

# **DERBY HOMES LIMITED**

## **MINUTES OF THE CITY BOARD MEETING**

**Held on Thursday 30 August 2012**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

### **Board Members Present:**

Mike Ainsley, Win Buchan, Jim Elks, Tony Holme, Harry Margett, Alison Martin, Bob Osler, Brian Perry, Janice Platt, Dennis Rees (Chair), Jolanta Szatkowska, Ian Veitch, Ken Whitehead

### **Officers Present:**

Paul Cole, Maureen Davis, Steve Giblenn, Maria Murphy, Ashley Redfern, Julie Wren

### **Observers Present:**

Rodney Grounsell, Bob MacDonald, Gill Young – Tenant Panel Members

### **12/78 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Shaun Bennett, Wendy Jessop, John Keith, Margaret Redfern, Fiona Walker, Linda Winter

### **12/79 Admission of Late Items**

There were none.

### **12/80 Declarations of any other business**

There were none

### **12/81 Declarations of Interest**

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

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

### **12/82 Presentation – Capital Programme Update**

Carried forward to the next City Board meeting.

## **12/83 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21 June 2012 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

## **Matters Arising**

- 12/84 Minute 12/54 Welfare Benefits Reform Act** – A meeting has taken place with Housing Office Managers to ensure they are using all options to promote payment of rent by direct debit to tenants. The majority of tenants do have bank accounts and a breakdown showing the number of tenants who already have the direct debit facility, those who currently do not but will have and the numbers set up at sign-up, will be provided for the next meeting.

Derby Homes has discussed with Erewash Credit Union a proposal benefitting the minority of tenants who do not have bank accounts by offering them 'Jam Jar' accounts. There will be a cost to the tenant of between £1 and £5. Erewash Credit Union are preparing a proposal for which should be available in October.

Pilots have taken place whereby tenants receive Housing Benefit payments direct. Feedback so far has been positive with the majority continuing to make regular rent payments.

**Minute 12/67 Tenant Rewards** – A request for funding from current reserves has been put forward and should be available by the end of the year.

**Minute 12/68 Director's Update** – Liz Perfect has been appointed to the Priority Families Co-ordinator post.

## **12/85 Questions from members of the public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

## **12/86 Any items from Part B to be discussed**

The City Board agreed to discuss items B3, B4, B6, B7 and B9. All other items were noted but not discussed.

## **12/87 Items from Contractor Partners**

There were no items from Contractor Partners.

## **12/88      Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' and Equality Groups Items**

The City Board received a report detailing Customer Service Management (CSM) cases/issues raised at Housing Focus Groups (HFG), Derby Leaseholder Focus Group and the Equality Groups.

Brian Perry facilitated the North West HFG and reported that attendance was good with several issues being raised.

A concern was raised regarding the cost of sending letters and texts when the attendance at HFG's is low. The Chair advised that some tenants text back with comments and views which can be useful and makes it worthwhile doing.

The Communications and Marketing Officer pointed out that they do not send out invites but inform tenants of issues to be discussed. Tenants can then decide whether or not it is of interest to attend.

An issue was raised regarding the number of text messages sent to tenants advising that an operative will be attending to carry out a repair to their property but not specifying what the repair is. The Director will arrange for this to be looked into.

### **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

## **12/89      Training for City Board Members**

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

## **12/90      Complaints Procedure Review**

The City Board received a report showing the findings of the Tenant Panel's review of Derby Homes Complaints Procedure and suggested recommendations.

Members of the City Board referred to Appendix 2 showing proposed changes to the wording in the standard response letter. Comments were made that the sentence 'If you have any further queries please refer to Derby Homes' Complaints Procedure' was not positive and too impersonal and that it should be reworded and include a contact name.

Bob Osler asked that the Director identify the financial implications of identifying a specific post for complaints handling.

## **Agreed**

The City Board agreed to the recommendations as outlined in paragraph 3.6, with the exception of Appendix 2 which should be reworded.

### **12/91      Review of Home Release Scheme**

The City Board received a report examining the current Home Release Scheme and in light of the forthcoming welfare reforms recommendations for changes.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service asked City Board members to consider the four options contained within the report to amend the scheme.

Alison Martin commented that it was a good idea to change the incentive to be goods based and not cash, however she did not agree with the recommendation to target only working age tenants. She added how appalled she is that elderly people are expected to leave their family home.

Mike Ainsley asked whether the main purpose in this scheme was to counteract bedroom tax or free up 3 bedroom houses. The Director replied she hopes to do both.

The Director asked if the City Board would agree to the suggestion to amend the eligibility to cover all tenants under-occupying rather than only those of working age. She also asked for agreement to move away from cash incentives and instead provide a contribution for carpets, curtains and decoration.

Bob Osler agreed to the suggestion to move to a voucher system as this will benefit Derby Homes stock internally. He added that he would like to see help provided with the move and also with disconnection and reconnection.

## **Agreed**

The City Board agreed to:

1. Recommend to Derby City Council that £500,000 is allocated from the retained Housing Revenue Account to fund this initiative.
2. Keep the scheme open to all tenants who are affected by under occupation, and through moving to smaller accommodation will either eliminate the under occupation charge, or release a family home for occupation.
3. To reduce the incentive payment from £1000 to £500 and instead

of a cash payment replace this with a contribution towards carpets, curtains and decoration.

4. The Director to arrange for a further piece of work to be done to look at options for providing the contribution towards carpets curtains and decoration and report back to the City Board in October 2012.

## **12/92 Repairs Team – Gas and Electrical Testing Proposal**

The City Board received a report updating them on the progress of the Gas Team and a proposal to extend the £10 Missed Appointment Scheme to include gas and electrical testing appointments.

Harry Margett reported that consultation took place with the Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP) and they had made a request that appointments specify whether am or pm. The Contracts Manager advised that they already offer two slots however the new system will have three time slots, am, pm and school run. The implementation is dependent on having the I.T. in place which is expected late 2012.

### **Agreed**

The City Board agreed to extend the £10 Missed Appointment Scheme to include gas and electrical safety testing appointments from 1 October 2012.

## **12/93 Review of Community Rooms Centurion Walk and Churchside Walk**

The City Board received a report containing an update on ongoing further considerations in relation to the future use of Centurion Walk and Churchside Walk community rooms.

Approval had previously been given to convert the two community rooms into accommodation for the elderly or disabled. However during the planning process Centurion Walk was identified as being in the flood risk area and therefore planning consent will not be approved. Developments with Welfare Reform requires the provision of accessible internet facilities for our customers. Derby Homes propose to reconsider both common rooms to meet these needs.

### **Agreed**

The City Board agreed to continue with further investigations into the most appropriate use of the community rooms on Centurion Walk and Churchside Walk and receive a future report to consider final recommendations.

## **12/94 Gas and Electric Focal Point Fires**

The City Board received a report with a proposal that wherever possible electric fires are installed when replacing a gas fire/gas heating systems.

Mike Ainsley asked what the energy costs would be. The Contracts Manager advised that tenants will be offered a choice of four electric fires. They will be shown the cost and heat output for their current gas fire compared against the four electric fires being offered.

### **Agreed**

The City Board agreed to the installation of electric fires wherever possible when replacing gas fires and that there be only one focal point fire in each property.

## **12/95 City Board Meeting 4 October – Change of Date**

The City Board received a report proposing a change of date for the next City Board meeting.

### **Agreed**

The City Board agreed to change the date of the next meeting from Thursday 4 October to Thursday 18 October at 6.00 pm.

## **12/96 Directors' Update**

The City Board received a report containing a general overview and update on

- New Build
- Asset Management/Planned Maintenance
- Energy Efficiency
- Repairs Team Update
- Priority Families
- Supported Living Service
- Community Activities
- Volunteering Opportunities

### **Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

## **12/97 Complaints and Satisfaction Report**

The City Board received a report providing detailed analysis of complaints received between 1 April and 30 June 2012.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**12/98 Performance Monitoring – Local Offers Quarter 1**

The City Board received a report detailing quarter 1 performance against the local offers set by Tenants and Leaseholders.

Reference was made to the statement advising that outstanding communal repairs will be placed in a notice board and that monitoring ensures the repairs are carried out. Win Buchan spoke of a repair request made in April but not placed on the notice board. The Director of Housing and Customer Service will arrange for a mystery customer check to be carried out.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**12/99 Performance Monitoring – Quarter 1**

The City Board received a report detailing Quarter 1 performance against targets contained in the Monthly Indicator Link.

A question was raised regarding the lack of demand for properties during quarter 1 as outlined in paragraph 3.6. The Director of Housing and Customer Service believed the reduction in demand is due to delays in registering applicants onto the housing list. Arrangements have been made to hold discussion with staff at the Housing Option Centre to offer resources to help with the backlog.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**12/100 Welfare Reform Proposals**

The City Board received a report containing an update on progress made to prepare for the provisions contained within the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

## **12/101 Repairs Team Update**

The City Board received a report containing an update on progress and developments the Repairs Team have made.

Tony Holme referred to paragraph 3.4 detailing problems with the IT system. The Contracts Manager reported that a working party has been set up to look at Open Contractor and review what can be done and which areas are not meeting our expectations. The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised that in terms of technical enhancement going through smoothly this is not happening due to problems such as performance and financial information. Jobs are going through the system and the handheld devices are working. The Head of Repairs will be asked to provide further information on this at a future meeting.

### **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

## **12/102 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids**

A report was provided updating the City Board on quick fix bids which have been approved.

A question was raised regarding appendix 3 and why some areas are reporting no spend approved. The Chair advised that this can be due to low attendance. The Director of Housing and Customer Service added that timing can be an issue too.

### **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

## **12/103 DACP Customer Journey Report**

The City Board received a report summarising the findings of two recent customer journey exercises looking at the Enquiry Centre and the ready to let void process.

### **Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

## **12/104 Grounds Maintenance Petition**

The City Board received a report containing details of a petition received from the residents of Holly Court and Hilton Close, Mickleover regarding the Grounds Maintenance service.



Tony Holme said that in his opinion Sodexo are not performing to the standard expected for the grounds maintenance service but are doing a good job with the cleaning service they provide.

The City Board was advised of new machinery being trialled which can cut and the shred the grass.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service said Derby Homes is aware of the problems being experienced and is working with Sodexo to bring them back up to speed. They will be monitored closely and given a certain amount of time to address the problems raised.

### **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report

#### **12/105 Minutes of the Derby Homes Board Meeting held on 26 July 2012 (Draft)**

The City Board noted the draft minutes of the Derby Homes Board held on 26 July 2012.

#### **12/106 Any Other Business**

Bob Osler updated City Board members on the recruitment process for the post of Chief Executive. An advert will be placed the first week in September. Interviews will take place on 18 and 19 October.

### **Date of next meeting**

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday 18 October 2012 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 30 August 2012.