

## **DERBY HOMES LIMITED**

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

**Held on Thursday 28 January 2021**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

#### **Board Members Present:**

Mike Ainsley, Charlene Bhurton, Alan Graves, Jenn Layton Annable, Iain MacDonald, Bob MacDonald, Lucy Care, Sarah Russell and Jsan Shepherd

#### **Officers Present:**

Maria Murphy, Managing Director  
David Enticott, Finance Director & Company Secretary  
Shaun Bennett, Director of Property  
Clare Mehrbani, Director of Housing Services  
Jackie Mitchell, Governance Services Manager  
Paul Cole, Customer Communications Manager

#### **Others Present:**

Councillor Roy Webb, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health & Housing  
Ian Fullagar, Head of Strategic Housing, Derby City Council

The Chair welcomed Charlene Bhurton, new Tenant Board Member, to the meeting.

#### **21/01 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Rachel North, Strategic Director Communities & Place

#### **21/02 Admission of Late Items**

The Chair admitted a late confidential item to be taken as Item B6.

#### **21/03 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.

**21/04 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26 November 2020 were accepted as a correct record.

**21/05 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**21/06 Announcements from the Chair**

There were no announcements from the Chair.

**21/07 Statements from Members of the Board**

There were no statements from Members of the Board.

**21/08 Questions from members of the public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**21/09 Committee Chairs' Feedback**

The Chair of the Operational Board provided feedback the meeting held on 3 December 2020.

New appointments have recently been made to the Operational Board, they are Kevin Ellaway and Natasha Cover. The Operational Board Chair thanked Charlene who has now stood down from the Operational Board to take up the place on the main Board.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the feedback from the Operational Board meeting held on 3 December 2020.

**21/10 Outstanding Actions**

The Board considered outstanding actions arising from previous meetings.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the progress made.

**21/11 Urgent Action taken since the last meeting**

The Board considered a report detailing urgent action taken by the Chair and Vice Chair of Derby Homes regarding Derby Homes entering into the Safe Space Collaboration agreement 2020/21 and to fund £75,000 core funding from the MHCLG allocated Flexible Homeless Support Grant 2020-21 and a further £206,870 from the MHCLG grant award of Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant 2020-21 £75,000 and £206,870 subject to the Council's approval.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the urgent action.

**21/12 Items from Part C for discussion**

**Agreed**

The Board did not raise any items from Part C for discussion.

**21/13 Managing Director's Report**

The Board considered a report on strategic and key issues.

The report provided an update on the impact of the third national lockdown on service provision and steps taken to support and ensure the safety of staff and tenants.

Jenn Layton Annable, and Alan Graves both praised the Derby Homes workforce, particularly in dealing with tenants with all the current restrictions in place.

Trades teams have been offered the opportunity to be regularly tested once a week in work time to further protect customers and colleagues and in the near future staff who cannot work from home will also be able to be tested.

An update was provided on follow up action arising from the staff survey.

The Health & Safety Executive have recently revised guidance, and Derby Homes is now revisiting working from home, asking staff to complete an assessment of how they are working, equipment they have got and anything further Derby Homes needs to do to ensure it is complying with the duty of care to staff.

The report also provided details of the impact of the pandemic on performance in areas such as rent arrears and empty homes.

Derby Homes is continuing to work very closely with the Council to manage our pandemic response and helping to shape the recovery strategy for our City.

The Council intends to take a report to the March meeting of Cabinet on the renewal of Derby Homes contract, with the outcome of the review undertaken in 2019 and recommendations for Derby Homes management agreement.

### **Agreed**

The Board noted the Managing Director's report.

## **21/14 Finance Update**

The Board considered a report on current financial issues.

The latest estimated position for the current financial year remains at around £2m and an operational surplus before pension adjustments is expected this year.

The new National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020 has been published and has been modified to allow boards to consider extensions to 9 years where in the best interest of the organisation, but will still require an explanation beyond 9 years.

The Government has deferred the target for spending RTB receipts until March 2021 and the outcome of the review of flexibility in use of receipts is still to be delivered 'shortly'.

The Homelessness SLA has been agreed with the Council and Derby Homes to ensure that grants will continue to be paid to Derby Homes to deliver our existing support for homelessness and rough sleepers until at least 2022.

### **Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

## **21/15 Property Update**

The Board considered an update on current issues within the Property Directorate.

The report included an update on new build and current working arrangements under the current lockdown restrictions.

The work on the War Memorial Village has now been completed. Two current sites are near to completion at Gerard Street and Perth Street.

The Council has identified a considerable number of sites for new build that they are looking to transfer from the General Fund to the HRA, for affordable housing.

The outcome of the bid for round 1b of the Green Homes Grant has been announced and Derby has received an allocation of £900K to improve over 100 homes with external insulation. In addition to this, £1.4m for round 2 has been allocated. Work will need to be completed for phase 1b by the end of September 2021 and round 2 by the end of December.

Details of a scheme of improvement work to 48 non- traditional flats in Mackworth to secure ERDF grant funding has been agreed for energy efficiency improvements via a joint bid with Nottingham City Homes.

Derby Homes is talking to the Council on a joint marketing strategy to ensure private home owners and private landlords are aware of the Green Homes Grant local authority led scheme targeting owner/occupiers across our estates. Home owners and private landlords can also apply through the voucher scheme.

Jenn Layton Annable suggested consideration be given to electric vehicle charging points for older properties as encouragement for tenants to move to using electric cars.

### **Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

## **21/16 Housing Services Update**

This Board Members considered a report on strategic and key issues in relation to Housing Services.

Derby has been allocated £986,280 Homelessness Prevention Grant 2021/22 and will enable targeted support to families at risk of homelessness and families that find themselves homeless.

The City has a Severe Weather Emergency Provision plan to address rough sleeping during periods of cold weather from 1 December until 31 March. Derby Homes, Council, Police, Probation, Public Health and other partner agencies work to provide cover for the whole winter period, where the weather is predicted to fall below zero for three consecutive nights.

The Sinfonia Viva brass quintet performance Christmas Carols at Parkland View on 22 December. It was an open-air event and was filmed by the BBC for East Midlands Today.

### **Agreed**

The Board noted the update.

## **21/17 Health & Safety Update**

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

The report included statistics on reports of Accident & Incidents and Violence & Aggression and an update on Covid-19 health and safety measures.

Iain MacDonald provided feedback from the Health & Safety Forum meeting.

### **Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

## **21/18 Draft Operational Budget 2021/22**

The Board considered the draft Operational Budget for 2021/22 and forecasts for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

A capital programme based on the central assumptions was also presented for approval.

There was a discussion on the future use of electric vans in place of diesel and the disposal of electric batteries. Derby Homes will look at this once a viable operational vehicle becomes available and will be considered within the environmental/climate change policy which will be brought to the Board for approval.

## **Agreed**

### **The Board**

1. approved the DH budget for 2021/22 as per Appendix 1, along with the pressures and savings listed in 4.14 of the report.
2. approved in principle the budgets for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 as detailed in Appendix 1.
3. approved the updated 2020/21 and future capital programme on new homes & vehicles as detailed in Appendix 3.
4. approved in principle any request for loan funding from DCC at the levels indicated in Appendix 3. Final approvals would be required from DCC and Board.

## **21/19 HRA Business Plan & Rents 2021/22**

The Board considered a report on the Council's proposals on its HRA Business Plan and rent & service charge proposals each year. The Council had proposed a 1.5% increase to weekly rents in line with the new regulatory limit on Council rents, inflationary increases to most service charges and a freeze on Furnished tenancies.

The Board was advised that this year the Council had already made its decision on the rent increase and, if necessary, this report would be brought to the Board in November in future.

Derby Homes' rental properties are also affected but are increased from August each year. The proposals intend to keep Derby Homes policies aligned with the Council.

## **Agreed**

### **The Board**

1. supported the Council's recommendations relating to rents and service charges for Council tenancies, and their recommendations for the HRA Business Plan.
2. approved a 1.5% rent increase for Derby Homes' tenancies from August 2021, with the exception of Green Lane apartments where the rent is recommended to be frozen.

3. approved changes to service charges for Derby Homes' tenancies from August in line with Council service charges (to be approved by Council Cabinet).

## **21/20 Draft Delivery Plan 2021/22**

The Board considered the draft Delivery Plan for 2021/22 which articulates the vision, priorities and deliverables for the coming 12 months. The Delivery Plan was updated for 2021/22 for approval prior to agreement by Derby City Council.

The following suggestions were made

Objective 3 Reducing homelessness and enabling access to affordable housing

3.1: 'Maximise supply of homes' – change to "make good use of".

Appendix 4 Service Drivers

Legal: 'Frequently updated Covid19 laws' change to 'regulations'.

Environmental: include bullet point on waste management and minimisation.

### **Agreed**

The Board

1. approved the draft 2021/22 Delivery Plan and delegated any further minor amendments to the Managing Director of Derby Homes, for submission to the Council
2. approved the draft scorecard for 2021/22.

## **21/21 Apprenticeship Strategy**

The Board considered the Apprenticeship Strategy for 2021-24. The existing strategy had been reviewed in accordance with Derby Homes' three year review schedule and re-written to reflect the development of work in this area.

The Board was advised that Derby Homes still took a cohort of apprentices on in the last half of 2020, who have settled in very well and moving forward with their studies. Derby Homes has 33 apprentices at the moment and has spent all of its Apprenticeship Levy.

Derby Homes is now looking to see how it can be involved in the government's Kick Start project to get more young people into training and provide employment opportunities working with adult learning colleagues.

Derby Homes is also looking to see if there are opportunities for young people made redundant from apprenticeships as a result of the pandemic to complete their apprenticeship.

The Managing Director advised that Derby Homes is working with a training provider as a pathfinder to develop a new apprenticeship for people working in Anti-Social Behaviour and Nick Bale, Derby Homes' ASB Manager has chaired a national providers group to establish a standard.

Lucy Care wished to suggest some amendments and will email them to the Managing Director.

**Agreed**

The Board approved the Apprenticeship Strategy 2021-24, subject to further amendments received from Lucy Care.

**21/22 Forward Plan of Agenda Items**

The Board received the Forward Plan of agenda items.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the Forward Plan.

**21/23 Insurance Act 2015**

Under the Act Derby Homes is obliged to disclose to insurers "relevant information" at both the insurance tender / renewal time and within the year if relevant issues occur.

The Board considered whether there was any new relevant information that should be disclosed to the insurer under the Insurance Act 2015.

**Agreed**

The Board, having considered whether there is any new relevant information that should be disclosed to insurers, as required under the Insurance Act 2015, agreed it was not aware of any such information.

**21/24 Confidential Business**

**Agreed**

The Board agreed, under Part IV of the Derby Homes Governance Arrangements, members of the public be excluded from the meeting during

discussion of the following items on grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of confidential information as defined in Standing Order 20.2 (n, f, g, h).

The Board agreed to allow Councillor Roy Webb and Ian Fullagar to remain during the confidential items.

**21/25 Confidential Minutes of the previous meeting**

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on the 26 November 2020 were accepted as a correct record.

**21/26 Matters arising**

**Minute 20/189 Procurement Waivers**

The Finance Director & Company Secretary offered to provide an explanation for individual Extensions to Waivers within the Appendix to the report at Board Members' request.

**21/27 Procurement Compliance Annual Report**

The Board considered the annual report on Procurement Compliance.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

**21/28 Finance Update**

The Board considered an update on potential agreements that were subject to further discussion with both the organisations concerned and the Council.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

**21/29 Standing Order 12**

The Board agreed to waive Standing Order 12 during discussion of the following item, to allow the meeting to continue.

**21/30 Gas Servicing Programme**

The Board considered a verbal report from the Managing Director on the gas servicing programme.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the verbal report.

**End of Confidential Business**

**21/31 Draft Minutes of the Operational Board held on 3 December 2020**

The Board received the draft minutes of the Operational Board meeting held on 3 December 2020.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the draft minutes.

**21/32 Performance Management Quarter 2**

The Board received an update on performance management for quarter 2.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the update.

**Date of next meeting**

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday 25 March 2021 at 6.00 pm.**

The meeting ended at 20.48 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 28 January 2021.