

DIRECTORS' UPDATE – JUNE 2009

This is a joint report prepared by the Director of Investment & Regeneration and the Director of Housing & Customer Service. The report provides Local Housing Board Members with a general overview and update on current issues.

New Build

I am pleased to report that the new build contracts and agreements have been signed. We now plan to start on site towards the end of June 09. Planning has been confirmed for three of the four sites we have appealed against the refusal for the site on Martin Drive, Chaddesden.

Future Bids

We are continuing to work with the regional Office of the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) for more grant funding for new build. The Council has however made it clear that they will only support future schemes if the HCA produce a less onerous agreement; I have made this clear to the HCA.

The Government have announced funding for Local Authority new build, the deal is less onerous than ours and we are working closely with the City Council to submit a bid for funding.

We continue to evaluate a number of sites to assess their viability for new build. We hope to submit further bids to the Housing Corporation during this year. We are also discussing possible ways to acquire ex-council homes that are on the market.

Estates Pride Large Scale Project Update

We are fulfilling our commitment to attend Housing Focus Groups (HFGs) to communicate effectively with them on progress of agreed projects; a number of these have now been completed. It is also good to see HFG's using their allocation to support much needed small scale improvements.

Repairs Service

Environmental Services Department has appointed two consultants to tackle some of the issues on performance;

- action plans have been agreed following the operative away days
- a backlog of orders is being worked through
- dates have been agreed for the introduction of handhelds for operatives and the migration to a consolidated pay structure.

Performance is showing signs of improvement. We have made it clear that the service must show strong improvement over the course of the next six months.

Stock Condition Survey

The stock condition survey is now almost complete; we are working with the surveying company and the consultant working on the option appraisal to agree how the results should be presented. The survey will help provide information on future investment need. This will be required for a future option appraisal that is planned to be carried out over the next 18 months. Both Derby Homes and the City Council agree that we need to consider options that lever in enough resources to maintain the stock to a modern standard into the future.

Solar Panels

We recently installed solar panels to the roof of Rivermead House; the panels will produce over £1,200 worth of electricity, all of which will be used on site.

Energy Display monitors and Power Down devices

Letters have now been sent to all tenants and leaseholders explaining how they can claim these free devices.

Compensation payments for missed appointments

The Local Housing Board asked that I kept them updated on the number of compensation payments made through the repairs service. From 25 September 2008 to 26 November 2008, 28 payments were made. From the 26 November to the 26 January 2009 only 10 payments were made. From 26 January to 16 March 2009 only 9 payments had been made, performance in this area is improving as shown in the figures. From 16 March to 26 May 2009 there were 24 payments made.

Investors In People

I am delighted to inform you that Derby Homes has been recognised as an **Investor in People** organisation for a further three years. This represents a significant achievement for all Board Members and employees of Derby Homes. The assessment process was led by an external assessor who was impressed by the enthusiasm, dedication and friendliness of the people she met.

Junior Wardens

On 17 April 2009 our Junior Wardens took place in an extremely successful launch at the Quad in the City Centre. We were extremely honoured that Margaret Beckett MP joined us for the launch and expressed her pride at the enthusiasm and commitment shown by the young people involved. The Junior Wardens will be assisting at the Big One on 7 June 2009.

Extension of the Family Intervention Project

We have now received confirmation that the Family Intervention Project has been successful in securing additional funding of £300,000 over the next two years to carry out additional work with young people under the Youth Crime Action Plan.

Walk and Talks

We are now into the second month of the new 'walk and talks' – this is the new process for involving residents in estate inspections which was developed through the Estate Management Process Improvement Team. We will review the success of this through the summer months.

Private Sector Management

We have completed a management agreement to provide the management services for a privately owned block of flats in Mackworth. This is the first venture of this kind for Derby Homes and we are keen to develop more agreements of this kind with private landlords/owners.

Under Occupation Initiative

Since increasing the incentive payment for releasing family homes we have managed to make available 31 two and three bedroom properties. A further 63 tenants currently under occupying their homes have expressed interest in the scheme and we are working with them to identify suitable properties for them to move to.