

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE CITY BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 18 April 2013

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Board Members Present:

Mike Ainsley, Susan Boon, Tony Holme, Wendy Jessop, Bob MacDonald, Harry Margett, Bob Osler, Brian Perry, Janice Platt, Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees (Chair), Peter Simpson, Fiona Walker, Michael Waplington, Linda Winter

Officers Present:

Shaun Bennett, Director of Investment and Regeneration
Paul Cole, Communications and Marketing Officer
Mary Holmes, Customer Services Manager
Maria Murphy, Acting Chief Executive
Richard Platt, Resident Involvement Administration Officer
Margaret Wardle, Performance Officer
Julie Wren, Directors' Secretary

Others Present:

Ian Wheatley - Derby City Council Head of Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing
David Beadle – Derby City Council Arboricultural Officer

13/27 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Win Buchan, Jim Elks, John Keith, Ian Veitch and Ken Whitehead

13/28 Admission of Late Items

The Chair agreed to include a late item on Junior Wardens, to be discussed at the end of part A of the agenda.

13/29 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.

13/30 Update on Derby Homes Review

Maria Murphy provided a verbal update on the Council's review of Housing Services. Derby Homes is working through a communication Plan, which will include City Board members. A final report will go to Council Cabinet on 15 May. The outcome will be discussed at the Derby Homes Board meeting on 30 May.

13/31 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 28 February 2013 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

13/32 Matters Arising

Minute 13/14 – Directors' Update – Maria Murphy provided an update on the Supported Living Service. Long term funding is still to be identified. The next stream of funding will be 50% from Derby Homes and 50% from HRA. Meetings will take place with staff to embed the service into the Housing Management structure.

Minute 13/20 – Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids – Funding of £11K has been agreed for future climbing wall sessions.

Minute 13/24 – Any other business – Peter Simpson asked if any progress had been made on the request for business cards for City Board members. The Chair replied that the DACP can arrange for these to be produced. Paul Cole suggested putting a profile of each member onto the website or perhaps having a member to do updates on social media sites such as Facebook. The Chair asked that a report on the options available is brought to the next City Board meeting. Bob Osler advised that he will discuss ideas with Maria Murphy.

Minute 13/26 – Review of the Community Watch Patrol – The City Board was provided with a draft copy of the Derby Homes/Derby City Council Environmental Protection Team Service Level Agreement. The service will be handed over to the Council's Environmental Protection Team on 1 May. Derby Homes will still be responsible for case management. Members of the Response Team will be invited to Derby Homes' Neighbourhood Safety Team meetings and Derby Homes' staff will attend Response Team meetings when required. Annual reports will be presented to future City Board meetings.

13/33 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

13/34 Items from Part B to be discussed

Agreed

The City Board agreed to discuss Part B Items 1, 2, 4 and 6.

13/35 Items for representatives from Contractor Partners

The City Board members were introduced to 2 members of the Council's Arboricultural Services Team.

Ian Wheatley reported that Derby Homes currently pays £180K a year for this service. Discussion then took place around different ways of working. There is a dedicated Arboricultural Officer, tree workers, vans and equipment, offering a 24/7 service.

David Beadle advised that when a complaint is received either he or a colleague will carry out a complete survey of all the trees in that area, and carry out any work necessary. If a complaint comes from a tenant they reply directly back to the tenant. He advised that tree surveys are carried out and reports produced, they can do this for any land that Derby Homes is looking at for development.

In 2012 changes in staffing were made. Shaun Phillips and Jason Humphreys has left the Council's employment; David Beadle and his colleague Andy Sherbourne now report to Ben Scott. A request was made that Ben Scott is invited to a future City Board meeting.

Each time a tree is removed a new one is planted. Last year 55 new trees were planted. All trees are plotted out on maps and a history kept. They have worked with architects to inspect potential sites for Derby Homes. Shaun Bennett said that Derby Homes will continue to work with them on a site by site basis.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Arboricultural Services for attending.

13/36 Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' and Equality Groups Items and Feedback from HFG Facilitators

The City Board received a report with details of Customer Service Management cases/issues raised at Housing Focus Groups (HFGs), Derby Leaseholder Focus Group (LFG) and the Equality Groups.

Shaun Bennett advised he had received an email from Councillor Sara Bolton raising an issue with incorrectly fitted gates at the bungalows on Oakleigh Avenue. Shaun is looking to get these issues resolved and provide a timescale for the work.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/37 Training for City Board Members

The City Board received a report on the training available for City Board Members for the new financial year.

Agreed

The City Board noted the 2013/14 training programme available for City Board Members.

13/38 Tenants Rewards Review

At the February meeting the City Board received a report on proposals for a revised Tenants Rewards programme. The proposal was not approved.

Maria Murphy and David Enticott have decided that having an officer-led group was not the right approach. The proposal now is to set up a working group of tenants to make proposals with a view to a new scheme being ready for implementation in 2014. The City Board members were asked to make nominations. Harry Margett advised that the Tenant Panel members would like to be involved. The Chair suggested that a date is identified and City Board members invited to attend.

Agreed

The City Board agreed that a date for the working group meeting should be identified and the Tenant Review Panel to consider the matter in more detail and to agree proposals to be brought back to the City Board at a future meeting.

13/39 Tenant Panel Review - Local Offer 5

The City Board received a report showing the findings of the Tenant Panel's review of Local Offer 5 'develop our own energy efficiency standards that will be above the government requirements', and presenting recommendations.

The findings raised concern that Kendal Hodder, Energy Efficiency Officer, is the only member of staff available to give advice to tenants. A recommendation was made that the Welfare Reform Team provides support. Maria Murphy stated that although this is a valid recommendation the Team is currently fully engaged in the work being done around the impact of welfare reform. However this might be possible in 6 to 9 months' time.

Agreed

The City Board agreed that energy saving packs and advice should be provided to tenants when signing up for their tenancy.

The recommendation that the Welfare Reform Team provides Energy Efficiency support will be reviewed again in 6 to 9 months' time.

13/40 Review of Local Lettings Plan

A review of current local lettings plans (LLPs) was carried out in January 2013 together with Derby City Council's Housing Option Centre. These LLPs have been considered in the light of the Council's new Allocations Policy. The City Board was asked to approve the recommendations of the LLP review.

Agreed

The City Board approved the recommendations from the LLPs review to manage local lettings through the new Allocations Policy unless there is a particular issue within a neighbourhood which can only be addressed by a specific plan for that area.

13/41 Late Item - Junior Wardens Scheme

Margaret Redfern advised the City Board that Derwent Neighbourhood funding pays for skips to be placed in the Derwent Ward. Volunteers are assigned to be skip marshalls. She spoke of a recent occasion when the Junior Wardens turned out in poor weather to help with the clean-up. Margaret asked that thanks be passed on to the Junior Wardens and to the staff involved for the work they do.

13/42 Directors' Update

The City Board received an update report providing a general overview and update on current issues. The update included

- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
- Recruitment to Senior Management Positions
- Victory Road
- New Build
- Asset Management/Planned Maintenance
- Energy Efficiency
- Repairs Team Update

In February 2012 a report was taken to the City Board proposing that the £300K budget for Estates Pride Quick Fix funding be delegated in full to the five HFGs with the flexibility to carry amounts over. This was agreed and that feedback on effectiveness is brought back to the City Board after a one year period. Shaun Bennett asked for the views of the City Board members and if they are happy to continue in this way.

Agreed

The City Board

1. noted the report
2. recommended that the Estates Pride Quick Fix funding continues to be delegated to the Housing Focus Groups and that an update is brought back to the City Board on an annual basis.

13/43 Repairs Service Update

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

A question was raised as to whether leaseholder properties are subject to the gas servicing and electrical testing. Shaun Bennett said he thought there is a responsibility and will check with Claire Dyson, Leaseholder Manager.

The Chair spoke of a letter he had received regarding gas servicing which stated it was an all-day appointment. He asked why tenants still cannot have either am or pm appointments. Shaun Bennett advised that a new IT system will soon be in place that will allow this.

The City Board complimented the Gas Team on achieving 100% compliance again.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/44 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids

The City Board received a report containing an update on Quick Fix bids which have been approved by Housing Focus Groups.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/45 Rent Arrears and Welfare Reform - Update

The City Board received a report detailing:

- year end position on rent arrears in comparison to last year
- the strategy Derby Homes will adopt to minimise the impact of Welfare Reform
- how Derby Homes will collect as much income as possible
- the likely impact of Welfare Reform on income collection during 2013/14 and beyond.

A question was raised as to whether Derby Homes and Derby City Council are doing any more to look at reclassified properties and what other Councils are doing. Maria Murphy reported that information is being gathered on re-classification and a recommendation will be made to the Council however this needs to be carefully considered. By next week she hopes to be in a position to give Councillor Shanker, Cabinet Member for Housing and Advice, the best advice including all the pro's and con's. The Labour Group will then consider the proposals.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/46 Tenancy Fraud Initiative Update

On 25 November 2010 the Derby Homes Board received a report advising of a national initiative to tackle tenancy fraud and Derby Homes' proposals to reduce the problem within the City. The City Board received a report containing an update of the current position.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/47 DACP Ready to Let Void Inspections

The City Board received a report summarising the findings of the Ready to Let Void Inspections.

An issue was raised regarding dogs fouling in stairwells in blocks of flats and cleaners being expected to clean this up. Members of the DACP have asked to be informed of any issues and will then visit to investigate which tenants the dogs belong to.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/48 Minutes of the Derby Homes Board Meeting held on 21 March 2013 (draft)

The City Board noted the draft minutes of the Derby Homes Board held on 21 March 2013.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 20 June at 6.00 pm at London Road.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 18 April 2013.