

# DERBY HOMES LIMITED

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

**Held on Thursday 25 March 2010**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

### **Board Members Present:**

David Batey, Paul Bayliss, John Bloxsom, Alison Brown, Tony Holme, Iain MacDonald, Bob Osler (Chair), Brian Perry, Dennis Rees, Mary Rowland (arrived at 6.35 pm), Roy Webb, Ken Whitehead.

### **Officers Present:**

Shaun Bennett, Phil Davies, Susan Hill, Jackie Mitchell, Maria Murphy, Lorraine Watson

### **Others Present:**

Douglas Mullen, Anthony Collins Solicitors  
Bill Tomlinson, Chairman, Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre  
Shelley Merrett, Housing Research Officer, Derby City Council

### **10/31 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Saadia Davis, Tabani Ndlovu, Margaret Redfern and Bob Troup.

### **10/32 Admission of Late Items**

The Chair admitted one late item on the Transfer of Part of Environmental Services Department (ESD) to Derby Homes.

### **10/33 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.

The Chair informed the Board that he would like to change the agenda to discuss item A8 Support for Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre

first and secondly, item B2 Key Findings of Mini STATUS so that Bill Tomlinson and Shelley Merrett could leave the meeting early.

#### **10/34 Derby Homes' Support for Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre**

The Board received a report to look at how Derby Homes could help support the Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre.

The Chief Executive informed the Board that at the last Board meeting in January Board Members asked for a report on possible ways that Derby Homes could support the work of the Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre in Skegness. The Chairman, Bill Tomlinson, was present at the meeting and gave a description of how the centre evolved. He also explained the children are from deprived backgrounds and they enjoy a seaside holiday at the centre. The children's self esteem, communication skills, and confidence to integrate with peer group increases from their holiday experience. The children visit the nature reserve, dancing, skating, and visit the cinema. These events are a social life they do not experience back at home.

Roy Webb declared his interest that he is a patron of Derby Kids Camp and would not vote on this matter.

Iain asked if Derby Homes was ignoring other organisations that could be sponsored. The Chief Executive acknowledged there were other organisations. However, Derby Homes proposed to support this holiday centre for one year and will report back to the Board. The Chair added that there are other organisations that Derby Homes works with like Enthusiasm and the Family Intervention Project. He suggested that where families qualify from these projects the children could be sponsored to go to the children centre for a holiday. The Chief Executive added he will speak to Bill Tomlinson about Enthusiasm and the Family Intervention Project and publicise Derby Homes' support for Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre in the Derby Homes News.

#### **Agreed**

The Board agreed to provide financial support to the Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre as set out in the report for one year.

#### **10/35 Minutes of Previous Meeting on 28 January 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2010 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the exception that Rolls Royce Ltd should be written with a hyphen between Rolls-Royce.

## **10/36 Matters Arising**

### **Minute 09/146 Presentation by David Hall, Tribal, on HRA Review**

The Chief Executive informed the Board that he heard today the Government has announced the HRA opt out from the subsidy system. He will contact Tribal for further information and forward this to Board Members.

### **Minute 10/12 Chief Executive's Update**

Tony Holme asked if action 8 in the report, to develop a robust 10 year business plan which would form Derby Homes' promise to the Council and to tenants and leaseholders, had been produced. The Chief Executive replied that this had not been completed but there was a small paragraph in the Delivery and Business Plan.

The Chief Executive informed the Board that he had told Michael Foote of the Board's concerns on the future of Derby Homes. He will write a brief article for Derby Homes News to explain the process being followed to determine the future of Derby Homes.

### **Minute 10/17 Derby Homes' Draft Operating Budget 2010/11 and Reduction in Management Fee from 2010**

The Director and Company Secretary informed the Board that Derby Homes had lost £190,000 from the management fee 2010/11.

### **Minute 10/24 Late Report – Appointments to Audit Committee**

Paul Bayliss asked if the appointment of new Audit Committee members was finalised. The Director and Company Secretary replied that this was the case. She added the last Audit Committee meeting was an excellent meeting chaired by Tony Holme, in the absence of John Bloxsom, and the meeting was quorate.

## **10/37 Announcements from the Chair**

The Chair announced that

1. Iain MacDonald and he went to London to attend the All Party Parliamentary Group for ALMOs meeting at the House of Commons. However, he was disappointed with the outcome of the meeting with regard to the HRA review.
2. the Chief Executive and he attended the opening of the Mackworth Library where Mackworth Local Housing Office shares accommodation with the Police.

3. He had presented a gift to the new owner of a new build property bought under the Government shared ownership scheme.
4. The ALMO New Build Ceremony for the first handover will be in June at the Mayor's office and invitations will be sent to all Board Members.

#### **10/38 Announcements from Members of the Board**

Dennis Rees announced that the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) has no powers to charge for short notice inspection, however, the Communities and Local Government (CLG) does. The Chief Executive added that Derby Homes had a mock short notice inspection by Derwent Living. There will be a report on this inspection to Performance Management Committee.

#### **10/39 Questions to Derby Homes Board From Members of the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

#### **10/40 Questions from Derby City Council**

There were no questions from Derby City Council.

#### **10/41 Committee Chairs' Feedback**

Chairs of Derby Homes' Committees and Local Housing Boards provided highlights from previous meetings.

Iain MacDonald, Chair of Development & Regeneration Committee:

- Handover of Derby Homes' new build properties expected by April/May 2010.
- The Council Cabinet had endorsed the master plan vision and agreed a consultation process in Osmaston where Derby Homes hopes to be involved in housing development and regeneration work.
- Derby Homes has submitted Elton Road new build for a housing design award.

David Batey on behalf of Tabani Ndlovu, Chair of Performance Management Committee:

- Three areas for performance improvements on Re-lets (Voids and Lettings), 6 weeks repairs and jobs completed at first visit, which is expected to improve once handhelds are in place.

- ESD integration to be closely monitored and steps taken to ensure performance does not fall.

Tony Holme on behalf of John Bloxsom, Chair of Audit Committee:

- Presentation from Hamid Ghafoor, PKF External Auditors, on their audit strategy for year end 2009/10.
- Assessment of Internal Audit - service scored and suggestions for improvement were made, subject to final approval by the Chair at the next meeting.
- Improvement in the credit control service relating to debtors where outstanding debts had been reduced.
- Monitoring action arising from Internal Audit recommendations.

Dennis Rees, Chair of Local Housing Board North:

- Derby Homes' furniture pack scheme is on the list of items to be included as part of the service charge review.
- Agreed marketing partnership with EBICO, a fuel supply company, to promote their services to tenants and leaseholders.
- Flats audit - requested more information explaining what has been done to move flats up from red to amber and green.

Paul Bayliss, Chair of Local Housing Board South:

- Agreed marketing partnership with EBICO, a fuel supply company, to promote their services to tenants and leaseholders.
- Would like to see Local Housing Managers present Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids.
- Agreed to keep the current car parking arrangements in place at Donington Close as recommended by the majority of the residents.

## **10/42 Key Findings of Mini STATUS**

The Board received a presentation from Shelley Merrett, Derby City Council's Housing Research Officer. She highlighted the main findings of five mini STATUS surveys carried out with tenants over a five month period within Derby Homes' five Housing Focus Group areas. The presentation compared the five areas and provided overall data for all respondents of the five surveys. The postal survey was a shorter version of STATUS with a random sample of 850 tenants from each area. The survey showed that respondents in the North were more satisfied than the South and those in the North West were more satisfied than the South East 2. Overall, 82% of respondents were satisfied with Derby Homes.

The Chief Executive commented that he would prefer 100% of tenants received questionnaires in the STATUS surveys instead of 20%. John

Bloxsom suggested doing the mini survey door to door or by telephone to increase the response rate. The Chair also suggested doing the mini survey on-line as it would be cheaper.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the findings of the Mini STATUS.

**10/43 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, j and n) of Part IV of Derby Homes Governance Arrangements.

**10/44 Late Item Transfer of Part of Environmental Services Department (ESD) to Derby Homes**

The Board received a late update report on the City Council's proposal to transfer housing services and public buildings services from ESD to Derby Homes.

**Agreed**

The Board approved recommendations 2.1 to 2.4 in the report.

**10/45 Standing Order 12**

During discussion of the above item, the Board agreed to waive Standing Order 12 to allow the meeting to continue after 8.00 pm.

**10/46 Chief Executive Update**

The Board received an update from the Chief Executive.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

**10/47 Insurance Renewal 2010/11**

The Board received a report with details of the insurance renewal proposals submitted by Farr PLC. The report contained details submitted by Farr of an annual review and indicated renewal premiums for the 12 months commencing 1 April 2010. .

## **Agreed**

The Board approved the renewal of insurance premiums on a like for like basis as proposed by Farr PLC and detailed in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

## **End of Confidential Business**

### **10/48 To agree any items from Part C to be discussed**

There were no items to be discussed from Part C. All items in Part C were noted but not discussed.

### **10/49 Health and Safety Update**

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

The Chief Executive referred to the letter from the Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service on audit of fire safety arrangements at Rivermead House. The Fire and Rescue Service identified a number of areas of work required to be completed by 30 April.

The Chief Executive informed the Board that violence and aggression cases had increased in January and February 2010 and Derby Evening Telegraph had reported a case from the report at the Austin Neighbourhood Base office calling the article “‘Slit throat’ threat is among 31 logged by housing workers”. The Chief Executive explained the report is based on the statements written by staff soon after the event and accurate to how the staff felt. He asked the Board if the report should go to the Health and Safety Working Party to see if future reports could be summarised. Roy Webb replied that it should carry on through the normal process by the person involved otherwise it would lose its effectiveness if changed. Iain MacDonald said the report should be kept as it is because it is important that the Board know what staff have experienced.

Tony Holme asked if there would be fire assessments at all flats. The Chief Executive replied that there already are. Fire Safety Officers have noticed an increase in calor gas heaters and bottles because of the cold winter spell. Calor gas bottles are a potential bomb and should not be used. Tenants had used them because they could not afford normal heating. There is a requirement to make all communal areas ‘sterile’ with no combustible materials or obstructions. There is also a continued issue of mobility scooters in flats.

## **Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

### **10/50 Draft Delivery and Business Plan 2010 – 2011**

The Board received a report containing the proposed initiatives and targets for 2010/11 shown against the eight strategic objectives.

The Chair asked the Board if they wished to discuss the report during the meeting or email questions and suggestions to the Director and Company Secretary. The Board agreed to send any questions and comments to the Director and Company Secretary.

The Chair commented that the report was very good and congratulated the Performance Team.

## **Agreed**

The Board

1. recommended, subject to minor amendment, the proposed initiatives and targets are agreed by Derby City Council within the update of the 2010/11 Delivery and Business Plan
2. agreed to send any questions and comments to the Director and Company Secretary.

### **10/51 Review of Key Policies**

The Board received a report providing a schedule of key policies with recommended timetable for their review by the Board or Committees.

The Director and Company Secretary informed the Board that this was a first attempt to compile a schedule of Derby Homes' key policies for review as suggested by John Bloxsom at a previous meeting. Tony Holme asked if the policy on Risk Management be included. The Director and Company Secretary replied that this policy is outstanding but will be included on the schedule once it has been approved. It will be reviewed by the Performance Management Committee. Alison Brown queried how it was decided Anti Social Behaviour is reviewed by Local Housing Boards and other policies go to the Board. The Director and Company Secretary replied that this schedule is still a work in progress and will continue to be updated.

## **Agreed**

The Board approved

1. the schedule for the review of Derby Homes key policies, attached at Appendix 1
2. key policies are reviewed at least every three years.

### **10/52 Board Annual Training Programme 2010/11**

The Board received a report setting out the proposals for the Board's annual training programme for 2010/11.

Alison Brown asked if the advance training for Board Members could be more developed. The Governance Services Manager replied that the quality of the basic and advanced courses is under review.

## **Agreed**

The Board

1. approved the annual Board training programme 2010/11
2. agreed attendance at essential training courses is extended to Local Housing Board Members
3. noted the proposals for the development of Board Members training.

### **10/53 CIH Conference and NFA Annual Conference and AGM 2010**

The Board received a report to consider Board Members' attendance at the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) on 22 – 24 June and National Federation of ALMOs (NFA) Annual Conferences on 15 – 16 July 2010.

There are two places available for up to two days' attendance at both conferences. The Chair asked the Board to inform the Governance Services Manager if they wish to attend the conferences.

## **Agreed**

The Board approved the attendance of two Board Members at the

1. Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Annual Conference in Harrogate on 22- 24 June 2010.

2. NFA Annual Conference & Awards Ceremony in Manchester on 15-16 July 2010.

#### **10/54 Derby Homes Operating Budget 2010-11**

The Board received a report confirming the late changes to the Derby Homes operating budget for 2010/11.

The Director and Company Secretary informed the Board that the changes have not affected the budget. The grant funding for the Family Intervention Project and the Supporting People income had been confirmed at £136,000 and £10,000 respectively less than forecasted.

#### **Agreed**

The Board noted the late changes to the operating budget for 2010/11 and beyond.

#### **10/55 Draft Minutes of Committees and Local Housing Boards**

The Board received the draft minutes of recent meetings of its Committees:

- a. Audit – 15 March 2010
- b. Development & Regeneration – 28 January 2010
- c. Governance Services – 29 January 2010
- d. Performance Management – 25 January 2010
- e. Local Housing Board North – 11 February 2010
- f. Local Housing Board South – 18 February 2010

#### **Agreed**

The Board noted but did not discuss the minutes.

#### **10/56 Council Cabinet Finance Reports**

The Board received a report from the Chief Executive with his comments on the Council's approval of the Cabinet's recommendations for Housing Rents and Service Charges 2010/11 and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Budget 2010/11.

#### **Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**10/57 Society Results**

The Board received a report which provided information on measuring the numbers of positive and negative press releases, monies raised for charity and sponsorships.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**10/58 Derby Homes' Forward Plan of Agenda Items**

The Board received a forward plan of agenda items for a six month period from April 2010.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**10/59 Derby Homes' Diary Planner**

The Board received a diary planner of events taking place for the six months from April 2010.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**Date of next meeting**

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday 27 May 2010 at 6.00 pm at Cardinal Square.**

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 25 March 2010.