

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE CITY BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 24 October 2013

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Board Members Present:

Mike Ainsley, Susan Boon, Win Buchan, Jim Elks, Tony Holme, Wendy Jessop, Bob MacDonald, Bob Osler, Brian Perry, Janice Platt, Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees (Chair), Peter Simpson, Ian Veitch, Fiona Walker.

Officers Present:

Paul Cole, Resident Involvement Officer
Margaret Wardle, Performance Officer
Clare Mehrbani, Head of Housing Management
Murray Chapman, Customer Services Manager
Jackie Mitchell, Governance Services Manager
Andrew McNeil, Head of Development
Anthony Slater, Community Projects Officer
Richard Holman, Contracts Manager
Lorraine Testro, Customer Service Manager
Carl Willis, Community Initiatives Officer

Others Present:

Leigh Alcock, OSCAR
Anne Turnbull, OSCAR
Sue McConnel, OSCAR
Gill Young, Tenant Panel Member

13/96 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Jolanta Szatkowska, Bob Troup, Michael Waplington.

13/97 Admission of Late Items

There were no late items.

13/98 Declarations of any other business

There were no declarations of any other business.

13/99 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.

13/100 Update on Derby Homes Review

The City Board received an update on the Council's review of Housing Services.

The Chair announced the names of the main Board Members under the new governance arrangements, following the AGM in November. The Council has nominated Councillors Baggy Shanker and Margaret Redfern; details of the Conservative Group's nomination is awaited.

The Independent Board Members will be Bob Osler, Mike Ainsley and Iain MacDonald.

Tony Holme, Brian Perry, Dennis Rees, and Fiona Walker are to be considered for the three Tenant Board Member places.

13/101 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22 August 2013 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

13/102 Matters Arising

Minute 13/82 Items for representatives from Contractor Partners

An article will be produced in the next edition of Derby Homes News and on Derby Homes' website regarding tree cutting. The article will be in the form of Frequently Asked Questions and should answer most queries. In addition, Ben Scott, the Council's Arboricultural Officer, will be providing a schedule of forthcoming tree work.

With regard to the garden maintenance scheme, a leaflet is to be produced to coincide with next year's grass cutting season.

Minute 13/84 Closure of In-house Mediation Service

Staff are currently carrying out a low level mediation service.

Minute 13/87 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids

Peter Simpson thanked staff for arranging to bring samples of fencing for viewing prior to the meeting.

The City Board received an explanation as to why the application for improvements to the Sussex Circus play area had been rejected. The project was to be joint funded by Derby Homes and the Derwent Board. The Derwent Board queried the costs and deferred approval. The bid was due to be considered again by the Derwent Board on 23 October and, if approved, will go to the HFG in November.

13/103 Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

13/104 Items from Part B to be discussed

Agreed

The City Board agreed to discuss Items B1, B4, B5 B6 B7, B8, and B10.

13/105 Items for Contractor Partners

The City Board received a presentation from members of OSCAR on the history of Osmaston and OSCAR, and the group's achievements to date.

Agreed

The City Board noted the presentation.

13/106 Housing & Leaseholder Focus Group Items

The City Board received a report providing details of Customer Service Management (CSM) cases/issues raised at Housing Focus Groups, Leaseholder Focus Group and Equality Groups.

Win Buchan advised that at the last Leaseholder meeting they were advised of the new estates charge; she queried what constituted 'Miscellaneous Items' within the service charge. The Leaseholder Manager had raised this with the Council but not had any further information from them.

Tony Holme queried the number number of satellite dishes that was allowed on flats. He said that on the Rykneld estate there were a number of dishes of various sizes on the flats.

Tony also queried window cleaning for flats. Leaseholders are expected to

clean their windows once a month. Sodexo has advised it can provide a window cleaning service at a cost. Tony felt this should be publicised for both leaseholders and tenants to access.

Clare Mehrbani agreed to look into these queries and report back to next City Board meeting.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/107 Customer Engagement & Community Development Strategy

The City Board considered the Derby Homes (DH) Customer Engagement & Community Development strategy, replacing the previous Resident Involvement and Community Initiatives strategies.

The strategy outlines DH's ambitions to strengthen the way it engages with customers and its ambitions to work towards changes that reduce inequality and poverty, by helping community members to develop skills and confidence to have more influence over issues that affect their lives.

An Annual Action Plan accompanied the strategy, which details how the strategic ambitions will be implemented. Progress will be regularly monitored and reviewed against ambitions with partners and involved customers, to ensure progress is made.

There was general support for the proposal. Some City Board Members wished to retain the Housing Focus Groups as this provided a forum for tenants to express their views, others felt that tenants did not get involved with HFGs or that it is always the 'same faces' who attend the meetings. Pete Simpson said that tenants will still have the opportunity to speak to the DACP and they have plans to provide a mobile service in the community.

Agreed

The City Board approved the Customer Engagement and Community Development Strategy and associated annual action plan.

13/108 Remedy & Compensation Policy

The City Board received a report proposing changes to the Remedy and Compensation Policy. The revisions are required following changes to the base insurance excess level Derby Homes now has on public liability claims and to update approval levels and those employees eligible to approve such awards.

Agreed

The City Board agreed the changes to the Remedy and Compensation Policy, as identified in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.6 of the report.

13/109 Youth Inclusion and Youth Activities

The City Board received a report providing the opportunity to understand the work that Derby Homes is doing to support children and young people, with particular reference to the Children and Young People's schedule of activities attached to the report.

The City Board was informed that the Skegness trip is for children from 3 areas of the City – there is a high take up of the 46 places and is usually oversubscribed.

Clare Mehrbani explained that it is difficult to measure value for money in traditional ways when it comes to these types of activities but that the team were working on innovative ways to capture this and that this is a work in progress. Staff have attempted to identify what outcomes are expected, and how this can be evaluated and will then carry out a value for money review with a view to emulating work in other areas where VFM is proven. However the consultancy work provided by staff does allow other organisations to expand this work in communities.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report and agreed to let Carl Willis know of any specific areas from within the schedule of activities they would like to receive more detail about at future City Board meetings.

13/110 Draft Derby Homes Garage Strategy

The City Board considered a proposed strategy for Derby Homes garage stock which aims to ensure that the garages are managed and maintained correctly thereby contributing to the sustainability of the built environment as well as helping to maintain the viability of Derby Homes.

The City Board was advised that the average cost to build a garage is £10K therefore, due to Derby Homes' borrowing capacity, the priority has to be to build new homes.

Brian Perry referred to garages used for storage and enquired whether Derby Homes inspects them for unsafe items such as chemicals. He suggested the need to be careful about specifying in the strategy the use of garages for storage.

Richard Holman advised of proposed Estates Pride funding for hardstandings and parking and said he hoped this will help to improve parking facilities across the City.

Margaret Redfern said that garages tend to attract anti social behavior, whereas houses will attract revenue; she felt the strategy was a good way forward.

Agreed

The City Board approved the proposed Garage Strategy

13/111 Review of Customer Service within Derby Homes

The City Board received a report from the Tenant Panel who had looked at the levels of Customer Service provided by Derby Homes.

Bob Osler asked what action had been taken to implement the Tenant Panel's recommendations.

Murray Chapman explained that the technical issues with the Academy system are beyond Derby Homes' ability to resolve. He said that Derby Homes is working with Serco to resolve some of the issues.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report and requested a report back to the next meeting on progress made to implement the recommendations in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

13/112 Directors' Update

The City Board received a report providing a general overview and update on current issues, including:

- Demolition of 18/20 Victory Road
- New build update
- Project update
- Supply Chain Procurement
- Performance
- Electrical Condition Inspection Reports
- Investment update
- Welfare Reform
- Availability of New Homes

Win Buchan asked for an update on the insulation of solid walls in flats. She had been told by Shaun Bennett, the Director of Investment & Regeneration, that the work would be done this year. However, there was nothing mentioned in the report.

Andrew McNeil advised that the previous scheme had been funded through the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP). The next scheme is due to be funded through a new funding regime, the Energy Companies Obligation (ECO). Derby Homes is in discussions with a number of energy suppliers to access funding. Andrew McNeil undertook to discuss Win's query with Shaun Bennett.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/113 Repairs Service Update

The City Board received an update report on the performance and progress the Repairs Team is continuing to make.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/114 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids

This report updates the City Board on Quick Fix bids which have been approved by the Housing Focus Groups.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/115 Petition from the residents of Stonebroom Walk

The City Board received a report regarding a petition, received from ten residents at Stonebroom Walk, regarding the date given to complete Estates Pride work to the drying areas and surrounding fencing.

Agreed

The City Board noted the action taken in response to the petition, and that the action has resolved the matter to the satisfaction of the petitioners.

13/116 Rent Arrears and Welfare Reform Update

The City Board received an update on

- The year-end position on rent arrears
- Current performance
- Current impact of the under occupation charge
- Introduction of the Benefit Cap.

Tony Holme said there appeared to be a heavy reliance on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). He asked what happens when this ends. He was advised that DHP is paid for six months and when this ends people are advised to reapply.

The shortage of smaller properties for people under-occupying to move into is a national problem. Derby Homes is focusing on trying to help as many people as possible to downsize and to claim and reclaim DHP. The impact of the benefit cap in Derby is relatively small at the moment.

Agreed

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

13/117 Partnership with IMPACT Derby

The City Board received a report outlining progress on joint work with IMPACT Derby for them to provide a service from Tintagel Close. IMPACT Derby, previously called the Gangs Advisory Team, work with young people in the City helping prevent them from getting into gang activity and other crime and antisocial behaviour. This work is extremely important and sits alongside Derby Homes' commitment to preventative work through Enthusiasm and Junior Wardens.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report and agreed to receive future progress reports.

13/118 ASB Step Change

The City Board received a report explaining that a project plan has been put in place which aims to deliver step change improvements in customer satisfaction with our Neighbourhood Safety service.

Dennis Rees said that tenants have complained that they are not informed when an ASB case has been closed and many feel that completing diary sheets was a waste of time.

Murray Chapman advised that Derby Homes' procedure is clear that individuals should always know that a case is going to be closed. He was aware that people have complained about the need to fill in diary sheets but the evidence is needed. He added that action plans should be agreed with tenants at the start of the process.

Tony Holme said that Local Office staff should visit the tenant and should not send letters in first instance.

Margaret Redfern commented that she would like to see timescales included, and that tenants initially receive a leaflet or some indication of what to expect from Derby Homes. She added there was a need for flexibility with professional witnesses and consideration given to what the case is and how the needs of tenants who have chaotic lives and cause intermittent ASB, can be met.

Clare Mehrbani replied that monthly contacts are a minimum standard – and Derby Homes is working to improve this. She advised that many organisations no longer use diary sheets and hoped tenants will see a fundamental shift in how we deal with cases in the future.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report and agreed to receive future progress reports.

13/119 Performance Monitoring – Quarter 2

The City Board received a report detailing Quarter 2 performance against targets reported to Derby City Council. The Council monitors Derby Homes' progress against these targets on a monthly basis.

Tony Holme queried why the Enquiry Centre's performance moved to red in September and asked if there was any connection with joining up with Derby Direct.

Murray Chapman said the integration with Derby Direct had not yet taken place and therefore not affected performance. The reason for the dip in performance was due to staff absences, however, performance was only just under target.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/120 Local Offers – Quarter 2

The City Board received a report detailing Quarter 2 performance against the Local Offers set by the Tenants and Leaseholders of Derby Homes.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/121 Complaints and Satisfaction – Quarter 2

The City Board considered a report providing detailed analysis of complaints received between 1 July and 30 September 2013.

Dennis Rees queried the low number of Stage 2 complaints (1 out of 3) that received a response within the target 10 working days.

Clare Mehrbani accepted that this response rate was poor but Derby Homes is working to improve this.

Feedback from the Tenant Panel regarding their first Appeal hearing was good. The Panel used the procedure for hearings that were heard by the Board.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/122 Draft Minutes of Derby Homes Board meeting held on 26 September 2013

The City Board received the draft minutes of the Derby Homes Board meeting held on 26 September 2013.

Agreed

The City Board noted the draft minutes of the Derby Homes Board meeting held on 26 September 2013.

13/123 Confidential Business

Under Part IV of Derby Homes Governance Arrangements, the City Board agreed to exclude members of the public from the meeting during discussion of the following items on grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential information as defined in Standing Order 20.2 (g)".

13/124 Intensive Housing Management Model

The City Board considered a confidential report regarding proposals for the Supported Living Service.

Agreed

The City Board supported the proposals in the report.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 12 December 2013 at 6.00 pm at London Road – subject to confirmation at the November Derby Homes Board meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 24 October 2013.