

# **DERBY HOMES LIMITED**

## **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING**

**Held on Thursday 30 September 2010**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

### **Board Members Present:**

Mick Barker, John Bloxsom, Tony Holme, Iain MacDonald, Tabani Ndlovu, Bob Osler (Chair), Brian Perry, Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees, Mary Rowland (arrived at 6.35 pm), Bob Troup, Roy Webb, Ken Whitehead.

### **Officers Present:**

Shaun Bennett, Phil Davies, Matt Hands, Susan Hill, Jackie Mitchell, Maria Murphy

### **Others Present:**

- Councillor Philip Ingall
- Angelina Novakovic, Housing Strategy and Research Manager, Derby City Council, for Item C2 Findings of the Mini STATUS 2009/10 Survey
- Anna Dabek, Anthony Collins Solicitors for Late Item Gas Servicing and Maintenance – Urgent Decision
- Lisa Callow, Housing Options Manager, Housing Options Centre, for Item B6 Allocations Policy Review
- Kim Morgan, Housing Advice Manager (Register), Housing Options Centre, for Item B6 Allocations Policy Review

### **10/112 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Bayliss, Alison Brown, and Lorraine Watson

### **10/113 Admission of Late Items**

The Chair admitted one late item on Gas Servicing and Maintenance – Urgent Decision.

#### **10/114    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.

Executive Team declared their interest in A3 Review of Chief Executive and Directors.

The Chair informed the Board that the agenda would change slightly so that certain officers could leave the meeting earlier. The items were C2 Mini STATUS 2009/10 Survey and B6 Allocations Policy Review.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Philip Ingall, Cabinet Member for Housing and Advice.

#### **10/115    Findings of the Mini STATUS 2009/10 Survey (Summary of the Second Wave)**

The Board received a report highlighting the main findings of the Mini STATUS survey. The survey was carried out with a random selection of tenants from all five Housing Focus Group areas covering the whole City. The data was collected during March – July 2010 period. The aim of the report was to show the level of tenants' satisfaction with Derby Homes' services and to describe the most common problems and issues identified by residents.

Tony Holme referred to paragraph 3.7 of the report and asked what the largest proportion of comments were and asked if the comments could be categorised relating to cyclical maintenance. Angelina Novakovic replied that she would send the comments to him.

#### **Agreed**

The Board noted the contents of the report.

#### **10/116    Minutes of Previous Meeting on 29 July 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2010 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

## **10/117 Matters Arising**

### **Minute 10/90 Matters Arising**

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

Tony Holme asked if there was further news on Derby Homes' bid for the Public Building Works. The Director of Investment and Regeneration replied that the second round was not successful. The East Midlands Procurement Alliance (EMPA) would prefer contractors that are able to operate across multiple regions. It is possible that Phil Derbyshire, Derby City Council Property Services, may ask Derby Homes to carry on with the bid, if Derby Homes could make the service efficient.

### **Minute 10/96 Chief Executive's Update**

Bob Troup asked if there was any progress on the purchase of properties in the Home Group's Central England stock with Nottingham Community Housing Association. The Chief Executive replied that he had not heard any further from them.

Iain MacDonald asked when the visit to the housing trust at Welwyn Garden City will be. Dennis Rees replied that he has no date as yet but if anyone would like to go, to contact him.

The Chief Executive added that Bob Osler, Dennis Rees and himself visited Watmos Housing Association today. This Housing Association manages an average of 300 properties, which was stock transferred from the council. They control their own allocations and a lot of good work has happened since 1994. They have been invited to visit Derby Homes.

### **Minute 10/98 Health and Safety Update**

The Chief Executive informed the Board that the additional Health and Safety Advisor has been recruited.

Ken Whitehead added that there is now an Action Plan to help resolve the air conditioning issues. A copy of the Action Plan will be sent to all Board Members.

### **Minute 10/102 Derby Homes Annual General Meeting – 28 October 2010**

The Chief Executive informed the Board that YMCA had won the Lionel Massingham Award for 2010.

**Minute 10/105 Fire Safety Policy**

Mick Barker commented that he had not received the details of who carries out the fire risk assessments. The Director of investment and Regeneration apologised and agreed to arrange for this to be sent to him.

**10/118 Announcements from the Chair**

The Chair handed out photographs to Councillor Philip Ingall and Dennis Rees taken at the official opening of the first two new build properties at Penalton Close, Allenton.

He also announced that Derby Homes has been awarded the Disability Symbol Employer Status for a further 12 months.

The Chair informed the Board that he will send a reply to the email sent to all Board Members from Gloria Glasby, UNISON, on concerns with the restructure of Derby Homes. It was noted that not every Board Member had received this email from Gloria. The Chair informed the Board that he will send his reply to her and to all Board Members.

**10/119 Announcements from Members of the Board**

Margaret Redfern commented that she was not receiving the DACP newsletter. Dennis Rees replied that the newsletter had not been issued due to the restructure of the DACP but he will ensure she receives the newsletter in future.

**10/120 Questions to Derby Homes Board From Members of the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**Questions from Derby City Council**

There were no questions from Derby City Council.

**10/121 Committee Chairs' Feedback**

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

John Bloxsom, Chair of Audit Committee on 27 September 2010

- There was an extra meeting on 27 September 2010 to discuss the risk management and Internal Audit investigations on the Housing Repairs Team

- Response from Derby Homes on the Housing Repairs Team.

The Chair announced that John will be stepping down from Audit Committee as he will be changing jobs and will be unable to attend meetings. Tony Holme will be recommended to the Board for appointment as Chair.

Dennis Rees, Chair of the Local Housing Board North on 9 September 2010

- Items for Representatives from Contractor Partners – Connaught
- Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids
- Changes to Cleaning Contract
- Mobile Scooters
- Mini STATUS 2009/10 Second Wave – Findings.

Ken Whitehead, Vice Chair of the Local Housing Board South on 16 September 2010

- Mobility Scooters
- Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids
- Burglary Reduction Project
- Training for Local Housing Board members
- Customer Service Strategy
- Anti Social Behaviour Statistics
- Capital Programme 2011/12.

Bob Osler, Chair of Governance Services Committee on 23 September 2010

- Governance training in December which will be delivered by Simon Ramshaw of Anthony Collins Solicitors
- Review of Board Reports
- Review the Format and Role of the Chair's Group
- Review Committee Structures and Delegated Responsibilities.

## **10/122 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 (b, c, g and j) of Part IV of Derby Homes Governance Arrangements.

**10/123 Late Item Gas Servicing and Maintenance – Urgent Decision**

The Board received a report with an update on recent developments concerning the provision of gas servicing and maintenance in the aftermath of Connaught entering administration, including an urgent decision taken by the Chair and Vice Chairs on 16 September 2010.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

**10/124 Chief Executive's Update**

The Board received a report which included updates on:

- HRA Review
- Future of Derby Homes
- Incident in Waterford Drive, Chaddesden
- Housing Benefit and Welfare Changes.

**Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

**10/125 Review of Chief Executive and Directors**

Shaun Bennett, Jackie Mitchell and Maria Murphy left the room whilst the item was discussed.

The Board received a report on the review of the Executive Team posts (Chief Executive and three Directors) and a proposal to fill the post of Director and Company Secretary.

**Agreed**

The Board approved

1. the existing structure of Chief Executive and 3 Directors be retained, as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report, and
2. that the Director and Company Secretary post be filled on a secondment for a 2 year period.

#### **10/126 Update on Derby Homes Repairs Team**

The Board received an update report on the progress made so far in modernising the way services are delivered by the Repairs Team.

Councillor Philip Ingall commented on the savings and achievements made and congratulated the Director of Investment and Regeneration and his team for their hard work.

#### **Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

#### **End of Confidential Business**

#### **10/127 To agree any items from Part C to be discussed**

All items in Part C were noted but not discussed.

#### **10/128 Health and Safety Update**

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

The Director of Housing and Customer Service informed the Board that Derby Homes has revised the management of violence and aggression reporting and warnings. The change allows improved coordination of information relating to violence and aggression, anti social behaviour cases and information from partner agencies including the Police and the Probation Service.

Tony Holme asked if t abusive incidents by tenants towards staff stay on their records. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that warnings are reviewed annually on Academy. Historical information is held against the person rather than the tenancy.

#### **Agreed**

The Board noted the report.

#### **10/129 Fire Safety Policy**

The Board received the Fire Safety Policy which was reviewed at the Board meeting on 29 July 2010. The Board requested that responsibilities of the Board and staff training should be incorporated

into the Policy. The Policy included these changes.

Tony Holme informed the Board that the section on Category 2 scheme states that Derby Homes operates a 'stay put' policy; however, there is no mention of this in the Flats section of the policy and he suggested this should be included. The Chief Executive agreed to incorporate the amendment.

Tony Holme also suggested that when items of furniture are removed, i.e. mirrors and pictures, from 'sterile areas' in block of flats that holes in the walls should be filled so as to keep the area aesthetically pleasant. Brian Perry also added if the reasons for the Fire Safety Policy could be publicised in Derby Homes News. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that letters will be sent out to all tenants and leaseholders regarding this over the next few weeks.

Margaret Redfern asked where tenants could keep their mobility scooters. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that in some cases, mobility scooters could be kept outside in a shed, for example, for safe storage. It will have to be negotiated with tenants what might be reasonable for storing their mobility scooters. It is part of the Conditions of Tenancy not to park mobility scooters in communal areas. Injunctive proceedings can be considered as an alternative to possession. The Chief Executive added that it is the flat that is rented and not the communal area. Roy Webb commented that some tenants do pay cleaning charges for communal areas and this could be an issue.

### **Agreed**

The Board approved the Policy subject to including 'Derby Homes operates a 'stay put' policy' in the Flats section.

## **10/130 Allocations Policy Review**

The Board received a report setting out the Chief Executive's response to 25 questions asked in a Council questionnaire on the review of the Allocations Policy. The report reproduced the top nine questions that the Chief Executive thought the Board might be most interested in, plus his responses.

### **1. Rents arrears, minor anti-social behaviour and recharges**

Roy Webb commented that before tenants are rehoused, their debts should be paid and there should be a proper format in place in the future for money owing to Derby Homes. The Chief Executive replied that tenants cannot move into new premises by law under these



circumstances, arrears are difficult for tenants to pay, but generally some tenants do pay.

Kim Morgan added that there is an exclusion policy for anti social behaviour (ASB) tenants. However, applications from tenants in debt could be suspended, but vulnerability of applicants could be defended using the Housing Regulations. On the other hand, tenant related debts and ASB are not acceptable.

## **2. Quota advertised to Bands**

John Bloxsom would like the system to be more transparent so as to understand it and to keep the 'needs points band'.

## **9. Additional changes to the Allocation Policy**

John Bloxsom suggested using the existing needs points criteria because it helps the community to make it transparent.

Margaret Redfern asked if tenants could appeal against policy decisions. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that tenants can appeal to the Housing Options Centre.

## **Agreed**

The Board agreed with the responses in the report and that they be forwarded to the Council as the Board's response to the Allocations Policy questionnaire.

### **10/131 Standing Order 12**

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

### **10/132 Delivering Efficiencies in Corporate and Transactional Services (DECATS) and Business Transformation**

The Board received a report of the Executive Team's recommendations on how Derby Homes could achieve £2.2m of savings and efficiencies by April 2015, against the baseline of Derby Homes' fee in 2010-11.

The Chair informed the Board that the DECATS report will now be referred to 'Business Transformation.'

John Bloxsom asked for clarification on recommendation 2.2 that if Appendix B was to be approved should the delegated powers not be changed. The Chief Executive replied Appendix B covered this and the Governance Arrangements will be looked at, at the AGM.

Roy Webb suggested changing the Core Values in Appendix A to 'Integrity – we are open and honest and we (insert 'aim to') keep our promises' and 'Work Safely – we (delete 'will') prioritise health and safety for customers and staff.'

Margaret Redfern suggested deleting 'we do not stand still' for the Innovation Core Value.

Roy Webb referred to Appendix B, Governance. He asked whether the Local Housing Boards representatives should be consulted on combining the two Local Housing Boards into one City Wide Housing Committee and therefore, the Board cannot approve this point. Mary Rowland commented that this report had been presented at meetings with the DACP and the Local Housing Board representatives recently.

The Board voted on the proposal to combine the two Local Housing Boards into one City Wide Housing Committee. Eleven Board Members were in favour and two were against.

The Board also voted on replacing the current Governance Services Committee meetings with two Governance Review meetings. Eleven Board Members were in favour and two were against.

The Board supported all other proposals contained in Appendix B but noted the proposals on Housing and Customer Services will be brought back to the Board after consultation has taken place.

Tony Holme suggested Derby Homes could consider the performance tool that was presented at the Excellence in Action Conference, Oxford, where members could access the tool to view the performance data.

## **Agreed**

The Board approved

1. the new mission, core values and strategic objectives in Appendix A, subject to changes mentioned above
2. the broad principles of Delivering Efficiencies in Corporate and Transactional Services (DECATS) and Business Transformation outlined in this report in paragraph 3.7 and Appendix B, subject to consulting Local Housing Boards representatives on the implementation of combining the two Local Housing Boards into one City Wide Housing Committee
3. the delegation of all staffing changes, including the Senior Management Team and Principal Officer review, to the Chief Executive and Executive Team

4. setting up an Invest to Save fund of £500,000, using £250,000 from early payment of fee, repayable from future savings in fee, and a matching sum from Derby Homes' reserves
5. progress to be reviewed at Value for Money Working Parties
6. progress report to be brought for information to all future Board meetings
7. consultation on the detailed customer service proposals, such as changes to opening hours or shutting down of cash offices, local offices and community rooms to be with Local Housing Boards and Housing Focus Groups, local tenants, Councillors, and final decisions to be made by the Board.

### **10/133 Customer Service Strategy**

The Board received a report on the Customer Service Strategy which had been updated and incorporates strategies for customer access and marketing and communication. A separate strategy for website development and maximising electronic access to services will be presented in November 2010.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service informed the Board that paragraph 3.5 'We will reward good customers and neighbours' had been added. The Local Housing Boards considered the draft strategy in September and their comments had been taken into account, in particular to encourage two-way communication with customers.

#### **Agreed**

The Board approved the Customer Services Strategy.

### **10/134 Review of Governance Arrangements**

The Board received a report of a review of the Governance Arrangements.

#### **Agreed**

The Board approved

1. the deferral of the review of Derby Homes' Governance Arrangements until a decision on the future of Derby Homes has been agreed
2. a rewrite of the Financial Regulations to be submitted to the Board for approval on 27 January 2011.

**10/135 Draft Minutes of Committees and Local Housing Boards**

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

- a. Performance Management – 26 July 2010
- b. Local Housing Board North – 9 September 2010
- c. Local Housing Board South – 16 September 2010

**Agreed**

The Board noted but did not discuss the minutes.

**10/136 Board Improvement Action Plan Update**

The Board received an updated report on progress made to implement the Board Improvement Action Plan.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**10/137 Derby Homes' Forward Plan of Agenda Items**

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

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**10/138 Derby Homes' Diary Planner**

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

The Chief Executive invited the Board to the Staff Conference on 5 November 2010.

**Agreed**

The report was noted.

**10/139 Any Other Business**

The Board thanked Mary Rowland for her work as a Board Member as she was standing down from the Board in October. Mary thanked the Board for their support and how she had enjoyed being a Board Member.

**Date of next meeting**

**The Annual General Meeting and Board meeting will be held on Thursday 28 October 2010 at 3.00 pm at the Spot Conference Centre.**

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 30 September 2010.