

RAISING THE PROFILE OF THE CITY BOARD

Report of the Acting Chief Executive of Derby Homes

1. SUMMARY

This report responds to a request from City Board members to identify ways of raising their profile in their communities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the City Board agrees the proposals outlined in Section 3 of this report.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 At the meeting in February, a request was made by Peter Simpson to look into the possibility for members of the City Board to have a business card, as people in his area are not aware that he is a member.

3.2 Business Cards

- 3.2.1 Officers have now had an opportunity to discuss this request in detail and to consider the options available to increase tenants and leaseholders awareness of the City Board and its work.
- 3.2.2 The option of providing City Board members with business cards has been discussed and although this suggestion has some merit, it is important that the role of members is not confused with that of Derby Homes' staff. It is felt that a standard business card may give out a message that conflicts with the role of members, in that they are expected to refer the enquiry to the local office or another relevant manager, rather than appear to be taking the issue forward on behalf of the tenant themselves and it could be detrimental to bypass local staff, before they have had a chance to deal with any issues. City Board members may also not fully be aware of the correct channels of contact for queries.
- 3.2.3 However, we recognise that there is a need for City Board members to present a positive and helpful image in their communities and we therefore propose to issue members with a custom City Board Member Referral card, which will indicate that a person has spoken to a member of the City Board and contain information about who they should contact.
- 3.2.4 It should be made clear that issuing the card will not give residents a fast track or enhanced service, but it is merely an aid to signposting them to the correct point of contact.

Proposals for promoting the City Board

3.3 Derby Homes' website

- 3.3.1 The current webpage (www.derbyhomes.org/derby-homes-board/city-board) describes the City Board role as, "Takes the lead on major decisions affecting housing management, maintenance and other customer services provided in the City" and features a list of members.
- 3.3.2 We propose the text will be reviewed to give more detail and highlight the work of the City Board and feature individual members' photographs and brief personal profiles. If agreed, we will arrange for photographs to be taken before the start of the August City Board meeting and members will be provided a short form to complete in order to produce personal profiles.

3.4 Housing Focus Groups

- 3.4.1 City Board Members attendance at Housing Focus Groups (HFGs) is somewhat varied. We propose that members endeavour to attend as many meetings as possible as this is a very positive way of increasing tenant awareness of members and work of the City Board.
- 3.4.2 Tenant Board Members on the Derby Homes Board are required to attend and facilitate HFGs and the presence and support of City Board members would strengthen this arrangement, particularly by providing feedback from City Board meetings to the HFG and vice-versa. To assist with this, members would be provided with a summary of the latest City Board decisions.

3.5 City Board meetings

- 3.5.1 From time to time, members have raised matters during City Board meetings that relate to themselves or to individual neighbours. This is in breach of the City Board Constitution and Board Code of Conduct, which was issued to existing members at the time it was adopted and has been provided to all new members since then.
- 3.5.2 In order to give members opportunity to discuss individual matters, it is proposed that a City Board surgery is held between 5.00 – 6.00 pm prior to City Board meetings, where officers will be in attendance to take details and provide advice. This could be opened up to all tenants and residents with a view to encouraging them to stay to observe meetings.

4. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The cost of producing custom City Board Member Referral cards would be £175 per 100 cards.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Consultation
Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk
Policy Review

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact:

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: Minute 13/24 of City Board Meeting 28 February 2013

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