

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 29 November 2012

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Board Members Present:

Mike Ainsley, Tony Holme, Iain MacDonald, Mark Menzies, Bob Osler (Chair), Brian Perry, Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees, Fiona Walker, Roy Webb, Ken Whitehead

Others Present:

Jim Elks
Anthony Slater
Janice Platt
Wendy Jessop
Councillor Phil Ingall
Councillor Bob Troup

Officers Present:

Chris Langstaff, Interim Chief Executive
David Enticott, Director & Company Secretary
Maria Murphy, Director of Housing & Customer Service
Shaun Bennett, Director of Investment & Regeneration
Jackie Mitchell, Governance Services Manager

12/160 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Martin, John Keith and Linda Winter, Tabani Ndlovu

12/161 Admission of Late Items

There were no late items. Item B7 Social Enterprise was withdrawn and will be brought back to the Board in January.

12/62 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.

12/63 Election of Chair of Derby Homes 2012/13

One nomination was received for Chair of Derby Homes 2012/13-2015-16 from Bob Osler, Independent Board Member.

Agreed

Bob Osler was appointed Chair of Derby Homes for the period 2012/13 – 2015/16 subject to annual confirmation at the First Board meetings following the AGM.

12/64 Election of Vice Chairs of Derby Homes 2012/13

Nominations were received for the positions of Vice Chair during 2012/13 from Margaret Redfern (Council Board Member) and Dennis Rees (Tenant Board Member).

Agreed

In accordance with Minute 2/18 Margaret Redfern and Dennis Rees were appointed Vice Chairs of Derby Homes 2012/13

12/65 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 September 2012 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

12/66 Matters Arising

Minute 12/141 Health & Safety Update

Iain MacDonald reported that following his concerns about low attendance at the Health & Safety Forum, senior staff have now looked at this resulting in much improved attendance at the meeting held earlier today.

Minute 12/146 Draft Memorandum & Articles of Association

The Council approved the changes to the Memorandum & Articles of Association on the 7 November.

12/67 Announcements from the Chair

There were none.

12/68 Statements from Members of the Board

Dennis Rees informed the Board that Jenny Bradley, a founder Leaseholder Board Member, passed away on Tuesday.

Dennis Rees advised that a volunteer Board Member was required to join the panel to consider applications for the DACP's Helping Hand Bursary Scheme.

Tony Holme volunteered to join the panel.

12/69 Questions from members of the public: Questions to Derby Homes Board

Anthony Slater of Oscar invited the South East Board Member to attend Neighbourhood Forum meetings.

Ken Whitehead agreed to attend meetings when he is able to.

12/70 Questions from Derby City Council

There were no questions from the Council.

12/71 Committee Chair's Feedback

The Chairs of the Audit Committee, City Board and Resources, Remuneration & Regeneration Committee provided feedback from recent meetings.

12/72 Confidential Business

Agreed

The Board agreed, under Part IV of Derby Homes Governance Arrangements, to exclude members of the public from the meeting during discussion of the following items on grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of confidential information as defined in Standing Order 20.2 (g, h, and n)"

12/73 Minutes of the Extraordinary Board Meeting held on 1 November 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1 November 2012 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

12/74 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

12/75 Shaping the Future

The Chief Executive presented a report giving a broad strategic view of some of the key drivers and decisions that will shape the long term future of the service and the business. He also gave a presentation on the HRA and the opportunities to build new homes for the Council.

Agreed

The Board noted the report.

12/76 Financial Update

The Board received a report tabling the 2012/13 management accounts as at September 2012 with a forecast of the likely year end position.

Agreed

The Board noted the current estimated forecast for 2012/13.

12/77 Appointment of Internal Auditors

The Board received a report setting out the options available for the provision of internal audit services. The Audit Committee had considered the matter at its meeting on 8 October and has recommended to the Board to join the Central Midlands Audit Partnership on a rolling 12 month basis, subject to the continuation of Derby Homes.

Agreed

The Board approved the recommendation.

12/78 Community Led Development

The Board received a report requesting authorisation to enter development agent and management and maintenance agreements with OSCAR, as recommended by the Resources, Remuneration & Regeneration Committee on 15 November 2012.

Agreed

The Board delegated authority to the Chief Executive and Chair to enter development agent and management and maintenance agreements with OSCAR for the building and managing of homes built through the community led project.

12/79 Improvements to London Road Depot – Urgent Matter approved by the Chair

The Board received a report advising of urgent action approval by the Chair and Vice Chair to approve additional expenditure for the conversion of The Mill and all other associated works at the London Road Depot.

Agreed

The Board noted the urgent action approval by the Chair and Vice Chair as outlined in the report.

12/80 To agree any items from Part C to be discussed

The Board did not request discussion of any items in Part C.

12/81 Health and Safety Update

The Board received a report detailing recent health and safety performance and current issues.

Agreed

The Board noted the report.

12/82 Financial Inclusion Strategy

The Board received a report and updated strategy detailing changes made in response to the Government's rolling plan of reforms of the welfare benefits system. Some of the major changes come in on from 2013 and Derby Homes Financial Inclusion Strategy needs to be updated in line with these reforms.

The Board was advised that 'jam jar' and card bank accounts do not allow overdrafts so tenants would not be able to unwittingly become overdrawn on their bank accounts. Staff will receive training on advising tenants how to manage their bank accounts and Derby Homes will discuss with the DACP how to get the message across to tenants.

More detail will be brought to the January Board meeting to update the Board and explain how Derby Homes proposes to manage risk. The Board will also be asked to consider the current arrears recovery policy.

Staff will be asked to look at modeling around rent free weeks but consultation would have to be carried out and also checks to ensure that systems could deal with this.

Agreed

The Board approved the revised Financial Inclusion Strategy.

12/83 Rent Arrears Update

The Board received an update report on progress on arrears recovery this year in comparison to last year and information on the likely impact of the under occupation charge (bedroom tax) during the next financial year.

Central Government funds the discretionary payments budget for those who can't be found alternative smaller accommodation or in exceptional hardship, through local authorities, RSLs and private landlords. It is administered through the Revenues and Benefits Team. The Director of Housing & Customer Service said the Council has not yet started to review how they will administer the fund but she will stress to them not to discriminate against the HRA. Around half of the fund is ring fenced for social housing. The Director will circulate details of Derby's Budget to Board Members.

Agreed

The Board noted the report and congratulated teams for exceptionally good performance on arrears.

12/84 Home Release Scheme

The Board received a report proposing changes to the Home Release Scheme. The changes had been discussed and were recommended by the City Board on 30 August 2012.

The City Board had agreed that the cash incentive was reduced from £1,000 to £500, and asked the Director of Housing & Customer Service to undertake further work to examine the feasibility of replacing the cash payment with a contribution towards carpets, curtains and decoration.

At the Board meeting on 20 September 2012 Roy Webb asked that consideration be given to undertaking decorating for elderly tenants releasing a family home and moving to ground floor accommodation.

The Council is to consider additional funding for the scheme and the Board will be informed of their decision.

Roy Webb moved that the second recommendation in the report be amended by removing the reference to 'ground floor'.

Agreed

The Board agreed

1. Option 1, as agreed by the City Board on 18 October.
2. the decoration option to accommodation for elderly tenants who are releasing a family home.

12/85 Derby Homes' Property Rents

The Board received a report recommending increasing the rents of its own ten properties each year, in line with target rent increases, and formally consulting the tenants on this approach.

The rent needs to be increased each year to ensure the overall financial viability of the project. Rental policy needs to be agreed for the future. The proposed consultation letter was attached for information.

Agreed

The Board agreed to consult its tenants on a proposal to automatically increase rents each year by the regular increase in target rents, based on September RPI plus 0.5% each year, starting in July 2013.

12/86 Board Away Day 2013

The Board received a report outlining a proposal for the Board Away Day in 2013.

Agreed

The Board agreed to hold an Away Day when the outcome of the Council's review of housing services is known and to receive a more detailed report on proposals for the Away Day at a future meeting.

12/87 Derby Homes Meetings 2012/13

The Board received a schedule of dates for its meetings and those of its Committees during 2012/13.

Agreed

The Board agreed the schedule of meeting dates for 2012/13.

12/88 Appointments to Committees 2012/13

The Board received a report proposing the appointment of Board Committees for 2012/13.

Agreed

The Board approved the appointment of Board Members to Derby Homes Committees for 2012/13.

12/89 Draft Minutes of Committees

The Board received the draft minutes of recent Committee meetings:

- a) Governance Services – 13 September 2012
- b) Audit – 8 October 2012
- c) City Board – 18 October 2012
- d) Resources, Remuneration & Regeneration – 15 November 2012

Agreed

The Board noted but did not discuss the minutes of recent Committee meetings.

12/90 Council Tax Support – Derby City Council Consultation response

As part of the Welfare Reform programme, Council Tax Benefit is being localised but in the case of Derby with only 86% of the current funding attached. Following consultation with the Chair of the Board, a response was sent on behalf of Derby Homes to the Council on its proposed scheme for households of working age. The response was attached at Appendix 1.

Agreed

The Board noted the response.

12/91 Performance Monitoring Information

The Board received a report of Quarter 2 performance against targets contained in the Monthly Indicator link.

Agreed

The Board noted the report.

12/92 Forward Plan of Agenda Items

The Board received a forward plan of agenda items for the period December 2012 – May 2013.

Agreed

The Board noted the Forward Plan.

12/93 Board Diary Planner

The Board received a diary of events for the period December 2012 – May 2013.

Agreed

The Board noted the Diary Planner.

The Chair congratulated Fiona Walker, Mike Ainsley and Tabani Ndlovu on their appointment/reappointments to the Board.

He gave his apologies for next meeting and asked that one of the Vice Chair's chair the meeting.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 17 January 2013 at 6.00 pm at Cardinal Square.

The meeting ended at 7.57 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 29 November 2012.