

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONAL BOARD MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2016

The meeting started at 6:00 pm

Operational Board Members Present:

Andrew Beresford, Richard Bruford, Jim Elks, Tony Holme, Bob MacDonald (Chair), Dennis Rees, Cadine Reid, Jsan Shepherd, Anna Skrobisz, Mick Whitehead

Officers present:

Nick Bale, Annabelle Barwick, Steve Bayliss, Paul Cole, Margaret Facey, Matt Hands, Richard Holman, Jackie Mitchell, Sophie Reynolds, Daniel Robertson

Others Present:

Mike Ainsley, Chair of Derby Homes
Nigel Barker, Chair of Rykneld Homes
John Carter, Vice Chair of Rykneld Homes
Shirley Green, Chair of the Tenant Panel
Chris Fraser, Streetpride Area Manager, Derby City Council
Ben Scott, Arboricultural Officer, Derby City Council

16/01 Apologies

The Operational Board received apologies from Amo Raju, Samantha Hudson Clare Mehrbani, Jackie Westwood.

The Chair announced that this was Matt Hands, Investment Manager's last meeting as he was leaving Derby Homes at the end of March. On behalf of the Operational Board, he wished him well for the future.

The Chair also welcomed new members Anna Skrobisz, Andrew Beresford, and Richard Bruford.

16/02 Admission of late items

The Operational Board received no late items.

16/03 Declarations of interests

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

16/04 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Operational Board meeting held on the Thursday 10 December 2015 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

16/05 Matters Arising

Minute 151/133 Service Update

Matt Hands provided an update on progress on Eaton Court Lift replacement (details in attached appendix).

Minute 15/113 - Petition: St Clare's Close

Tony Holme informed that this matter has been now closed and the residents are happy with the outcome.

16/06 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

16/07 Items for Partner Organisations

Tree Update

Ben Scott from Derby City Council attended and provided the six monthly Tree Update.

Dennis Rees said that in Chaddesden some trees that were planted in tenants' gardens by Derby City Council are now overgrown, and asked what the process was to deal with the overgrown trees?

Ben Scott advised that it is the tenants' responsibility, but occasionally the Council will compromise with them to see if the cost can be split, but it is subject to each specific site.

Jsan Shepherd noted that in the report provided it states that Derby City Council will plant 50 trees before March and asked where these will be planted?

Ben Scott informed that they will be planted across the city.

Shirley Green asked when the Council cuts back old trees, for example trees causing potential damage to property.

Ben Scott replied that there is no time limit as maintenance is carried out throughout the year.

Tony Holme asked if the Council's arboricultural service is engaged in the new build projects.

Ben Scott advised that tree planting on new sites is usually something that is funded by the developers, but the Council would have some input.

Streetpride Grounds Maintenance

Chris Fraser provided an update on Grounds Maintenance across the city informing that all Winter works are complete and mowing started Monday 22 February 2016, which is early due to Winter works being completed.

Tony Holme asked if they are recruiting now, as last year they had experienced staff shortages. Chris Fraser advised that they are, including 2-3 new apprentices. The full time employee recruitment process will be starting imminently.

Dennis Rees noted that the grass cutting slipped last year, and asked for clarity on this year's cycle. Chris Fraser said they are hoping for a 2-3 weeks cycle.

The Chair noted the good work on grounds maintenance, compared to last year's update.

Tony Holme asked if the new machines will be able to carry out the mulching. Chris Fraser confirmed they will be able to.

16/08 Any Items from Part B to be Discussed

The Chair reminded the Operational Board of the new format to manage all Part B items. Operational Board members should submit any questions from Part B prior to the meeting and responses will be provided to everyone ahead of the meeting. The item will not then be raised at the meeting. However, if the response provided does not fully answer the question or a member has a supplementary question arising from the response, then they can raise a further question at the meeting.

The Operational Board agreed to discuss item B5 and B6 in order to deal with a supplementary question. Questions and responses raised prior to this meeting were emailed to all members and are attached to these minutes.

16/09 Estates Pride Large Scale Programme 2016/17

The Operational Board received a report setting out proposals for the Estates Pride Large Scale Programme 2016-17 and requesting approval of the priorities as set out in the report.

Richard Holman gave a presentation discussing previous schemes and various new schemes for 2016-17. He advised if members would like to visit or discuss in more detail any of the proposed 2016/17 schemes they should contact him.

Dennis Rees asked

- (a) will tenants be charged for hard standings
- (b) clarity of the budget for Prince Charles Avenue
- (c) is the proposed BMX track scheme the same scheme that was approved at the last meeting.
- (d) how much the neighbourhood contribution for the New Sinfin proposed scheme is.

Richard Holman advised

- (a) tenants will be charged about £5 per week
- (b) He will check and let Dennis know
- (c) It is the same BMX track scheme for which funding was approved at the last meeting
- (d) Graeme Walton, the area housing manager, is currently working on obtaining match funding from other social housing landlords who have housing stock in New Sinfin.

Cadine Reid asked if the proposed scheme at Rivermead House will cause congestion for residents parking.

Richard Holman informed that the work will start at the back of the building and when that has been completed, to the front, which will hopefully prevent congestion.

Jsan Shepherd asked if all of the schemes will be able to be completed, due to the funding allocated.

Richard Holman said that not all of the schemes marked red will be completed, especially as some depend on external funding being made available. But due to the value for money we achieve by working with small, local contractors, we can often deliver projects for less than estimated, meaning we may then be able to bring forward work listed in the amber and red categories. Also some projects may end up having to be cancelled, meaning some further down the priority list can go ahead.

The Operational Board was advised that the total amount of Estates Pride funding for 2016/17 has been confirmed at £1.3 million.

Tony Holme asked if leaseholders will be charged for work affecting their blocks.

Richard Holman confirmed that leaseholders will be charged and consultation will be taking place with them.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the priorities set out in the Large Scale Programme 2016-17.

16/10 Estates Maintenance Small Scale Bids

The Operational Board received a report requesting approval of an Estates Maintenance small scale bid to improve existing slab pathways leading to communal entrances and surrounding service strips at 39-49 and 51-61 Cavan Drive at a cost of £11,914.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the bid.

16/11 Customer Service Standards

The Operational Board received a report outlining the newly developed customer service standards.

The Chair asked how the new standards will be managed.

Annabelle Barwick informed him that we will be joining forces with the Tenant Panel and DACP to check our services in key areas.

Dennis Rees advised the DACP newsletter will be encouraging tenants to use digital platforms to communicate with Derby Homes.

Jsan Shepherd asked for a breakdown of how tenants contact us.

Annabelle Barwick advised that she will send this information to Operational Board members.

Dennis Rees asked for Annabelle Barwick to report feedback on customer contact at the June 2016 Operational Board meeting.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the Customer Service Standards.

16/12 Council House Customer Service Booth

The Operational Board received a report proposing to change the opening times of the Derby Homes customer service booth service at the Council House from 8.30am-5pm Monday to Friday, to 8.30am-3pm Monday to Friday.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the change to the opening times of the Customer Service Booth to 8.30 am – 3.00 pm Monday to Friday.

16/13 Garden Maintenance – Tenant Panel Review

The Operational Board received a report from Derby Homes' Tenant Panel providing the findings of the Panel's review of the Garden Maintenance Scheme and recommendations for improvement.

Dennis Rees said this was an excellent report. He asked how tenants in the scheme who haven't got any grass in their garden are dealt with?

Richard Holman said that they would have any weeds treated and removed and clean slabs/paving etc. Tenants who we believe may not need our service are asked to consider their options but if they insist they want the service we try where we can to make sure they get their quota.

Dennis Rees asked what the process with tree height limitations is.

Richard Holman advised that there is no height limit but we are starting to do reductions instead of trims.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the information detailed in appendix 1 and approved the recommendations in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

16/14 Service Delivery Update

The Operational Board received a joint report from Derby Homes Heads of Service. The report provided a general overview and update on current issues.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/15 Performance Monitoring Quarter 3

The Operational Board received a report from the Finance Director and Company Secretary summarising the performance of Derby Homes for the third quarter of 2015/16.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/16 Rent Arrears and Welfare Reform Update

The Operational Board received a report from the Head of Income Management and Advice.

The report detailed:

- December position on rent arrears
- Detail of Discretionary Housing Payments
- Welfare Reforms and how we are migrating the impacts.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report and agreed to continue receiving further update reports.

16/17 Customer Engagement & Community Development Update

The Operational Board received a report from the Head of Housing Management and Housing Options updating on the further changes made to Customer Engagement and Community Development.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/18 Estate & Flat Inspections Quarter 3

The Operational Board received a report which gives detail on the numbers of cases by type arising from monthly flat and estate inspections carried out by area for the last quarter.

Tony Holme had raised a question and received a response ahead of the meeting regarding dealing with gardens. He had requested information on the reasons for this, but felt the response did not adequately answer his question and asked for further clarification.

It was noted that the city wide figure of 285 cases was relatively small compared to the number of houses managed by Derby Homes.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/19 Customer Priorities Quarter 3

The Operational Board received a report from the Head of Housing Management and Housing Options detailing the performance against the ten Customer Priorities to the end of quarter three 2015/16.

Tony Holme had raised a question and received a response ahead of the meeting regarding Priority 1 'We will develop and deliver a proactive litter campaign'. He had raised concerns about the Stockbrook Street housing area. He advised that he had been contacted by the Area Manager and had received assurances from her.

Tony Holme has raised concerns that few residents note the comments that highlight issues in Flat Inspections on notice boards in communal areas.

It was suggested that the notice boards could be made more noticeable by, for example, changing the colour of the paper used every month.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/20 Complaints & Satisfaction Quarter 3

The Operational Board received a report providing detailed analysis of complaints received between Quarter three 2015/16.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/21 ASB Statistics Quarter 3

The Operational Board received a report providing key statistics for Derby Homes ASB service for the third quarter 2015/16.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/22 Draft Minutes of Derby Homes Board meeting held on 21 January 2016

The Operational Board received the draft minutes of Derby Homes Board meeting on 21 January 2016.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the draft minutes.

16/23 Any Other Business

Tony Holme asked for an update as to when a member(s) from the Youth Board will be attending the Operational Board.

Paul Cole advised that the Youth Board had met that week and it is also receiving training to prepare for attending this meeting.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 28 April 2016 at 6:00 pm

The meeting ended at 7:40 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 25 February 2016.

Appendix

Derby Homes Operational Board Agenda – 25 March 2016

Queries raised by Chair & Vice Chair

Minutes of Previous Meeting (Min 15/133) Service Delivery Update

What is the current progress on the Eaton Court Lift replacement?

Up until last week, the lift was still breaking down – at least for short periods. On every single occasion, by the time the engineer gets to site, the fault has cleared itself. So it's an almost impossible task to diagnose and fix.

But we have now employed a firm of consultant engineers who specialise in passenger lifts, the Dunbar and Boardman Partnership. This should be a big help – they are experts and we really are not. They have investigated the lift and advised on a possible repair that hasn't been considered before. The replacement part was fitted last Friday and the lift has worked since then. That is clearly only a very short time, but with this lift's repeated failures it's actually quite encouraging. If it does solve, or substantially improve the lift's short term problems, it will remove the time pressure on the lift replacement.

We are also employing D&BP to advise on the lift replacement contract. They have scrutinised the tender submissions, are questioning the bidders, and will oversee the lift design and installation process. This is to make sure we have a new lift that is well spec'd, designed and installed, so we will have much more confidence in it for the future. New passenger lifts installed in recent years as part of new build or major refurb projects have often been problematic, so we want to go the extra mile to avoid that here.

We have obtained tenders for the replacement, as per the timetable. The prices are as expected, so cost is not an issue. But unfortunately several tenders didn't comply with the requirements and have had to be ruled out. We only have three remaining tenders and those did not fully demonstrate compliance, but we can ask further clarification questions and D&BP expect these firms to be able to show they meet our requirements. D&BP have been handling that process for us. That is good in that it's a thorough process and should result in a sound new lift, but it will add about 6 weeks delay. It may be possible to pull that time back in the design process, especially as we will have D&BP working closely with the manufacturer from the start. But the solution we hope for is that a repair proves effective, so we can complete the lift replacement without rushing and risking a

problematic new lift. So we will monitor the lift daily over this week and if the most recent repair continues to hold, we could be over the immediate problem.

A3 Estates Pride Small Scale Bid 2015-16

Can we have a Communications push on Estates Pride Small Scale, perhaps through Facebook, Twitter and DHN?

We are in the process of editing our new team's first edition of Derby Homes News and will try to fit in a small update on Estates Pride. Longer term, our plan is to proactively engage with all service areas to produce an annual communications plan for them. In the short term, we will meet with the service manager and agree what the current needs are for promoting these improvements.

B2 Performance Monitoring Quarter 3

Why is ASB customer satisfaction off target when 2 recent assessments of the service show Excellent Service?

We had a problem collecting these statistics earlier in the year due to staffing shortages and other work pressures in the Customer Services team who were responsible for telephoning complainants. This led to a backlog and delays between cases being closed and surveys carried out. We have found that unless surveys are carried out immediately, satisfaction levels – the statistics, but not actual satisfaction - go down. As I explained in the report, we have made changes to the way we do this now and this will result in higher performance levels next quarter.

B5 Estate & Flat Inspections

Why such a surge of fly tipping in South West Managed Area? Why so much worse than other areas in terms of incidents of fly tipping?

There hasn't been a surge in fly tipping in the South West area, the last quarterly report showed 258 cases, almost exactly the same. The level of fly tipping in that area is consistently much higher in that area of the City than elsewhere – other areas have different problems – because the area managed by the Stockbrook Street Office has the vast majority of inner city flats, and it is the communal areas associated with those where a lot of dumping occurs, by Council tenants and others. We are making improvements to our caretaking response which should improve this a lot as Caretakers will routinely pick up dumped items before they are identified on estate inspections.

B8 ASB Statistics (last page)

What is ASB Noise as opposed to other categories? Also 171 'other' can this be broken down more into trends – seems a lot of 'others'.

ASB noise is noise nuisance which has various forms. It is a sub category of antisocial behaviour and is about 50% of all ASB complaints. As explained in the report, we are constrained by the functionality within the Noise App – complainants have a limited number of sources to choose from, if they feel there is not one that applies they choose 'other'. We are not then able to break this down. We are only giving you a snapshot of the reporting facility available from the Noise App for this report. We thought we would either bring a more detailed presentation on it to a future Operational Board or alternatively at a future Board member training session – or both – depending on what Operational board members want.

Queries raised by Tony Holme, Leaseholder Operational Board Member

B1 – Service Update - Head of Income Management & Advice

1. Restructure - can you please give a briefing on the breakdown of the revised structure.

The changes brought about by The Welfare Reform Act brings significant risk to Derby Homes being able to maximise income and sustain tenancies, particularly with the introduction of universal credit in Derby from January 2016. This will without doubt increase the pressure on Derby Homes in being able to effectively collect rent and other debts.

The new structure for Income Management and Advice has been designed for the next 2 years to manage the transition to Universal Credit/other benefit changes and to support the pro-active and preventive focus of financial inclusion and money advice initiatives. After 2 years this structure will need to be reviewed again.

New posts have been created as follows:

Money Advice Manager

This is a new permanent post. To strengthen the current management structure with a new post of Money Advice Manager leading on the new 3 year Financial Inclusion Strategy, the money advice services team, campaigns and income/benefit advice surgeries. DCC's Money Advice Team and x4 Money Advice Officers would move to report to this manager instead of in the current structure of the Income Manager (North) and respective Team Leaders working across the city leading to a joined up approach to service development and delivery in this area.

Income Manager (Welfare Reform) – temporary 2 years

This is a new post, temporary for 2 years to lead on preparing for the implementation of Universal Credit in Derby and to lead a team providing targeted and pro-active support to those tenants affected by both UC and the other benefit changes such as under occupation charge and overall benefit cap. The Income Advisors x4 would move to report to this manager instead of the current structure of where they are split working across North/South of the City reporting into the respective Team Leaders, creating a team to provide pro-active and targeted support to those tenants affected by the under occupation charge, over all benefit cap and other welfare benefit changes working closely with the Money Advice Manager.

Income Project Officer – temporary 2 years

This is a new post, temporary for 2 years to provide project and research support to the Income Management & Advice Management Team to develop and deliver the Action Plan of the Income Management Strategy to manage the impacts of Welfare Reform.

Income Recovery Officer (Universal Credit)

This is a new permanent post to manage the UC claims from January 2016.

Income Recovery Assistant (Universal Credit) *This is a new permanent post to support the management of UC claims from January 2016.*

As the number of claims increases, Income Recovery Officers within the current establishment will transfer to the team led by the Income Manager (Welfare Reform). In 2 years' time the structure will need to be reviewed to consider how many tenants are in receipt of UC and how resources in the establishment should be managed.

Income Recovery Officer (Former Tenant Arrears & Sundry Debt)

This is a new permanent post to refocus recovery of FTA, rechargeable repairs, court costs other sundry debts. This function is currently carried out on a patch basis by the Income Recovery Officer responsible for the area. Performance is currently below target, this post will ensure that income collection in this area is maximised whilst the Income Recovery Officers focus on collection of current tenant rent arrears.

2. Universal Credit - have we had any new cases as B2 says a spike is expected this month and B3 states no new cases?

Since the report has been written we now have 10 Universal Credit claimants.

3. Derby Advice - With the Council proposing to withdraw funding from all voluntary advice services, although this is subject to a Scrutiny Panel review, will Derby Advice continue to provide a service to all Derby citizens and will this mean extra work load and hence staffing implications? Does this have any implications for A5 Council House booth opening hours?

Derby Advice will continue to provide a service for all Derby Citizens. The current demand is as follows: 99% customers for Money Advice are Derby Homes tenants.

For welfare rights service 55% non council tenants, 45% Derby Homes tenants.

The integration of Derby Advice into the Income Management & Advice Team at Derby Homes has enabled improved way of working within teams. The new structure from January 2016 integrates Derby Homes Money Advice Officers in the same team as Derby Advice staff. This will ensure a joined up approach in supporting customers with advice at the right level depending on their circumstances. I do not see this having implications on the council house booth opening hours as there hasn't been a change in this service provision. Customers wanting to access money advice services are referred to the customer service team via normal channels, telephone, website etc.

B3 Rent Arrears & Welfare Reform Update

What is the definition of hardship that is required to trigger Discretionary Housing Benefit?

When someone claims for a DHP a detailed financial statement is completed showing incoming and out goings this is then assessed by the staff in Derby Benefits and a decision made on the information supplied. Claimants have to show financial hardship in order to receive a DHP payment. If the income exceeds the outgoings on the financial statement they will be deemed as not able to show financial hardship and will not receive an award.

There are also some things that are exempted from the outgoings classed as a luxury e.g.: spend on cigarettes, satellite TV and alcohol. Allowances for other items e.g.: internet is £7.15 a week in line with the cheapest broadband package and mobile phones £3 per person in line with cheapest option.

B5 Estate & Flat Inspections

Sorting out gardens seems to be problem, any reason for this?

Dealing with gardens is part of the routine work of Housing Officers. The percentage of gardens that are in breach of tenancy conditions at any one time is low. Most cases are dealt with satisfactorily by use of informal means. It is very rare that we have to go to Court, but this has happened in the past and if necessary we will do this again.

Flat inspections have failed to notice that the door mats introduced at the main entrance to flats in response to the Fire Safety sterile area policy have never been laundered or replaced and now are not fit for purpose. Best cost effective answer for Derby Homes would be to let occupants have their own mats.

Thank you for pointing out this problem with door mats. We will investigate this. Whilst we appreciate your reasons for arguing that residents should be allowed to have their own mats, the sterile areas Policy, including the rules around residents not being allowed to have their own mats was agreed by Derby Homes Operational Board for fire safety reasons.

B6 – Customer Priorities Q3

Priority 1 - Stockbrook St. Housing is a disgrace, can we organise some volunteers to litter pick, preferably from that area to encourage a pride in their estate.

I'm sorry that you feel that Stockbrook Street Housing is a disgrace. Whilst litter is not the direct responsibility of Derby Homes, we are responding to residents concerns and trying to do something about it by working in the ways described. Some litter picks have been arranged in various parts of the City and we will explore ways of doing that at Stockbrook Street.

Also, having introduced notice boards to highlight issues in Flat inspections it is apparent that few residents note the comments. This applies particularly to smokers who are incapable of properly disposing of their cigarette ends in spite of this being highlighted on the report.

In general the state of cleanliness of communal areas is very good and much improved. The cleaning contractors do a very good job of keeping on top of things like cigarette ends but there will always be an element of litter. Are you aware of who it may be regularly dropping cigarette ends in your block? If you are, please let us know and we will speak to them.

Priority 3- Does Derby Homes have any idea of the number and variety of pets in their properties?

Unfortunately we do not have a register of pets that was in place prior to the new pets policy being introduced. We do have a list on our academy system of any new pets – new tenants or replacement pets – since the pets policy was introduced.

