

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE LOCAL HOUSING BOARD SOUTH MEETING

Held on Thursday 15 April 2010

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Board Members Present:

Stuart Boon, Susan Boon, Alice Buckle, Lyn Gilbey, Tony Holme, Trevor Lamb, Tabani Ndlovu, Jane Todd, Ian Veitch, Ken Whitehead (Chair), Jack Wray

Officers Present:

Shaun Bennett, Murray Chapman, Andrew McNeil, Maria Murphy, Tracy O'Connor, Paula Solowij, Carl Willis, Sophie Wood

Partner Organisations Present:

Maria Christine Schmidt, Groundwork

10/25 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from David Batey, Paul Bayliss, Win Buchan and Harry Margett.

10/26 Admission of Late Items

There were no late items.

10/27 Declarations of Any Other Business

The Director of Housing and Customer Service will provide a verbal update on the Community Watch Patrol.

10/28 Declarations of Interests

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

10/29 Harvey Road Improvements

The Local Housing Board received a report detailing the progress of

the masterplan for environmental works to Harvey Road. There are a number of proposals for works in the masterplan which tenants have been consulted upon and, following further consultation with the Neighbourhood Board, a proposal will be brought to a future Local Housing Board South.

Maria Christine Schmidt of Groundwork gave a presentation on the work that had taken place around the consultation involving all parts of the community, including the elderly, families, local businesses, schools, residents of Alvaston, Boulton and Allenton, Arriva, Police, Highways and Planning Department, local councillors, youth clubs, community centres, emergency services and Derby Homes.

Alice Buckle asked whether benches would be installed. Maria Christine Schmidt said that benches in that area seemed to attract anti-social behaviour but that they have looked into the possibility of having lean to's, whereby if people need a rest from walking they can lean against it before they set off walking again.

Trevor Lamb asked what the road improvements had to do with Derby Homes. The Director of Investment and Regeneration said that the road is made up of mainly Council homes and that it is a part of the Estates Pride scheme.

Tracy O'Connor asked about the hard standings for residents that haven't got them, could they be a part of the improvements. Maria Christine Schmidt said that it could be a possibility.

Murray Chapman asked about the grass that was there at the moment and what will happen to it. Maria Christine Schmidt said that grass would be laid and that it would be strengthened.

Jack Wray said that it is a lot of money to be spent on one area. The Director of Investment and Regeneration said that this report and presentation is for information at present and that the matter would come back to a future Local Housing Board for the Board to approve.

10/30 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 February 2010 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the exception a spelling mistake regarding EBICO at minute 10/11.

10/31 Matters Arising

10/06 Car Parking at Donington Close

All residents have been notified of the Local Board's decision to keep

the current arrangements in place as recommended by the majority of the residents.

09/172 Tenant Sustainment Service

The Tenant Sustainment Service went live on 6 April 2010 and 24 tenants have signed up.

10/12 Allocations

The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that 99% of properties are dealt with through the Derby Homefinder Register. It is only community safety issues where homes are let without going through the system. Tabani Ndlovu asked about the other 1%. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said it is usually when the Police get in touch and need a tenant re-housing due to domestic violence.

10/14 Mini Status Survey – South Areas

Tony Holme had raised concern at the last meeting on 'Keeping Tenants Informed'. He asked whether anything had been done on this. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that this will be an item for the next Local Housing Board South meeting.

10/21 Update on Flat Inspections

Tony Holme has met with the Director of Housing and Customer Service and the Maintenance Manager to discuss the services charges in flats.

10/32 Questions from members of the public

The Local Housing Board noted the questions.

10/33 Items from Part B to be discussed

The Local Housing Board agreed to discuss items B1, B3, B5 and B6. All other reports on Part B of the agenda were noted but not discussed.

10/34 Housing Focus and Leaseholder Groups Items

The Local Housing Board received an update of unresolved cases discussed at Housing Focus Groups in the South of the City. Five cases remain open and action is being taken on all cases.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the report.

10/35 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids

The Local Housing Board considered bids for funding from the quick fix fund within Estates Pride. The bids were in response to known problems, in particular to reduce crime, nuisance and vandalism.

The bids for funding were

1. Lord Street Play area – Supply and fit 1.8m high black metal bow top fencing to boundary.
2. 43-57 Finsley Walk – Supply and fit 1.8m high black metal bow top fencing and 2 lockable single gates to the drying area.
3. 43-57 Finsley Walk & Block 59-69 Finsley Walk – Supply and fit 1m high black metal bow top fencing and double lockable gates to the perimeter of the car park.
4. 241 – 251 Caxton Street - Supply and fit 1.8m high black metal bow top fencing and 1 lockable single and 1 lockable double gate to the drying area.
5. 48 – 54 Finsley Walk - Supply and fit 1.8m high black metal bow top fencing and 2 lockable single gates to the drying area.
6. Leonard Walk car park – Remove brick wall around the garages, make good the area and supply and fit 1m high black metal bow top fencing.
7. 10 Stevenage Place – Remove hedge and replace with 1.8m high black metal bow top fencing.
8. Gerard Street car park –Remove drying area and reinstate car park.

The report also contained an update on other works agreed and customer satisfaction survey results for the quick fix projects.

Tony Holme said that the Local Housing Board approved numerous works for Finsley Walk at the last meeting, so why has that area come up again. Paula Solowij, the Local Housing Office manager for that area said that there was not enough budget available last financial year for that area so has been carried forward to the new financial year.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board

1. approved bids for funding at
 - Lord Street Play area
 - 43-57 Finsley Walk
 - 43-57 Finsley Walk & Block 59-69 Finsley Walk
 - 241-251 Caxton Street
 - 48-54 Finsley Walk
 - Leonard Walk car park
 - 10 Stevenage Place
 - Gerard St car park
2. noted the update on the works outlined in paragraph 3.10.

10/36 Rechargeable Repairs

The Local Housing Board received a report explaining the current procedures for raising rechargeable repairs and collecting the money owed from tenants. It proposed changes to these procedures, including taking over the collection of this money from the City Council. The report also explained the current policy on rechargeable repairs and how this needs to change in the light of legislation and case law around the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Tabani Ndlovu asked if Derby Homes takes over the collection of this money from the City Council, will there be a need for additional staff/resources. Murray Chapman, Housing Services Manager said that it can be completed by existing Income Management team and there will be no additional costs.

Tony Holme asked if Derby Homes takes into account people's ability to pay. The Housing Services Manager confirmed and said that the advice given is that, Derby Homes needs to carry out a brief Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) assessment before applying any recharge. Derby Homes already does this before taking other formal action under the terms of the tenancy conditions, such as for rent arrears. Tony Holme then asked if this procedure will also be applied to Leaseholders. The Director of Housing and Customer Service confirmed it would.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board recommended to the City Council

1. the proposed changes to collection methods.
2. the proposed alteration in policy required under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

10/37 Fairdene Court Community Room

The Local Housing Board received a report outlining a proposal for a joint initiative between Derby Homes and the Street Circle Community Champions to allow the use of Fairdene Court Community Room as a venue for the group to operate and conduct a number of community based activities.

Jack Wray said that any initiative to use the community rooms is a good idea and asked if Derby Homes could charge for the room hire. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that there are insurance implications for charging room hire and that the Director and Company Secretary is looking into it with the City Council.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board agreed to a pilot of 6 months and to then evaluate the project against the objectives and service level agreement.

10/38 Mobile Scooters

The Local Housing Board received a report providing an update on the current position in relation to safe storage of mobility scooters within accommodation managed by Derby Homes.

It is recommended that the Local Housing Board approves the proposal that any requests from Housing Focus Groups to provide storage facilities through Estates Pride Quick Fix funding are deferred until the matter is given full consideration in June 2010.

Further consultation is also required with tenants and leaseholders on this matter. The special interest group Tenants Reviewing Access and Quality (TRAQ) will be involved and invited to comment on proposals.

Trevor Lamb said that storage space would need to have charging facilities. Tabani Ndlovu asked what other authorities are doing. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that Sheffield have implemented a policy. Tony Holme suggested speaking to mobility organisations.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the current position in relation to the safe storage of mobility scooters and agreed to defer any requests, from Housing Focus Groups to provide storage facilities through Estates Pride Quick Fix funding until the matter is given full consideration at the main Board and the Local Housing Boards.

10/39 Directors' Update

The Local Housing Board received a report providing a general overview and update on current issues.

Tony Holme said that the missed appointments figure has increased compared to this time last year. The Director of Investment and Regeneration said that a project group has been set up to tackle the issues and an issue that may have affected the figures was that mobile handhelds were introduced during this time which affected appointments.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the report.

10/40 Service Plan 2010-11

The Local Housing Board received a report detailing the Service Improvement Targets (SIT's) for offices located and delivering services within the South of the City as contained within the Service Plan 2009/10.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted, but did not discuss this report.

10/41 Anti Social Behaviour

The Local Housing Board received a report outlining the performance management information on Anti-Social Behaviour for Quarter 4 2009/10.

Tony Holme said that most of the ASB cases across the City are noise, relating to loud music or parties and asked if the detail could be broken down in the report. The Director of Housing and Customer Service explained that the categories used to define types of cases were set by national benchmarking groups and Tony Holme was correct, most of

the ASB cases were noise related. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that Derby Homes is hoping to second an Environmental Health Officer post from the City Council to deal with noise issues and to improve them.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the report.

10/42 Board Annual Training Programme 2010/11

The Local Housing Board received a report setting out the arrangements for the annual Board training programme for 2010/11.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted that attendance at essential training courses is now extended to Local Housing Board members elected from 2010 onwards, but did not discuss the report.

10/43 Mediation Service

The Local Housing Board received a report explaining the role of mediation in helping resolve neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the South area. It also gave information on the performance of the service since April 2009.

Tony Holme asked if the Mediation Service is used for noise nuisance relating to ASB cases. The Housing Services Manager confirmed that the Mediation Service is used for noise nuisance ASB cases. Lyn Gilbey asked what the noise monitors are used for. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said it is used for loud music, playing of instruments and parties but they are not able to pick up door banging or heavy footsteps, as that is not a constant noise.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the report.

10/44 Update on Flat Inspections

The Local Housing Board received an update on the flat evaluations carried out in March 2010.

Tony Holme asked if the communal cleaning is happening. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that arrangements are

in place.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the report.

10/45 Minutes of Derby Homes Board 28 January 2010

The Local Housing Board received the minutes of the Derby Homes Board held on 28 January 2010.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted, but did not discuss the minutes.

10/46 Any Other Business

Community Watch Patrol

Derby Homes has recently undertaken a review of the role of the Community Watch Patrol, following an investigation into the conduct of some employees. Four employees have subsequently resigned.

An opportunity is now being taken to review the working arrangements of the patrol and looking to refocus activities into the core areas of housing management, particularly around providing support to manage complaints of noise and anti social behaviour.

At the present time there is a reduced number of staff and the service provided has been reduced to between the hours of 4.30 pm and 11.30 pm on four evenings a week. The service is still covering anti-social behaviour hot spots and visiting vulnerable families during the evening.

Proposals will be brought to the Local Housing Boards in June for the longer term provision of the service. Any savings identified out of the review will be redirected into providing services which tackle community safety/wellbeing and estate sustainability.

Trevor Lamb said that he did not know that the Community Watch Patrol visited vulnerable families and asked if these visits are still able to be carried out at the same level as before with the reduced service in place. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that the service is still being carried out at the same level and able to visit vulnerable families.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 17 June 2010 at 6.00 pm at Cardinal Square.

The meeting ended at 7.46pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on Thursday 15 April 2010.