

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE CITY BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 24 February 2011

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

City Board Members Present:

Donald Beard, Mick Barker, Bob Troup, Ian Veitch, Ken Whitehead, Patrick Molson, Stuart Boon, Alice Buckle, Win Buchan, Jim Elks, Lyn Gilbey, Harry Margett, Bob Osler, Brian Perry, Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees (Chair)

Officers Present:

Steve Bayliss, Lorraine Howe, Paul Cole, Pete Matthews, Maria Murphy, Maureen Davis, Paula Solowij, Margaret Wardle, Terry Willis, Julie Wren

Others Present:

None

11/01 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Bayliss, Phil Davies, Shaun Bennett, Tony Holme, Bill Beckett, Doris Buckler, Jack Wray and Gary Featherstone

11/02 Admission of Late Items

Confidential Item

Under Part IV of the Derby Homes Governance Arrangements, members of the public were excluded 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 18.2 (c).

The City Board accepted a late item regarding a report published in the Derby Telegraph . This concerned a 60 year old tenant residing at Rauche Court whose flat had been closed down by the Police due to it being used for drugs and prostitution.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

11/03 Declarations of Any Other Business

There were none.

11/04 Declarations of Interests

The Council Board Members were noted as declaring their interest in matters relating to Derby City Council.

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

11/05 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the City Board meeting held on the 9 December 2010 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

11/06 Matters Arising

Minute 10/93 Harvey Road Improvements – Win Buchan advised that this work has now started.

Minute 10/14 Local Issues – The Housing Operations Manager advised the issue raised of a private owner encroaching onto Derby Homes' land has been investigated. Findings show that pathways have been built onto Derby Homes' land and therefore Planning Control has been informed.

Minute 10/20 Equalities Monitoring – At the last meeting Margaret Redfern asked why there was a rise in allocations to single male applicants. The Housing Operations Manager has looked at the last 2 quarters and these show no significant rise. She added that bids by single males have dropped but there were higher lettings to this group.

11/07 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

11/08 Items from Part B to be discussed

The City Board agreed to discuss items B1, B2, B3, B6, B7 and B8. All other reports on Part B of the agenda were noted but not discussed.

11/09 Training for Local Housing Board members

The Chair informed the City Board Members that members should contact Jackie Mitchell, Governance Services Manager, if they have any requests for training.

The Chair asked members to attend as many Housing Focus Group meetings as possible. He advised them to let him know if they do not know dates and/or venues and he will ask Jackie Mitchell to write to them with this information.

11/10 Items from Contractor Partners

There were no items from Contractor Partners

11/11 Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' Items

The City Board received a report detailing issues raised at Housing Focus Groups (HFG's), Leaseholders Focus Groups and Equality Groups.

The Resident Involvement Officer advised that there had not been any HFG meetings since the last City Board meeting. He reported that the one outstanding case referred to in appendix 1 has now been resolved.

Win Buchan referred to Rivermead House and discussions around the concierge service. Various options and costs are being looked at. She said that the best option would be the most expensive. She asked if the decision is made to go with this option that Derby Homes' looks at the service charges. She said that if these are rising then peoples' incomes will not meet expenses and that their financial situation needs to be looked at.

The Chair advised that the costs need to be met. Win Buchan pointed out that tenants not paying for this service will choose the best option and that this needs looking at further.

The Director of Housing and Customer Services said that a complete consultation exercise would be carried out. The City Board will receive a report on three options in June .

Win Buchan advised that she had received an email from Tony Holme containing 2 issues he would like raised in his absence. The first point is around laminate flooring in a property on the Rykneld estate and the impact of noise for those living underneath. The second point is around the number of satellite dishes on flats that are not being picked up by Derby Homes. Win asked if the Local Housing Offices notice when these go up and added that leaseholders are not allowed to do this but there is no rule for tenants. She said that tenants should be asking permission to put these up and asked if permission had been given for all in place.

Paula Solowij, the Housing and Neighbourhood Manager replied that with regard to the laminate flooring this is not allowed and she requested the addresses concerned.

With regard to the satellite dishes, the Housing and Neighbourhood Manager advised that she had met with the Planning Officer on site at St Clare's Close. She advised that Gareth Stead, Housing Officer, is advising tenants with a dish to request permission. She added that most do come into the office for advice.

Harry Margett said that he understood only 2 satellites were permitted on a block. The Housing and Neighbourhoods Manager said that the number

allowed depends on the height of the block. Harry Margett said that he thought this had been raised and agreed by the Local Housing Board.

The Chair said that this was a good report, however, he would like all cases highlighted and be able to see all issues reported.

Bob Osler asked members if they thought the HFGs were working now. The Chair replied that they are now working better than when they started. Harry Margett said he has been to all of them and that people are coming along with issues to raise and get resolved.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

11/12 Local Issues – Verbal Update

No local issues were raised.

11/13 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids

The City Board received a report on bids for funding from the Quick Fix fund within Estates Pride, in response to known problems, in particular to reduce crime, nuisance and vandalism.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised that the report contains 3 proposals. She informed the Board that at a Chair's meeting they were advised that consultation had been carried out and approval was given.

In addition to the three bids, the Director of Housing and Customer Service proposed Derby Homes contribute's an amount towards the mediation service within the Gangs Team. An amount of £40k is needed to continue this work and the City Board was asked to support a proposal to provide an amount of £10k from Estates Pride funding. She explained there are Derby Homes' estates in all 3 gang areas of Allenton, Sinfen and Austin . The Police and partners do a good job on these estates and the City Board was asked to support this proposal.

Margaret Redfern asked where other contributions came from. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that an amount of £20k will come from Derbyshire Constabulary and the rest from smaller partners.

Patrick Molson commented that this work had been carried out in London and had failed. The Director of Housing and Customer Services replied that the Chief Inspector has worked successfully in Birmingham and is enthusiastic and committed to this work.

Agreed

The City Board approved the following bids:

1. **83 Parliament Street** – Remove existing handrails and replace with 1.2m high black single bar fencing.
2. **Exeter House car park** – Remove existing parking barriers and make good the ground.
3. **Richmond Road** – Energy and ongoing maintenance cost for lighting column. The actual lighting column was approved by the City Board on 9 December 2010.

The City Board supported the proposal to contribute £10,000 from the Estates Pride budget to the Multi-Agency Gangs Team's Mediation Service within the Community Safety Partnership.

11/14 Recharging Tenants for Missed Appointments

The City Board received a report detailing a proposal to charge tenants who are not at home at the time of a pre-arranged appointment and who have not made contact to cancel or rearrange the appointment.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service said approval is requested for Derby Homes to consult with tenants. The proposal is to charge an amount of £10 for missed appointments or for when a tenant refuses to allow an operative into their home to complete a repair.

Harry Margett said that this was reasonable as long as tenants received a more precise appointment slot. The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised that once the new gas team is in place shorter time slots will be allocated.

Margaret Redfern said that publicising this to all tenants will be helpful and added that Derby Homes needs to be able to carry out repairs more efficiently.

The Repairs Manager was asked how much the actual cost is for a missed appointment. He advised it was £40 to attend an appointment.

Patrick Molson asked for the cost involved in carrying out gas safety checks. He stated that tenants living in properties on Bretton Avenue, which are all electric, receive gas safety visits. The Director of Housing and Customer Services asked the Repairs Manager to look into this.

Agreed

The City Board gave approval for Derby Homes to consult with tenants on the proposal to charge tenants who are not at home at the time of a pre-arranged appointment and who have not made contact to cancel or re-arrange the appointment.

11/15 Review of Customer Access

The City Board received a report detailing how Derby Homes can provide

better customer care and obtain better value for money by using a mixture of service access methods.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised that progress on projects will be seen by implementing the Customer Service Strategy and provided details on areas targeted within the service access review.

The Enquiry Centre will become the first point of call. To achieve this Housing Assistants will be trained to become Enquiry Centre operators based in the local offices.

Consultation will take place on the reduction of opening hours at all local offices and co-locations. This will help Derby Homes to achieve efficiency savings. Details of the opening hours at co-locations such as libraries will be provided at the next meeting.

Agreed

The City Board agreed

1. To delegate the implementation of these proposals to the Chief Executive
2. To receive regular progress reports.

11/16 Update on Improving the Management of Flats

The City Board received a report providing an update on the policies introduced to improve the management of Derby Homes' flats.

The Housing Operations Manager gave a brief explanation of the figures detailed in appendix A.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

11/17 Directors' Update

The City Board received a joint report provided by the Director of Investment & Regeneration and the Director of Housing and Customer Service containing a general overview and update on current issues.

Win Buchan referred to the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP). Derby Homes has secured an amount just over £3M in grant funding. She asked where the other £3M would come from to bring it up to the total investment of £6M. The Chair advised that this would come from the Housing Revenue Accounts reserves.

The Chair advised that the Tenancy Fraud Initiative has now started. The Housing Operations Manager said that the aim is to check and update information on a tenancy. If staff are unsure they are asking for

photographic identification of the tenant. Harry Margett asked what happens if a person says they have no photo identification. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that in these circumstances an appointment is made at the Local Housing Office for the tenant to bring along paper identification. A photograph is taken at the office.

Win Buchan commented on the the allocation of £200K of funding from Estates Pride for the Family Intervention Project. She asked how much money is remaining in the Estates Pride budget. The Chair replied that there is an amount of £1.5M and that Derby Homes needs to make sure that this is spent in the best possible way.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

11/18 Customer Feedback Report

The City Board received a report providing detailed analysis of customer feedback received between 1 October 2010 and 31 December 2010 and also an outline of key figures for the year 2010/11.

The Chair said that he felt that parts of the report were unclear, in particular in Appendix 4, Customer Journey Allocations. He referred to the graph on page 5 'Customer is offered property'. This gave scores out of 10 however one shows a score of 12. The Director of Housing and Customer Services said she would take this back to the Performance Team.

Margaret Redfern referred to new tenants being promised extra works by an Housing Officer however this is not logged in any way. She asked if on escorted viewings it was possible to have a tick list to record what is agreed. The Housing Manager said that a tick list was already being used by staff. Issues raised are written down and taken back to the office for actioning. These are kept on file.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

11/19 Performance Monitoring

The City Board received a report submitted by the Chair's Group to highlight key performance issues arising from the discussion of quarter 3 2010/11.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

11/20 Equalities Monitoring

The City Board received a report providing details of equalities monitoring

during the third quarter of 2010/11 concentrating on the Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) service. A full copy of this report can be viewed on Derby Homes website.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

11/21 Review of Non-Core Activities

In September 2010 Derby Homes Board approved recommendations from the Executive Team to review non-core service activities over a 3 year period.

The City Board was provided with a report detailing the service areas and planned review dates.

The Director of Housing and Customer Services referred to paragraph 3.4 and explained that for each service area a responsible officer has been identified with a date for completion. She asked the City Board to contact her if they identify any other areas they feel need to be included.

A report will be produced for each review which will be taken to the City Board and the main Board on completion.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

11/22 Review of Tenancy Conditions and Enforcement

The City Board received a report outlining Derby Homes' intention to carry out a review of the existing Conditions of Tenancy and how these will be enforced, taking account of current issues on anti social behavior on estates.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that this report links in with the confidential item discussed at the start of the meeting.

The existing conditions contained in the Tenancy Agreement have been reviewed and 2 issues have been identified

- Problems linked to gang related activities on council estates
- Problems linked to the rehousing of tenants with support packages and promises of behaviour, which tenants subsequently fail to maintain.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service asked members to contact her if they have any thoughts on this. A final report will be brought back at the end of Summer and will then go to the Council for approval.

Bob Troup asked if the changes made by Government have been included. The Director of Housing and Customer Services replied that this change is around tenancy terms and will be implemented for new tenancies.

Bob Osler asked if it would be useful to arrange a workshop on this item for Board members to attend. The Director of Housing and Customer Service agreed this was a good idea. Margaret Redfern asked if Local Housing Office staff should also have input on this. The Director of Housing and Customer Services said she will invite 2 or 3 staff to attend the workshop and will arrange this before Easter in early April if possible.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

11/23 Financial Literacy Project with Derby United Credit Union

The City Board received a report containing an update on Derby Homes' work with Derby Credit Union. The project is due to end in early May 2011.

The report was noted but not discussed.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 28 April 2011 at 6.00 pm at London Road.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 24 February 2011