

# **DERBY HOMES LIMITED**

## **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING**

**Held on Thursday 19 January 2012**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

### **Board Members Present:**

Mike Ainsley, Tony Holme, John Keith (left at 7.50 pm), Iain MacDonald, Mark Menzies, Patrick Molson, Bob Osler (Chair), Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees, Bob Troup

### **Officers Present:**

Shaun Bennett, David Enticott, Susan Hill, Jackie Mitchell, Maria Murphy.

### **12/01 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Bayliss, Brian Perry, Tabani Ndlovu, Roy Webb, Ken Whitehead, Phil Davies, Councillor Ingall and Cath Roff.

### **12/02 Admission of Late Items**

The Chair admitted one late item, Board Member Attendance, which was discussed at Item A8.

### **12/03 Declarations of Interests**

The Council Board Members were noted as declaring their interest in matters relating to Derby City Council.

The Tenant and Leaseholder Board Members declared their interests as tenants (as defined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association) of Derby City Council.

Mark Menzies declared an interest as a Derby City Council employee.

### **12/04 Minutes of Previous Meeting on 24 November 2011**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2011 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

## **12/05 Matters Arising**

### **Minute 11/138 Governance Arrangements Review**

The Chair advised that the Board Members Service Agreement will be discussed at the Governance Services Committee meeting on 23 February 2012.

### **Minute 11/134 Chief Executive's Update**

The Director of Housing and Customer Service provided an update on the Family Intervention Project.

### **Minute 11/165 Statements from members of the Board**

The Director and Company Secretary advised the IT Team will order broadband lines for installation at sheltered housing schemes by the end of the week and refurbished PCs will be deployed once broadband is in place.

### **Minute 11/170 Chief Executive's Update**

Tony Holme advised the Director of Housing and Customer Service will bring information on the number of national exchanges to the next Value for Money meeting on 31 January.

### **Minute 11/172 Solar Panels Feed in Tariff**

Tony Holme asked if we will continue to install solar panels. The Director of Investment and Regeneration replied that we will, until March 2012. The tariff for flats is 21p minimum but could be more if the Government fails with their appeal. However, it was likely that the tariff will be reduced to 16.8p at the end of March.

## **12/06 Announcements from the Chair**

The Chair congratulated Susan Hill, the Board and Committee Support Officer on her engagement.

He informed the Board of the good comments from the recent Board Reviews from Ita Cooke, BDA, and who observed the November Board meeting. She commented that the length of the agenda and reports were good, however, she had commented that the Health and Safety report was too operational, not enough forward planning of agenda items and a lack of in depth questioning. Overall, the Board worked very well. The Chair thanked the Board Members for their contribution to the review.

## **12/07 Statements from members of the Board**

There were no statements from members of the Board.

## **12/08 Questions to Derby Homes Board From Members of the Public**

There were no statements from members of the public.

## **12/09 Questions from Derby City Council**

There were no questions from Derby City Council.

## **12/10 Committee Chairs' Feedback**

Iain MacDonald, Chair of Resources, Remuneration and Regeneration Committee, provided highlights of recent meetings on 17 November 2011 and 5 January 2012.

Dennis Rees informed the Board that the City Board meeting was held on 22 December but suggested not having a City Board meeting three days before Christmas in future. He informed the Board that he was elected Chair of the City Board for a further year. As the minutes were 12 pages long he suggested that Board Members view the agenda and reports on the website and if anyone had any questions, to contact him.

## **12/11 Confidential Business**

The Board agreed to exclude members of the public during consideration of the following item on grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential information as defined in Standing Order 20.2 (g, h, j & n) of Part IV of Derby Homes Governance Arrangements.

## **12/12 Chief Executive's Update**

The Board received a report with information on:

- Derby Homes is 10 years old!
- The potential impact of the Government's new Right to Buy (RTB) announcements
- How Derby Homes could help the Council to build new properties

### **Agreed**

The Board noted the report and approved the RTB consultation response, amended as discussed above.

**12/13      Review of Non Core Activity – New Business**

The Board received a report which was presented to the Resources, Remuneration and Regeneration Committee on 17 November 2011 and recommended to the Board. The report set out the arguments for and against continuing to seek and take on new business.

**Agreed**

The Board approved the recommendations in the report.

**12/14      Review of Non Core Activity – Master Planning/Large Scale Estate Regeneration**

The Board received a report which was presented to the Resources, Remuneration and Regeneration Committee on 17 November 2011 and recommended to the Board. The report set out reasons why Derby Homes should always retain the option to consider larger scale estate regeneration, using master-planning where appropriate.

**Agreed**

The Board approved the recommendations in the report.

**12/15      Tenants' Contents Insurance**

The Board received a report summarising the outcome of a re-tendering of the Tenants' Contents Insurance Scheme.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the recommendation in the report.

**12/16      General Insurance Contract**

The Board received a report summarising the outcome of a re-tendering of the General Insurance Contract.

**Agreed**

The Board approved the recommendations in the report.

**12/17      Purchase of a Further 32 Vehicles For The Repairs Team**

The Board received a report seeking approval to purchase a further 32 vehicles for the Repairs Team.

### **Agreed**

The Board approved the recommendations in the report.

#### **12/18 Late Item – Board Member Attendance**

The Board received a report advising the Board of a potential breach of the rules governing Board Members absences from Board meetings.

### **Agreed**

The Board approved the recommendation in the report.

#### **End of Confidential Business**

#### **12/19 To agree any items from Part C to be discussed**

Tony Holme had requested discussion of Items C2 Performance Monitoring Quarter 3 2011 and C3 Carbon Plan. However, he had spoken to the Director of Housing and Customer Service before this meeting regarding Item C2. He commented that the Carbon Plan Appendix 1 was ineligible on the Committee Meeting Information System (CMIS). The Board and Committee Support Officer replied that the appendix had been replaced and was now clearer.

The rest of the items in Part C were noted but not discussed.

#### **12/20 Health and Safety Update**

The Board received details of recent health and safety performance and current issues.

The Chair asked that the report should now be shortened to reflect the comments from the Board Reviews which was mentioned earlier and include implications and matters of importance to the Board when required.

Iain MacDonald referred to 'warnings on Academy for no lone visits' and asked for the number of tenancies where staff visit only in pairs. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that she will provide this at the next meeting.

### **Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

## **12/21 Derby Homes' Operating Budget 2012/13 and Forecasts**

The Board received the Operating Budget 2012/13 and forecasts for 2013/14 and 2014/15. The budget was prepared in accordance with the Medium Term Finance Strategy and is consistent with the HRA Business Plan and Derby Homes Delivery Plan.

The draft budget was prepared after consultation with budget managers and presented to a Budget Scrutiny Group on 18 November 2011. It was then presented to the City Board on 22 December 2011 and Resources, Remuneration and Regeneration Committee on 5 January 2012.

### **Agreed**

The Board approved the operating budget for 2012/13 and the financial strategy outlined in the report.

## **12/22 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (HRABP) 2012/42, Rents and Service Charges 2012/13**

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is to be reformed in April 2012, and the subsidy system abolished. The Council will be required to pay Central Government £29.5m as a consequence. As a result of the new system the HRA will be better off financially and able to sustain Council housing into the future. The Council has issued an HRA Business Plan (HRABP) to indicate their plans for that future, and is seeking comments on the plan from interested parties. The report highlighted some of the key changes that will occur as a consequence, and asked for any comments to be fed back to the Council.

The Director and Company Secretary informed the Board that a slight change had been made to the Housing Capital Programme within the HRABP relating to investment in kitchens and bathrooms, where the plans now include £2.8m for the first three years dropping to £1.9m and lower in the subsequent two years.

Patrick Molson commented as well as rent increases it does not help his neighbours on Bretton Avenue who have problems paying their electricity bills. The cost of increasing fuel bills is a problem for the vulnerable. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said she will ask Samantha Cholerton, Market Development Support Officer, to publicise information on additional help with electric heating.

## **Agreed**

The Board recommended to the Council

1. their general support of the report and the consultation from the Council
2. with regard to paragraph 3.13, the system of four rent free weeks should be maintained.
3. one rent free week should be moved from the end of the financial year to the beginning.

### **12/23 Review of Opening Hours – Co-located Offices**

The Board received a report advising that Derby City Council had approved further revised opening times for libraries which will take effect from 23 February 2012. The changes will affect the services Derby Homes delivers at Alvaston and New Sinfen co-locations.

## **Agreed**

The Board approved the proposed revisions to opening hours at Alvaston and New Sinfen to take effect from 23 January 2012.

### **12/24 Standing Order 12**

The Board agreed to waive Standing Order 12 to allow the meeting to continue after 8.00 pm.

### **12/25 Update on Rent Arrears**

The Board received a report setting out current performance on rent arrears and the ongoing management actions since the last report in November 2011.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service informed the Board of her discussion with Tony Holme before the meeting who asked to look at the rent collected as a percentage of rent due. Last year it was 98.08% and now it is 97.42%. She explained the total rent arrears were 3.71% which was higher than last year at 2.3%. This had been in part due to processing delays with Housing Benefit which is estimated at £160,000 outstanding of which around £50,000 would be due to the natural processing cycle.

Margaret Redfern referred to paragraph 3.15 of the report where it stated “We will be holding a free to enter prize draw for all tenants who have a clear rent account at the end of the financial year” and asked

would tenants in arrears due to the Housing Benefit processing delays still be eligible? The Director explained that if the claim is being processed they will be eligible to enter the draw so long as any payment pattern had been maintained.

Tony Holme asked if the Council was considering changes to manage the welfare benefit reform proposals. The Director replied that they were and there are firm action plans in place.

Tony Holme asked how Derby Homes compare to peer groups with rent arrears at 3.71%. The Director replied income management for example is upper quartile but she will need to speak to the Performance Manager to retrieve the information. Iain MacDonald agreed with Tony that it would help to get peer comparisons especially with arrears. The Director replied that she hoped to get this information by October. The Chair suggested comparing rent arrears with ALMOs in the Derbyshire area.

### **Agreed**

The Board noted the content of the report and approved the actions being taken.

## **12/26 Draft Minutes of Committees and City Board**

The Board received the draft minutes of recent Committee meetings:

- a Resources, Remuneration & Regeneration — 17 November 2011
- b Resources, Remuneration & Regeneration – 5 January 2012
- c City Board – 22 December 2011

### **Agreed**

The Board noted but did not discuss the minutes.

## **12/27 Performance Monitoring Quarter 3 2011**

The Board received a report of Quarter 3 performance against targets contained in the Monthly Indicator link.

### **Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.



**12/28      Carbon Plan**

The Board received a report outlining the proposals for Housing and Communities in the Government's Carbon Plan published in December 2011.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**12/29      Board Compass**

The Board received the Board Compass.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**12/30      Forward Plan of Agenda Items**

The Board received a forward plan of agenda items for a six month period from February 2012.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**12/31      Board Diary Planner**

The Board received a diary planner of events taking place for the six months from February 2012.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**Date of next meeting**

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday 22 March 2012 at 6.00 pm at Cardinal Square.**

The meeting ended at 8.08 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 19 January 2012.