

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 31 March 2011

The meeting started at 5.57 pm

Board Members Present:

Mick Barker, Paul Bayliss (Chair), Tony Holme, Iain MacDonald, Patrick Molson, Tabani Ndlovu, Brian Perry, Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees, Bob Troup, Roy Webb, Ken Whitehead.

Officers Present:

Shaun Bennett, Phil Davies, David Enticott, Susan Hill, Jackie Mitchell, Maria Murphy

Others Present:

Councillor Philip Ingall, Cabinet Member for Housing and Advice, was present for Admission of Late Items.

Gillian Young, Scrutiny Panel Member
Bill Beckett, North West City Board Member

11/30 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Bob Osler, John Bloxsom and Maggie Fennell, UNISON.

11/31 Admission of Late Items

The Chair presented a photograph taken at the signing of the Management Agreement to Councillor Philip Ingall, Cabinet Member for Housing and Advice.

Councillor Ingall told the Board he was delighted that Derby Homes contract with Derby City Council has been extended for a further 10 years. He said Derby Homes has managed well and provided a very good service. He thanked everyone for doing a good job. The Chief Executive thanked Councillor Ingall for his support (Councillor Ingall then left the meeting).

The Chair presented a further photograph to Dennis Rees. The Chief Executive asked him to thank the Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP) for their support.

11/32 Declarations of Interests

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.

11/33 Minutes of Previous Meeting on 27 January 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2011 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

With regard to Minute 11/14 the Chief Executive informed the Board that he had spoken to Andrew Millross, Anthony Collins Solicitors, for clarification of the second paragraph on page 7. He advised it should read ... 'Anthony Collins Solicitors flagged up the need to obtain employment legal advice on the TUPE issue before changing conditions of employment in the Repairs Team.'

11/34 Matters Arising

Minute 10/163 Chief Executive's Update

The Chief Executive informed the Board that details of the Gas Safety audit was included in his report (Item A2).

Minute 11/13 Changes to Derby Homes Memorandum and Articles of Association

The Director and Company Secretary informed the Board that Councillor Ingall approved the Memorandum and Articles of Association yesterday.

Minute 11/17 Derby Homes' Operating Budget 2011/12

The Director of Housing and Customer Service informed the Board that the £25,000 for soft furnishings for common rooms will be prioritised within the review of common rooms and a City Board report in April will detail the progress. Kestrel House soft seating had already been indentified.

Minute 11/20 Corporate Responsibility Strategy

Roy Webb asked if Nottingham City Council's initiative on community activities for residents had been looked into. The Chief Executive replied Lorraine Watson had provided a contact at Nottingham City Council and he would be following this up.

Minute 11/26 Derby Homes Performance Monitoring Information Quarter 3 2010/11

The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised at the end of last week the rent arrears position was very encouraging and she was confident we would meet the end of year target.

Tony Holme asked if Derby Homes is providing any support to tenants as the Housing Benefit changes start from 1 April. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that there are money advice surgeries planned for tenants and tenants who will be affected had been written to. The Chief Executive explained that when the unified benefits comes into effect, it will be the end of direct landlord payments and there are a lot of concerns about this. He agreed to invite a Housing Benefit expert to talk at the May Board meeting.

11/35 Announcements from the Chair

There were no announcements from the Chair.

11/36 Statements from members of the Board

There were no statements from members of the Board.

11/37 Questions to Derby Homes Board From Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

11/38 Questions from Derby City Council

There were no questions from Derby City Council.

11/39 Committee Chairs' Feedback

Chairs of Derby Homes' Committees provided highlights from previous meetings.

Tony Holme, Chair of Audit Committee - 31 January 2011

- External Audit Strategy for the Year Ended 31 March 2011
- Internal Audit Case Study

- Internal Audit – Progress Report
- Housing Repairs Section – Internal Audit Plan
- Audit Committee Self Assessment
- Implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations.

Dennis Rees, Governance Services Committee – 10 February 2011

- Changes to Derby Homes Memorandum and Articles of Association
- Derwent Living Board Peer Review
- Review of Governance Arrangements
- Management Agreement.

Dennis Rees informed the Board that the next Governance Services Committee meeting will be on Thursday 15 September 2011 and all Board Members are welcomed to attend.

Dennis Rees, Chair of City Board – 24 February 2011

- Training for City Board members
- Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids
- Recharging Tenants for Missed Appointments
- Review of Customer Access
- Update on Improving the Management of Flats
- Review of Non-core Activities
- Review of Tenancy Conditions and Enforcement.

11/40 Confidential Business

The Board agreed to exclude members of the public during consideration of the following item on grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential information as defined in Standing Order 20.2 (g & h) of Part IV of Derby Homes Governance Arrangements.

Gillian Young and Bill Beckett left the meeting during consideration of the confidential items.

11/41 Chief Executive's Update

The Board received a report which included updates on:

- New Build
- Osmaston Regeneration
- Energy Efficiency
- Gas Contract

- Customer satisfaction
- School Kitchens Gas Audit.

Agreed

The Board noted the report.

11/42 Insurance Renewal 2011/12 – Urgent Decision

The Board received an urgent decision report on the insurance renewal which was due on 1 April 2011.

Agreed

The Board noted the report.

End of Confidential Business

Gillian Young and Bill Beckett rejoined the meeting.

11/43 To agree any items from Part C to be discussed

All items in Part C were noted but not discussed.

11/44 Health and Safety Update

The Board received details of recent health and safety performance and current issues.

Iain MacDonald asked for the colour of the 'sexual assault' bar in the Violence and Aggression Trends chart to be changed to better distinguish trends. He congratulated Derby Homes on how well it compares with other housing organisations, as shown in the Comparison of Annual Accident Statistics, Appendix 2.

Agreed

The Board noted the report.

11/45 Management Agreement

The Board received a report that the Council is finalising the new management agreement for the period April 2012 until March 2022. The exact form is yet to be agreed, but the Council has signed an in principle agreement that the contract will be renewed.

Agreed

The Board agreed to consider further the detail of any proposals in advance of the formal agreement, should sufficient time be available before the 1 October deadline. In the event that this is not possible, they delegated the signing of the detailed management agreement to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Board.

11/46 Implementing Self-financing for Council Housing – Urgent Decision

The Board was invited to discuss the Council's response relating to issues raised by Communities and Local Government (CLG) and by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). Derby Homes' support for the response was authorised by the Chair and Vice Chair as an urgent action on 21 March, following Council leadership approval on 15 March. The aim of the report was to highlight the key issues included in the response for the Board to discuss.

The Director and Company Secretary informed the Board that we are requesting the exclusion of projected demolitions and disposals from the debt settlement in addition to those already scheduled by the Council. He explained how the Council might split their debts between two pools of debts i.e. shared out fairly between the HRA and the general fund. He commented that the charge for depreciation needs to be limited as far as possible to retain maximum flexibility. He drafted the required document to the Council yesterday.

The Chair commented that there are opportunities and threats with self-financing. Further demolition of properties could be beneficial as long as the debt settlement reflected the loss of income. It would be best to invest in repairs and new properties and that a Committee should be involved with this.

Bob Troup commented that the Government should look at the debt settlement terms. The Director and Company Secretary replied that the Local Government Association is lobbying on the relevant issues. The Government had made a statement in the House of Commons that it would only look to vary the settlement if a major change of policy occurred, for instance, changing rent policy

Agreed

The Board discussed the issues raised by CLG and CIPFA with respect to the implementation of self financing from 2012.

11/47 Business Disaster Recovery Plan Review

The Board received a report reviewing the Business Disaster Recovery Plan (BDRP) which seeks to set out the actions to be taken by Derby Homes staff in the event of seven identified business disasters and laid out ways for dealing with each.

The Chair suggested using a Local Housing Office to create a mock situation where, for example, computers are not working to test the plan. The Chief Executive agreed to test the plan by holding a mock disaster.

Iain MacDonald asked if the BDR Co-ordinator was ill, or any other team fell ill, is there a plan B? The Chief Executive replied that there are very able staff to help with this situation.

Agreed

The Board approved the amendments made to the BDRP and agreed the next review date be set for March 2014 in line with the current review policy.

11/48 Domestic Violence Policy

The Board received the Derby Homes' Domestic Violence Policy. The Director of Housing and Company Secretary informed the Board that the previous policy was 20 pages long but it is now manageable at 5 pages. This was achieved by separating the procedure from the policy document.

Agreed

The Board approved the changes to the policy.

11/49 Performance Management Strategy

The Board received the Performance Management Strategy which had been reviewed and found to require no significant amendments.

Iain MacDonald asked if senior management were involved in reviewing changes to key policy documents before they were considered by the Board.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a member of the Executive Team reviewed the proposed changes.

Agreed

The Board approved the revised Performance Management Strategy.

11/50 Board Training Programme 2011/12

The Board received a report setting out proposals for the Board's annual training programme for 2011/12.

The Governance Services Manager explained that there have been changes made to the training programme. These included basic/introductory level online training through Derby Homes' e-learning system from April onwards for all Board and City Board Members, a dispensation scheme for Board Members who possess a high level of skill or experience in any of the essential course areas and Board Member visits to service areas, workshadowing staff and meeting tenants to see some of the work carried out first hand.

The Chair commented how he found shadowing a member of staff extremely useful and recommended this to other Board Members. He also highly recommended the Housing Finance course delivered by Steve Partridge, who is very knowledgeable in this area. Dennis Rees added that the training will help City Board members build up their knowledge too.

Bob Troup suggested a television series called Neighbourhood Watch is downloaded onto the e-learning site as it could be useful for new Board Members.

Tony Holme asked if e-learning was accessed through Derby Homes' website. The Governance Services Manager replied that the e-learning is usually accessed through the intranet but she will send a link, and passwords to Board Members.

Agreed

The Board noted the changes and approved the Board Training Programme 2011/12.

11/51 Chartered Institute of Housing and National Federation of ALMOs Annual Conferences 2011

The Board received a report providing details of this year's annual conferences and was asked to consider Board Members' attendance at the Chartered Institute of Housing Annual Conference in Harrogate and NFA Annual Conference in Manchester.

Dennis Rees said he would like to attend the CIH annual conference.

Agreed

The Board approved the attendance of two Board Members at the

1. Chartered Institute of Housing Annual Conference in Harrogate on 21- 23 June 2011.
2. NFA Annual Conference in Manchester on 12-13 July 2011.

11/52 Annual Board Tour

The Board received a report setting out the proposed itinerary for an evening tour on Thursday 9 June 2011.

Brian Perry suggested looking at the solar panels at Rivermead House as well as the proposals in the report.

Agreed

The Board approved the proposals.

11/53 Draft Minutes of Committees and City Board

The Board received the draft minutes of recent Committee meetings:

- a Audit – 31 January 2011
- b Governance Services – 10 February 2011
- c City Board – 24 February 2011

Agreed

The Board noted but did not discuss the minutes.

11/54 Society Results

The Board received a report providing information which measures the numbers of positive and negative press releases, monies raised for charity, sponsorships and initiatives carried out with partners in the community.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

11/55 Derby Homes' Forward Plan of Agenda Items

The Board received a forward plan of agenda items for a six month period from April 2011.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

11/56 Derby Homes' Diary Planner

The Board received a diary planner of events taking place for the six months from April 2011.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 26 May 2011 at 6.00 pm at Cardinal Square.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on Thursday 31 March 2011.