



DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONAL BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 22 September 2022

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Operational Board Members present:

Bob MacDonald (Chair), Councillor Lucy Care, Kevin Ellaway, Tony Holme, Dennis Rees, Alan Martin and Jsan Shepherd (Vice Chair).

Officers present:

Steve Bayliss, Head of Repairs
Ian Yeomans, Head of Capital Works
Michael Kirk, Finance Director and Company Secretary
Lorraine Testro, Head of Housing Management
Annabelle Barwick, Customer Service and Equalities Manager
Ewan Hannah, Customer Service Project Manager
Louise Paget, Governance Officer

Others present:

Chloe Gilman, Improvement Support Officer, Derby City Council
Sarah Oliffe, Corporate Performance Lead, Derby City Council
Kas Sahota, Improvement Support Officer, Derby City Council
Lee Wheatley, Street Pride Service Manager, Derby City Council

22/50 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mike Ainsley, Chair of Derby Homes and James Joyce, Interim Head of Housing Options and Homelessness

22/51 Admission of late items

There were no late items submitted.

22/52 Declarations of interests

The Council Board Member was noted as declaring their interest in matters relating to Derby City Council.

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

22/53 Chair's Announcements

The Chair reminded the Operational Board to inform the Governance Officer of attendance either in person or via teams.

22/54 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 June were accepted as a correct record.

22/55 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

22/56 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

22/57 Performance Management 2022/23 Quarter 1

The Operational Board received a presentation on the highlights and exceptions of key performance information for quarter 1 2022/23.

The Operational Board queried that the appendix stated that 10 people were dissatisfied with their new home however there were no details provided regarding the reasons for this. The Operational Board requested for this information to be included in future reports.

The Operational Board raised that there is no indication of the steps Derby Homes are taking to improve the customer satisfaction level to meet the target of 93%. Derby Homes confirmed that regular customer surveys are carried out to identify and address dissatisfaction trends.

The Operational Board queried what Derby Homes have in place to address the current sickness levels as this is higher than previous years. Derby Homes have workplace wellness and occupational health services in place to address and support employee sickness. Derby Homes have also introduced counselling sessions for staff who have experienced trauma at work and hold regular occupational health clinics. Sickness cases are reviewed on a daily basis.

The Operational Board raised that from surveys there was a large proportion of people not expecting to move onto online services and queried if Derby Homes are addressing this. Derby Homes will be presenting the Digital Strategy to the Board March next year which will include how Derby Homes will improve the digital offer to customers.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the Quarter 1 Highlights and exceptions of key performance.

Derby Homes agreed to include more information regarding dissatisfaction reports.

22/58 Operational Board Forward Plan

The Operational Board considered the Forward Plan of agenda items for the period December 2022 to June 2023.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the Forward Plan of agenda items.

22/59 Part B Questions

There were no questions submitted in relation to part B reports.

22/60 Value for Money Annual Report 2021-2022

The Operational Board considered the value for money annual report which focuses on two areas:

1. The 2021/22 financial outturn compared to the latest RSH benchmarked figures
2. The Housemark report for the 2020/21 figures (the 2021/22 Housemark report will be available in late 2022).

The Operational Board queried if the reason Derby Homes are spending less than other organisations in responsive repairs is due to Derby Homes stock being in good condition. Derby Homes confirmed that this is the case as a result of the decent homes investment.

The Operational Board raised that the major works and cyclical maintenance costs are significantly lower in comparison to others and suggested that it would be useful to have a breakdown of the maintenance which is being carried out, specifically the cyclical. Derby Homes responded that there are significant investments in kitchens roofing and bathrooms planned in the next coming years which will result in a significant increase in spend. In terms of the cyclical maintenance, this is taking place and Derby Homes have £1.4 million budget to carry out internal and external painting/repairs.

A Tenant Operational Board member feedback that they are pleased with a recent roof repair to his home.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report and agreed that there is a balance between cost and performance.

22/61 Grounds Maintenance Service Update

The Operational Board considered the report which provided the Operational Board with a further update on the delivery of the Grounds Maintenance Service in 2022/23 and proposed actions to deliver service improvements in 2023/24.

The Street Pride Service Manager from Derby City Council delivered a presentation to the Operational Board regarding the challenges of the Grounds Maintenance Service.

The Operational Board raised concerns that service has repeatedly requested more funding however tenants are not seeing an improvement in the service. The Street Pride Service Manager explained the reason for this is because there has never been sufficient levels of staff to meet the offer that Derby Homes has been offering for the service charge. In addition there has been an increase of land to maintain in more arduous conditions. Derby Homes raised that the service charge is subsisted each year and there are significant cost pressures moving forward.

The Operational Board felt there may be requirement to rescope what level of Derby Homes are requesting from the Grounds Maintenance Service and assess if this will be adequately delivered to those who are paying for the service. The Operational Board suggested there may be other options to explore to resolve this issue such a working party. The Street Pride Service Manager suggested a tiered approach to the service and agreed that there is a requirement to reassess the current service as the current model was established 7 years ago.

The Operational Board queried if the Street Pride Service Manager has carried out a comparison to other Local Authorities to determine if this issue is unique to Derby. The Street Pride Service Manager confirmed this issue is not unique to Derby and that there are areas which have a more significant problem in this service area, mainly due to Local Authority salary which is significantly lower in comparison to the private sector.

The Operational Board queried if there is a detailed contract between Derby Homes and the Grounds maintenance Team outlining requirements. The Street Pride Service Manager confirmed there is no contract in place

however, there is was different levels of resources offered (Gold Silver and Bronze) by the Grounds Maintenance Team and Derby Homes opted for the Silver resource level.

The Operational Board raised that the report was incorrect it should read this has not been the first time the issue has raised. The correction was noted by Derby Homes.

The Operational Board were concerned regarding inaccurate figures (£200,000 per year investment) which were presented to main board initially.

The Operational Board queried if the reason Derby City Council Ground Maintenance Service are winning contracts is due to pricing being too low. The Street Pride Service Manager confirmed that the pricing is determined in line with others services within the directorate.

The Operational Board suggested that potential savings could be made from allocating Derby Homes work by location rather than a dedicated team. The Street Pride Service Manager confirmed that has been trialled previously however there was an issue of the requirement for additional machinery.

The Chair raised that Grounds Maintenance employees provide an excellent service and is not aimed at the employees as they work hard under difficult conditions.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted update on the delivery of the Grounds Maintenance Service in 2022.

The Operational Board asked officers from DCC and DH to provide potential options that can be shared with Board to put to customers later this autumn with a view to changes in the 2023 growing season.

The Operational Board agreed to maintain existing staffing levels and monitor any improvements to the service from the actions listed in the report.

The Operational Board rejected the proposal to Invest in an additional 4 staff at a cost of approx. £120,000 a year.

22/62 Home Release Policy

The Operational Board considered the review of the Home Release Policy which included feedback from a consultation exercise.

The Operational Board raised that the policy is not clear on funding for removals or painting and it also is not clear if tenants will have their house

repainted or will receive a voucher. Derby Homes confirmed the costs would be covered by the HRA.

The Operational Board queried if tenants wish to downsize if additional needs would be awarded for priority. Derby Homes confirmed the tenant would be allocated an advisor and there is scope within the policy to give advantage to tenants in this situation however, the tenant would not be awarded extra needs.

The Operational Board queried if secure tenancies will be lost if tenants were to downsize. Derby Homes confirmed this would not be the case.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the changes to the Home Release Policy as outlined in Appendix 1.

22/63 CUSTOMER FIRST STRATEGY 2022/25

The Operational Board considered the proposed update to the existing Customer First Strategy (2018). The update reflects the expectations on social landlords within the Social Housing White Paper in respect of their relationship with customers and also incorporates updated legislator requirements.

The Operational Board queried how the success of the strategy will be measured. Derby Homes confirmed this will be measured by continuous customer feedback.

An Operational Board member raised historically they had contacted Derby Homes with a complaint and was advised a manager will call back however this never happened but when queried this was informed it was recorded as completed as it had been passed to a manager for action. Derby Homes confirmed that call backs which have not been dealt with can be identified by a data report and it is recommended for these reports to be completed on a weekly basis. Derby Homes also confirmed that customer journeys are being reviewed to identify any issues and areas for improvement.

The Operational Board raised concerns about regarding the response rate from the survey. Derby Homes confirmed that the survey was sent to the virtual panel but were unable to give the number of members for the virtual panel.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the revised Customer First Strategy, as attached at Appendix 1, subject to feedback from the Virtual Tenants Voice Panel.

22/64 Leasehold Policy 2022-2025

The Operational Board considered the review to the existing Leasehold Policy for Derby Homes that was created in 2019. There are no changes to the existing policy other than to note the addition of reference to a new Major Works Repayment Policy, which will be a stand-alone Council policy supplementing this Derby Homes based Leasehold Policy.

The Operational Board raised that the Pets Policy was not referenced within the Leasehold Policy. Derby Homes confirmed this will be managed as part of the Lease.

The Operational Board suggested to include the option for virtual meetings for Leaseholders in addition to phone calls and face to face meetings.

The Operational Board raised it is unclear what the arrangements are for the Lease hold forums and who can attend and suggested for this to be including within the policy.

The Operational Board requested an update on the Leaseholder major works repayment policy. Derby Homes have requested the Derby City Council to introduce the Leaseholder major works repayment policy and this is not currently in place. The Operational Board suggested to update the policy to reflect this.

The Operational Board suggested the sentence “those who are wishing to sub let must seek Derby Homes approval” should be expanded to “should have a meeting with the Leasehold Manager” to fully understand their obligations in subletting.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the Leasehold Policy 2022 – 2025 as drafted in Appendix 1 with the suggested amendments:

Derby Homes agreed to reword the policy to include “in anticipation Derby City Council adopting a major works repayment policy” .

Derby Homes agreed to include that a service will be offered to explain the practicalities of subletting.

MULTI-FATH CENTRE – GRANT PROPOSAL

This report requests the support of the Operational Board for to support a 12 month fixed term position to connect with and co-ordinate work between the various faith groups in the city.

Agreed

The Operational Board supported a grant of maximum £10,000 to the Multi-Faith Centre for the purpose outlined in the report. Grant subject to final approval by Derby City Council.

The following items were noted by the Operational Board:

22/65 Service Update

The Operational Board noted a joint report prepared by Heads of Service to give a general overview and update on current issues within service areas.

22/66 Homelessness Report Quarter 1

The Operational Board noted Homelessness Report which gave details on:

- Homelessness Approaches
- Homelessness cases resolved under Prevention and Relief Duty
- Homelessness Acceptances

22/67 Compliments and Complaints Quarter 1

The Operational Board noted the Compliments and Complaints reported which provided a detailed analysis of complaints received between 1 April and 30 June 2022 (Q1).

22/68 Localised Customer Priorities Quarter 1

The Operational Board noted the Localised Customer Priorities Report which gave an update on the progress being made in our new approach to Derby Homes Customer Priorities, embracing the values and principles of Better Together.

22/69 Customer Survey Report Quarter 1

The Operational Board noted the Customer Survey Report which provided a detailed analysis of the satisfaction results from the first quarter of the Customer Survey 2022–2023. Full details can be found in Appendix 1.

22/70 ASB Quarter 1 Report

The Operational Board noted the ASB report which outlined key statistics for Derby Homes ASB service for the first Quarter of 2022/23

22/71 Home Finder Report Quarter 1

The Operational Board noted the Home Finder end of year report which provided information on Derby Homefinder for the period April 2021 – March 2022.

22/72 Annual Equalities Report

The operational Board noted the annual Equalities report which presented a demographic picture of Derby City and equalities performance information as at April 2022.

22/73 Youth Alliance Update

The Operational Board approved a £100,000 grant to the Youth Alliance (YA) for the financial year 2021/2022. The Operational Board noted the report which provided an update on the evaluation of the grant from the year.

22/74 Derby Homes Board Minutes 19 May 2022

The Operational Board noted the draft minutes from the Derby Homes Board meeting held on 19 May 2022.

22/75 Operational Board Members Attendance

The Operational Board noted Operational Board Members attendance.

22/76 Confidential Business

The Board agreed, under Part IV of the Derby Homes Governance Arrangements, members of the public be excluded 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 (b).

22/77 Operational Board Constitution

Article 18 of the Company articles relates to the disqualification and removal of board members.

Board's rules for attendance set out in Article 18 (paragraph 3.1 below) apply to the Operational Board.

Sarah Mason and Natasha Cover have both missed 4 Operational Board meetings.

Agreed

The Operational Board agreed to remove Sarah Mason and Natasha Cover as Operational Board members and to commence recruitment for the vacant posts.

The Operational Board suggested to ask for feedback from their experience as an Operational Board Member.

Date of next meeting 8 December 2022 at 6:00pm

The meeting ended at 8:41 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 22 September 2022.