

PART XII

Protocol on Board Member, Executive Team and Staff Relations

1. PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 The roles of Board members, Executive Team and staff, remain distinct. Board members are not employees and serve only as long as their term of office lasts. Staff are employees who serve the interests of Derby Homes, Board members, tenants, leaseholders and other residents of council housing estates, and are responsible to the Executive Team for their day to day performance.
- 1.2 Mutual respect between Board members and staff is essential for good management of the organisation. The different accountabilities need to be understood and respected.
- 1.3 The Board believes that out of this mutual respect a healthy atmosphere will prevail where all members feel free to question and challenge staff and where staff feel free to manage and to offer full and frank advice to members.

2. ROLES OF MEMBERS

- 2.1 The members of the Board will have the following leadership roles
 - leading the business planning process and the search for best value
 - approving Derby Homes' strategies, key policies and budget
 - taking decisions to deliver the budget and policies
 - being the partnership forming focus of Derby Homes.

3. ROLES OF THE EXECUTIVE TEAM AND STAFF

- 3.1 The Executive Team and staff are responsible for
 - taking day-to-day managerial and operational decisions
 - advising and supporting all members in their above roles.
- 3.2 Senior staff, particularly the Executive Team, have additional roles in arbitration to ensure that Derby Homes' business is conducted fairly and with propriety if needs be.

- 3.3 The Executive Team and staff are employed by, and accountable to Derby Homes as a whole.

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXECUTIVE TEAM, STAFF AND THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIRS OF THE BOARD

- 4.1 Even though staff serve Derby Homes, it is inevitable that staff, and the Executive Team in particular, will have a closer working relationship with Board members. Staff, therefore, can have a difficult job in balancing the sometimes conflicting demands of delivering professional judgement and advice, satisfying the need of all Board members and retaining the confidence of the Chair or Vice Chairs.
- 4.2 There is a potential for tension between staff and Board members. This can be avoided by all involved recognising the particular roles set out in parts 2 and 3 of this Protocol for both members and staff.

5. OFFICERS' RELATIONSHIP WITH COUNCILLOR AND TENANT BOARD MEMBERS

- 5.1 In their capacity as representatives of Derby Homes, councillor and tenant members of the Board will naturally be keen to bring about improvements and the resolution of problems which relate to their own areas. Derby Homes staff have to do what they reasonably can to support the representative role of all councillor and tenant Board members.
- 5.2 Councillor and tenant Board members have to remember that staff have to look after the needs of Derby Homes as a whole, and in doing so, they have to apply the appropriate policies and procedures laid down by the organisation.

6. ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

- 6.1 In addition to the rights that everybody has under access to information provisions, Board members also have a right to inspect documents held within Derby Homes, where this is reasonably necessary for the performance of their duties.
- 6.2 In cases of dispute, the Finance Director and Company Secretary will determine the eligibility of members to access documents.
- 6.3 Members and staff inevitably come into possession of information which has been identified, or would be identified, as exempt or confidential information for the purposes of the access to information provisions. This information should

not be disclosed to the media or to the general public by Board members or staff.

7. CO-OPTED PERSONS

- 7.1 The Board may invite non-members to sit on various bodies that it establishes either as observers or shadow members.
- 7.2 Co-opted persons need to be made aware of the contents of this Protocol and that its principles apply to them.

8. PRESS RELEASES

- 8.1 Press releases are issued by Derby Homes.
- 8.2 Press releases are not issued by Derby Homes on behalf of political groups. They can however contain the comments of Board members and the Chair and Vice Chairs where they are speaking in connection with the roles given to them by Derby Homes. The Executive Team's comments can be included on professional and technical issues.
- 8.3 Copies of all press releases issued will be sent to all Board members and to all staff of Derby Homes.

9. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

- 9.1 Correspondence between Board members and staff should normally be kept on a confidential basis.
- 9.2 However, if it is considered necessary by staff, having received the advice of the Finance Director and Company Secretary, to disclose the contents of the communication to other Board members, then the member concerned will be informed in advance that this will happen and the reasons for doing so. This will underpin the arbitration role of staff.

10. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Mutual respect between employees and Board members is essential. Close personal relationships between employees and individual Board members can damage this respect. They should be avoided because it can embarrass other employees and Board members.