

# DERBY HOMES LIMITED

## MINUTES OF THE CITY BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 13 October 2011

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

### Board Members Present:

Win Buchan, Jim Elks, Lynn Gilbey, Tony Holme, Wendy Jessop, John Keith, Harry Margett, Patrick Molson, Bob Osler, Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees (Chair), Bob Troup, Ian Veitch, Jack Wray

### Officers Present:

Mick Archer, Paul Cole, Phil Davies, Maureen Davis, Errol Harriott, Jim Joyce, Tony Muldoon, Maria Murphy, Jo Solbe, Lorraine Testro, Julie Wren

### Others Present:

Arlene Rees, Terry Rogerson, Gill Young

### 11/99 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Ainsley, Paul Bayliss, Brian Perry

### 11/100 Admission of Late Items

The Chair agreed to admit two items on problems with an alarm at Rebecca House and the kitchen and bathroom programme in the Derwent area to be discussed at the end of the agenda.

### 11/101 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.

## **11/102 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25 August 2011 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

## **11/103 Matters Arising**

The Chair informed the City Board that the Resident Involvement Officer would be doing a live Twitter during the meeting and asked if anyone had any objections. All were happy for this to go ahead.

**Minute 11/83 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids** – Tony Holme asked the Estate Regeneration Officer if she had identified the date that feedback would next be received on works carried out. The Estate Regeneration Officer informed the City Board that it is next due in April 2012.

**Minute 11/65 Mobility Scooter Service Charges** – Win Buchan asked if the charge of £2 was a set amount or if it would need reviewing. The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised this was the initial charge and over a period of time it would be recalculated alongside costs for electricity. The Chair said City Board members did not feel £2 was enough. The Chief Executive said the charge would change over time.

**Minute 11/86 Charges for the Concierge Service** – The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised a meeting was held at Centurion Walk with the residents of Rivermead House to carry out further discussion on the level of service they would like, however only four residents attended.

The Director said the residents were asked to look options detailed in the report presented at the last City Board meeting. The residents preferred option two which is to have two members of staff on site providing both the cleaning and concierge service but with a variation to the hours. They would like the hours extended at weekends from 8.00 pm to midnight.

A further meeting was held at St. Mary's Hall and the same option was chosen by residents.

The Director said staff will be writing to residents advising them of the options to choose from with costings and the cap being applied.

This item will be brought back to the next City Board meeting.

**Minute 11/93 Volunteering Update** – Harry Margett asked if there had been any improvement in identifying volunteers. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that a volunteer had attended an initial

induction today. Annabelle Barwick and members of the Volunteer Forum are working to gradually increase the numbers.

The Resident Involvement Manager advised that at the recent Older Peoples' Day eight or nine people had shown an interest in volunteering. He has put them in touch with the Supported Living team.

**Minute 11/96 DACP Customer Journey Report** – The Housing Operations Manager advised the City Board that as requested at the last meeting a further report containing action plans has been provided at item B5 of the agenda.

**11/104 Questions from members of the public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**11/105 Items from Part B to be discussed**

The City Board agreed to discuss items B2, B3, B4 and B5,. All other reports on Part B of the agenda were noted but not discussed.

**11/106 Items from Contractor Partners**

There were no items from Contractor Partners.

**11/107 Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' Items**

The City Board received a report detailing issues raised at Housing Focus Groups (HFG's), Leaseholders Focus Group and Equality Groups.

Win Buchan reported that no issues had been raised at the last Leaseholder meeting.

The Resident Involvement Officer reported that the outstanding cases are all in progress. Wendy Jessop commented that these have been ongoing for some time as the date noted against them is 12 September.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**11/108 Training for Local Housing Board members**

The City Board received a report listing training courses available. The Chair advised the City Board that the date for the Presentation Skills training has changed from 18 November to 18 October. Finance Training

will be taking place at London Road on 11 November. Anyone wanting to attend any of the training courses should contact Susan Hill.

The Chair advised the City Board that Derby Homes' Annual General Meeting (AGM) is due to take place on Thursday 27 October. A raffle is planned for the day with all proceeds going to the British Heart Foundation. He asked that anyone wishing to donate a prize should pass it to Susan Hill.

### **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

### **11/109 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids**

The City Board received a report on bids for funding from the Quick Fix fund within Estates Pride, in response to known problems, in particular to reduce crime, nuisance and vandalism.

At the previous City Board meeting a request was received for funding of £14k to clear an area of land on Hollis Street and to replace metal palisade fencing with two sets of lockable metal gates. The City Board deferred the bid whilst other options were investigated. The Estate Regeneration Officer advised this bid has now been withdrawn. A full review of sites for redevelopment is planned and this site has been put forward.

Tony Holme raised the request for funding for Northumberland Street to supply and fit high metal fencing to the top of a wall. He asked if this will stop the issue of balls from a nearby play area landing in gardens and the children then climbing over to retrieve them. The Estate Regeneration Officer replied that the 1 meter high fencing will be fixed onto cranked extensions on top of a wall. She hopes that this will prevent the balls from going over.

Wendy Jessop referred to the Kickz Project and the request to Derby Homes for funding of £5,000. So far an amount of £28,000 has been secured. The total required is £47,500. She asked if they have identified where the shortfall will come from. The Estate Regeneration Officer replied they have not.

At a previous City Board meeting approval was given for funding to remove a hedge and supply and fit fencing at 143 Cowsley Road. The Estate Regeneration Officer advised that a further amount of £300 was needed and asked for approval for this. The City Board agreed to this extra amount.

Tony Holme asked if there has been any feedback on Sporting Futures. The Estate Regeneration Officer advised the City Board that comments had been received from 12 young people who attended the Swallowdale Road session held on 30 September. The Estate Regeneration Officer has a document containing their responses. The Chair asked her to provide Julie Wren with a copy of the feedback to attach to the minutes.

### **Agreed**

The City Board approved the following bids:

- 1. KICKZ project** – To continue to deliver a 12 month football project to young people living in the Derwent area. The KICKZ project will run 3 sessions a week for the duration of three hours each session. Two of these sessions are football based and the third session is flexible and can take the form of various different sports/activities or educational workshops such as substance misuse and the dangers of guns and weapons.
- 2. 10-24 Uttoxeter Old Road** – Remove existing wooden fencing and gate and replace with 1.8m high black metal bow fencing and lockable gate.
- 3. 16-32 Bright Street** - Remove existing wooden fencing and gate and replace with 1.8m high black metal bow fencing and lockable gate.
- 4. 114-121 Northumberland Street** – Remove old knee high wooden fencing and supply and fit 1m high metal bowtop fencing and three single gates. Tarmac over shrub areas to create areas for wheelie bins.
- 5. Northumberland Street at back of Lower Dale Road** – Supply and fit 1m high metal fencing on cranked extensions on top of wall.
- 6. Oak Street drying area** - Remove existing wooden fencing and gate and replace with 1.8m high black metal bow fencing and lockable gate. Supply and fit additional 1.8m high bow top fence and lockable gate adjacent to 11 Oak Street.
- 7. Centurion Walk** – Supply and fit 5 Photo cell lights.

The City Board also agreed to a request for extra funding of £300 to remove a hedge and supply and fit fencing at 143 Cowsley Road.

### **11/110 Pet Ownership – Dog Fouling on Estates**

At the last meeting a question was received from a tenant raising concerns about the actions taken by staff at Derby Homes in response to reports of dog fouling.

In response to this a report has been produced for the City Board examining the Pet Policy and outlining the powers landlords and local authorities have in relation to this problem.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised that paragraph 3.1 of the report it states there are five dog control matters, however the report contains only four. She will seek further clarification on this.

The Director advised that the report looks at how the local authority and Derby Homes can take action against irresponsible pet owners, however it is the local authority, not Derby Homes, who has the power to take legal action.

A table included in the report showed a high increase in the number of complaints received by the Council in relation to dog fouling. The Director said that this is due to a publicity drive and she expects the trend of increase to continue.

The Director advised that the Council is to lose its two dedicated Dog Wardens. However in their place will be a team of six Neighbourhood Wardens who will cover the City.

The Director said the Pet Policy encourages tenants and leaseholders to be responsible dog owners. This supplements and underpins the tenancy agreement which already has ample provision to deal with tenants whose dogs cause fouling. She has also spoken with the Legal Team who has advised that sufficient powers are in place.

The Director advised the recommendation outlined in the report is incorrect and should be paragraph 3.16 to continue the joint working with the Council Neighbourhood Teams to promote responsible pet ownership and reduce instances of dog fouling within the City and not 3.14,.

Lynn Gilbey raised an issue of visitors to a flat bringing a dog which was left to run loose and mess on the grass. She reported this but it took 3 days before anyone responded. She also felt that Streetpride was slow to attend and clean up the mess.

The Director advised the City Board that tenants' are responsible for the conduct of their visitors. If possible this should be reported to the Local Housing Officer who can then take action. With regards to Streetpride, although she understood Lynn's frustration, they have a large area of the City to cover. However she will feed this information back to Tim Clegg.

Margaret Redfern raised concerns about the number of people who have untrained dogs which are unleashed and appear to be used as some kind of a threat. She asked if there is any way in which there can be a registration of animals owned by our tenants. Wendy Jessop advised that this was looked into several years ago by Derby Homes but the administration cost was too high.

The Director said she understood Margaret's concerns but Derby Homes does not have any powers to deal with this she will pass this onto the Community Safety Team.

The Chief Executive advised Derby Homes will continue to support any actions that can be taken. He asked the Director and the Housing Operations Manager to also support this.

### **Agreed**

The City Board approved the recommendation 3.16 to work with the City Neighbourhood Teams and participate in initiatives to promote responsible pet ownership and reduce instances of dog fouling within the City. Derby Homes' will also review joint working processes to ensure that tenants and leaseholders have clear guidance on how to report issues of dog fouling.

## **11/111 Review of Community Rooms**

The City Board received a report containing an update on the ongoing work to review the levels of usage in community rooms across the City and proposals on the future use of rooms which are currently under-utilised.

Lorraine Testro, Customer Services Manager, advised the review has looked at the ten most under-utilised rooms. The recommendation is to convert the community rooms at Centurion Walk and Churchside Walk to accommodation suitable for the elderly or disabled.

The Customer Services Manager passed to the Chair a letter received from the Little Chester Residents Association. The letter detailed concerns about the closure of Centurion Walk common room and in particular linked the loss of Wardens to the lack of use. The Chair asked for any comments. Harry Margett questioned why they had not attended the meetings arranged to voice their opinions. The Chief Executive said that he agreed in part that there had been nothing or very little arranged for residents since the loss of the Wardens.

Tony Holme asked if money is available to convert these rooms. The Chief Executive advised that there is in the Capital Programme. Tony Holme asked when these rooms are likely to close. The Chief Executive said he expects this will take place after Christmas.

## **Agreed**

The City Board agreed

1. To close the common rooms at Centurion Walk and Churchside Walk and to convert into accommodation suitable for elderly or disabled people.
2. To continue to support and monitor the growth of new activities at Oakleigh Avenue, Slindon Croft and Garsdale Court and to retain the current use of the community room at Humber Close.

## **11/112 Tenant Review Panel**

The City Board received a report detailing the issues and recommendations arising from the Tenant Review Panel's first inspection of Derby Homes' services.

Gill Young, Review Panel member, commented that the Repairs Team has only been up and running for 1 year and so the Panel would like to go back and revisit in 18 months to 2 years time.

The Chair said that this was a very good report. The Review Panel had found shortcomings which they would like to address. He added that he would like this report to go to the main Board in future as it contains some strong recommendations. Bob Osler commented that he did not think it necessary to take the report to the main Board as there are Board Members present on the City Board.

The Director of Housing and Customer Services congratulated the panel on a well written report. She suggested the Head of Repairs should respond formally to all points raised in the report. The Head of Repairs agreed to report back to the next meeting with his response.

The Chair asked the Head of Repairs if he was happy with the recommendations contained within the report. The Head of Repairs replied he was apart from paragraph 3.2.5 which recommends that Derby Homes reconsiders implementing charging tenants for missed appointments. He commented on the high number of missed appointments and asked if they can go ahead and introduce this charge. The Chair advised that this is to be taken to the City Board in December.

Gill Young said she felt it was too early to implement the missed appointment charge and asked if it could be deferred. The Chief Executive agreed with the proposal made earlier that the Head of Repairs comes back to the next meeting with his comments.

## **Agreed**

The City Board

1. noted the report
2. agreed to receive a report at the next meeting responding to the recommendations in the report.

### **11/113 Resident Involvement Strategy**

The City Board received a report introducing the Resident Involvement Strategy.

The Housing Operations Manager advised that the strategy is being implemented to move away from a reactive service and to provide residents with more opportunities to become involved.

The Chair referred to the new technology available and commented on the improvements made to the website.

Tony Holme asked if Derby Homes is providing any guidance around the use of Web, Twitter or Facebook for those who are not familiar with these. The Resident Involvement Manager said he would be happy to arrange some training sessions and City Board members should contact him if they are interested.

## **Agreed**

The City Board approved the strategy.

### **11/114 Repairs Update**

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

The Head of Repairs advised the City Board that a new National Housing Federation Schedule of Rates (SORs) is due to be implemented by the end of November. As part of this there will be a new piece of software called Housecall. This will allow tenants to go on-line and report a repair.

The Head of Repairs reported that with the implementation of the new SORs, changes are to be made to current priorities and timescales. The main changes are:

- Reduce routine repairs from 30 to 25 days
- Reduce specialist repairs from 90 to 60 days

The Chair congratulated the Head of Repairs on the new targets.

The Contracts Manager Voids provided the City Board with an update on voids. Changes have been made to the way they now work which has led to a smarter way of working. He reported that the void turnaround was 15 days in the first quarter and 8 days in the last quarter. Closer work is taking place with the Allocation Team alongside regular meetings with the Allocations Manager which has streamlined the work.

The Contracts Manager Voids reported that Harry Margett, Jim Elks and Bob Osler had recently visited London Road and that good feedback had been received from them.

Margaret Redfern said she would like to see more details of the kind of repairs they undertake. She questioned whether there was a temptation to do the smaller quicker jobs first to enable them to meet the targets set. The Head of Repairs replied he can provide this information for the next City Board meeting and added that they monitor across all priorities.

### **Agreed**

The City Board

1. Noted the content of the report
2. Approved the proposed repair priorities and timescales in conjunction with the implementation of the National Housing Federation SORs.

### **11/115 Standing Order 12**

The City Board agreed to waive Standing Order 12 to allow the meeting to continue after 8.00 pm.

### **11/116 Review of Non Core Activity – Tenants Contents Insurance**

The City Board received a report containing details of the low cost contents insurance service available to Derby Homes' tenants and asking opinion as to whether the scheme should continue for a further period.

The Head of Finance advised the City Board that tenants insurance cover can be selected in a range from £10,000 (£8,000 for pensioners) to £25,000. Of the membership of 1,143 at March 2011, 922 members have cover of between £8k and £15K and 744 of those members only have the standard cover, excluding accidental damage. Tenants are able to pay the premiums on a weekly basis together with their rent at no additional charge.

The Head of Finance said that if the decision is taken not to continue with this scheme a large amount of Derby Homes' tenants will not take out any insurance and will not be covered.

Lynn Gilbey raised an issue of not being able to get hold of a copy of the leaflet containing details of the insurance scheme. The Head of Finance advised her that these should be available in the Cardinal Square reception. The Director of Housing and Customer Service will arrange for a copy to be posted out to her.

The Head of Finance reported that the scheme has never been put out for re-tender and has in recent years been renewed on an annual basis. The next renewal date is 1 April 2012. It is now proposed that if the scheme is to continue it will be retendered in accordance with OJEU processes. He advised that a consultant with the necessary expertise to undertake a re-tendering exercise of this service has been appointed.

The Head of Finance said that if the scheme is continued he would like the City Board to nominate a member to advise on the retender and to take part in the evaluation panel.

The Chair said that this is a valuable service provided to the tenants of Derby Homes and he proposed that it is continued. He also volunteered to provide advice and take part in the evaluation panel.

### **Agreed**

The City Board

1. noted the content of the report
2. agreed to the continuance of the scheme
3. agreed that the City Board Chair will advise on the retender and take part in the evaluation panel.

### **11/117 Directors Update**

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

- New Build
- Asset Management
- Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP)
- Solar Panels
- Repairs Team Update
- Derby Homes Awards
- Website

- Travellers Site – Russell Street
- Tenants & Staff Conference

### **Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

### **11/118 Timetable for Procurement of Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning Contract**

The City Board received an update on the timetable for the process to procure a new contract for grounds maintenance and cleaning.

Tony Holme asked if there was a process in place to input any concerns. The Chair advised that he will be discussing this at the Chair's meeting. He suggested that any feedback is passed to Harry Margett or to the Head of Investment.

### **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

### **11/119 Governance and City Board Review**

A desktop review of Derby Homes Governance Arrangements has been carried out by Anthony Collins Solicitors. Recommendations arising were considered by the Governance Services Committee on 15 September and subsequently approved by the Derby Homes Board on 29 September 2011.

The City Board was asked to note the report, the recommendations of the Governance Services Committee and resolutions of the Derby Homes Board.

The Chair referred to paragraph 3.2.2, maximum term of office. He commented that this has changed from 10 years to 9 years and therefore his current term will end in 2012.

Win Buchan referred to paragraph 3.2.3 recommending that tenants living in Derby Homes' new build properties are given the same election and voting rights as Council tenants. She asked for a clearer understanding of the difference between a Council tenant and a Derby Homes tenant. The Chief Executive replied that a Council tenant is a secure tenant whereas a Derby Homes tenant is an assured tenant.

## **Agreed**

The City Board noted the content of the report.

### **11/120 Review of Support Services Delivered to Vulnerable Tenants**

The City Board received a report updating them on the progress made in reviewing support services to vulnerable tenants.

Tony Holme said he was impressed with the report and content however he noted that it concentrates more on the elderly. He would like to see younger people included with an opportunity for them to become more involved. The Customer Services Manager replied that there is a lot of linking up with the Junior Wardens and that various activities are arranged in the summer holidays.

The Customer Services Manager advised the City Board of a Derby Homes Supported Services showcase event taking place on 3 November. Invitations for this have been sent through various residents groups. The Director of Housing and Customer Service asked the Customer Services Manager to forward this to Susan Hill for her to circulate to City Board members.

The Chief Executive spoke of cuts coming up in Supporting People funding, an amount of £100k this year. Derby City Council is facing a 50% cut too. He has alerted staff and told them to expect reductions in services provided. Staff have also been asked to consider moving in to other service areas.

The Chair thanked the Customer Services Manager for a good report.

## **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

### **11/121 Action Plan on the DACP Customer Journey Report (Anti Social Behaviour)**

The City Board received a report containing comparisons and action plans from Customer Journeys carried out during 2010 and 2011.

The Director of Housing and Customer Services thanked Harry Margett for a great report presented at the last meeting. She suggested a further report is brought to the December meeting.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**11/122 Draft Minutes of the Derby Homes Board held on 29 September 2011**

The City Board noted the draft minutes of the Derby Homes Board held on 29 September 2011.

**11/123 Confidential Reports**

Under Part IV of the Derby Homes Governance Arrangements, members of the public were excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential information as defined in Standing Order 18.2 (c).

**11/124 Petition**

The City Board received a confidential report containing details of a petition received regarding a tenant living at Hillcrest Road.

Margaret Redfern said she knew of the tenant and commented that she has been a problem to her neighbours and Derby Homes' staff for many years. She added that Derby Homes is in danger of neglecting the tenants who have to live with the ongoing anti social behaviour.

The Chair said he looked for a swift conclusion to this problem.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the action taken by staff in response to the petition.

**11/125 Petition**

The City Board received a confidential report containing details of a petition received regarding a tenant living at Marston Close.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**11/126 Late Items**

Jim Elks raised an incident at Rebecca House of a fire alarm which had been left running for 1 hour and 40 minutes. He informed the City Board that although someone from Chubb was on site at the time he could not

switch the alarm off. The company who had fitted the alarm would not pass on the code to switch it off. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said she would speak to Tony Billingham about this.

Margaret Redfern raised the kitchen and bathroom replacement programme taking place in the Derwent area. She said some tenants are contacting her to ask when they are due to have the work carried out. She asked if she could be provided with a list of the properties being refurbished so that she can pass on the information when queried. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that this information will soon be available and she will ask Matt Hands, Maintenance Manager, to contact her.

The Chair asked that Matt Hands be invited to attend the next City Board meeting to discuss the above.

**Date of next meeting**

**The next meeting date will be agreed at the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 27 October 2010.**

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 13 October 2011.