What exactly was done to address the challenge;
- The outcomes that have been (or are expected to be) achieved.

Your response should be kept to a maximum of 5,200 characters (including spaces).

PART E – MEETING THE CRITERIA

In this part of the application form you will demonstrate how the project or approach you are submitting meets the criteria and descriptors given in Section 2 of these guidance notes.

Definitions

The definitions of the five criteria below give an indication of what the assessors will be looking for in each category.

- Applicants should refer to the appropriate theme heading in Section 2 for indications of the types of characteristics that judges will be looking for in a successful bid.

1 Positive outcomes

What has the overall impact of your work been? Outcomes refer more to the experience of end-users than to the immediate products of your work.

2 Innovation

Describe those aspects of your submission that you consider to be new and innovative. Please tell us how your work differs from existing methods.

3 Efficient use of resources

We want to know about the resources required to enable your project to happen. Please give an honest account of what is required in terms of human resources, materials and other expenses to allow your best practice work to succeed.

4 User Involvement

Please tell us in what ways, and to what extent, service users have been involved in the various stages of the development of your best practice.

5 Working in partnership

How have you worked alongside partner organisations (including local authorities, charities, voluntary groups and the private sector) to achieve your outcomes?

Additional considerations

Throughout your application we would like to know how you addressed the following:

- Responding to diversity;
- Continuous improvement;
- Performance management and evaluation.

Evidence

Wherever possible the assessors will be looking for evidence of your outstanding work. Anecdote alone may not suffice to earn a Gold Award. We will be particularly keen to see any objective evidence of outcomes or any feedback you may have gained from partners or service users through monitoring and evaluation.

Please feel free to tell us about initiatives that have been partially implemented, or those that have yet to be fully realised. You may need to adjust your responses to the criteria accordingly.

For example, it is acceptable to say: "Resident based research currently being undertaken is expected to reveal a 30% saving in..."

PART F – DISSEMINATION PLANS

Applicants must commit to sharing their excellent practices with other housing organisations through a nine-month dissemination programme with support from the Housing Corporation and its contractor. Here we need to know about your specific plans for sharing your approach with peers across the social housing sector. Tell us about the products you might develop and the events you hope to stage. Who will deliver the key messages, what are your timescales and how will you use the prize money of £50,000 to best effect?

PART G – VALIDATION

Please ensure that you complete the validation part of the application form. You should enter the name of the person signing, their position within the organisation and the date that the form is signed.

The date must be supplied in the form dd/mm/yyyy. The signatory must be one of the following:

- The Chief Executive;
- The Chairperson;
- An authorised officer of the governing body.

If this person's signature is available electronically (i.e. as a scanned image in JPG, GIF or similar format) then please paste the image into the text box in Part G of the application form as indicated.

If you cannot provide an electronic signature, please type "Hard copy signature to follow" in the signature box under Part G and e-mail the form to us in accordance with the submission instructions given in Section 4, below. If this is the case you must print the form and have it signed by an appropriate signatory and then post it to us at the Gold Award's Cambridge address given in the contact section on page 28.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Tips for completion

- Do not exceed the maximum length of each entry stated in the application form;
- Be succinct in your responses;
- Avoid any unnecessary details such as people's names, dates of events or milestones, specific location names etc;
- Avoid diagrams, tables and images;
- The text limit for each of the five criteria is 3,000 characters;
- The required font is Arial at 11 point size.

SECTION 4 – NEXT STEPS

Protocol for naming files

Please use the following protocol for naming your files when returning both your notification of entry and your completed application form. Save the file to an appropriate network or local hard drive with a name constructed as follows:

Format for file names:

←**name of lead applicant**→ ←**form type**→ ←**RSL code**→

Name of lead applicant: Please use up to 20 characters to provide a name which uniquely identifies the lead association named your application (e.g. If an association was called 'Borchester Town and District Housing Association', and there are no other RSLs with Borchester in their name, just use 'Borchester'. If there is also a 'Borchester Charitable Housing Trust', then use 'Borchester T and D', to make the distinction clear).

Form type: For notification of entry forms use **NOE**
For application forms use **APP**

RSL Code: Your five or six character Housing Corporation Registered Number (e.g. **LH0000**)

Examples: **Borchester NOE LH0000**
Borchester Town and District Housing Association's notification of entry form

Borchester APP LH0000
Borchester Town and District Housing Association's application form

Application deadline

Applications must be returned by e-mail to gold@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk by 5pm on **Friday 15th December 2006**. No applications returned after this deadline will be considered.

If your association is unable to complete the application form electronically, or is otherwise unable to e-mail the completed form, please contact the Gold Team well in advance of the closing date to make alternative arrangements for the submission of your application.

If you are unable to return an application form complete with embedded electronic signature, then your e-mailed submission will be accepted as long as the Gold Team receives a signed hard copy of your application by no later than 13th January 2006.

Assessment process

No applications will be seen by any expert or judge prior to the closing date for the competition: 15th December 2006.

Short Listing

From **Monday 18th December 2006**, applications will be sent to the theme experts and the internal champions responsible for each theme. They will carefully read through every application received and will use a predefined template to apply an overall score to each submission. At a moderation meeting of the experts and champions a consensus will be reached on the appropriate score for each application.

The experts will then use the scores and their judgment to draw up a long list of the best applications to present to the judges. At a short listing meeting of the judges to be held **15th February 2007**, a short list of up to 12 applications (six per theme) will be agreed.

Golden note: Application deadline

All applications must be returned by e-mail to gold@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk by 5pm on Friday 15th December 2006

Site visits

Each short listed association will host an assessment visit at a site of their choice (normally a location relevant to the work highlighted in the application). This will be an opportunity for a delegation of Gold Award assessors to observe at first hand the best practice or innovation put forward in the applications. If you are short listed you will receive further guidance on what is expected and what the delegation will want to be shown.

The Housing Corporation delegation is likely to consist of:

- At least two judges;
- Both theme experts;
- The internal theme champion;
- A member of the Gold Award Team.

The dates of these visits have already been determined.

If you are short listed, you will be told in the week beginning **Monday 19th February** on which of the six possible dates you will be required to host an assessment visit. We have given this notice early to ensure that you are able to secure the diary time of any of the key staff, residents or partners that you may wish to be present at your visit.

Dates for site visits

Community empowerment	7th March 2007
	13th March 2007
	15th March 2007
	21st March 2007
	27th March 2007
	29th March 2007
Environmental sustainability	6th March 2007
	8th March 2007
	14th March 2007
	20th March 2007
	22nd March 2007
	28th March 2007

You are free to decide the format of the visit which will last no more than four hours. The purpose of the visit is to persuade the Corporation's delegation that your submission can demonstrate tangible outcomes, that it works well and has a discernable impact on service quality. You may choose to do this with a combination of presentations, site visits and video presentations. The delegation will be particularly interested in the perceptions of service users and partners.

Assessors will write a short report on their observations to help inform their final decision making.

Decision making

A meeting of the full judging panel, the experts and internal champions will be held on **10th May 2007**. The panel will discuss the merits of all the finalists and agree the winners for each theme. A maximum of three gold winners will be identified for each theme.

Announcement of winners

The winners of the Gold Awards 2007 will be informed of their success no later than 5pm on **Friday 11th May 2007**. The Corporation will contact the person named in Part A of the application form using the contact details provided. If your named contact will not be available on the day, please ensure you nominate an alternative to the Gold Team sufficiently in advance of this date.

Feedback

Providing feedback to unsuccessful applications is resource intensive. We would ask applicants only to request feedback if they consider this to be absolutely necessary. We will, however, provide feedback to all applicants who request it.

The judges' decision is final

The judging panel is drawn from a respected cross-section of organisations with an interest in improving services in the social housing sector. The assessment methodology has been carefully designed to ensure the fairest possible system for determining Gold Award winners. For these reasons, and to ensure that winners can proceed to sharing their best practice as soon as possible, the judges' decision is final and there will be no appeal process.

Presentation of Awards

An event will be staged in London on 24th May 2007 at which winners and finalists will be presented with certificates marking their success. In addition, winners will be presented with a trophy and will make a short presentation highlighting their achievements. Representatives of government and the housing sector will be invited to help celebrate with the finalists and find out more about the best practice that has been identified.

Contract and payment of prize fund

Winners will be asked to sign a contract with the Housing Corporation which will set out the core expectations of winning associations in terms of delivering an effective dissemination programme. Payment of the £50,000 prize fund will be staged upon satisfactorily meeting three key milestones in the dissemination programme.

Gold winners' logo

From the date of the Award ceremony winners will be entitled to display a winners' logo on their stationery and website. This will allow residents, stakeholders and peers to recognise the exceptional achievement that the Gold Award recognises.

Contacting the Gold Team

The Gold Team exists to support the whole of the Gold Award. If you have any questions, or need any kind of clarification, advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact us.

E-mail: gold@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk

Telephone: 01223 272 574

Address: Gold Team,
Housing Corporation,
Centre for Research and
Market Intelligence (CRMI),
Westbrook Centre,
Block A, Suite 1,
Milton Road,
Cambridge
CB4 1YG

Further Information

Additional information about the Gold Award can be found on the Corporation's website at: www.housingcorp.gov.uk

This includes:

- Information relating to the Gold Award 2006;
 - Tackling homelessness.
 - Innovation in procurement.
 - Dissemination activities.
- More information on the Gold Awards 2007;
 - The judging panel.
 - The expert advisors.
 - The Corporation champions.

Check list

If you are submitting an application or applications for the Gold Awards 2007, please ensure that you have completed each of the tasks shown in the box below:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Returned a notification of entry by 17th November 2006 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Met eligibility criteria | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agreed to conditions of entry | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Completed ALL registration details on application form | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Completed all other parts of the application form | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Validated the application with an authorised signatory | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Kept an electronic/hard copy of the application | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you have completed all these tasks then you should send your application to the Gold Team.

Good luck and we look forward to receiving your application by 15th December 2006

www.housingcorp.gov.uk



Housing Corporation Maple House 149 Tottenham Court Road London W1T 7BN