

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE CITY BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 20 June 2013

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Board Members Present:

Mike Ainsley, Susan Boon, Jim Elks, Tony Holme, Wendy Jessop, Bob MacDonald, Harry Margett, Brian Perry, Janice Platt, Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees (Chair), Peter Simpson, Bob Troup, Ian Veitch, Fiona Walker, Michael Waplington

Officers Present:

Shaun Bennett, Director of Investment and Regeneration
Paul Cole, Communications and Marketing Officer
Mark Crown, Housing Project and Research Officer
Mary Holmes, Customer Services Manager
Clare Mehrbani, Head of Housing Management
Maria Murphy, Acting Chief Executive
Richard Platt, Resident Involvement Administration Officer
Julie Wren, Directors' Secretary

Observers Present:

Keith Merry, Tenant Panel Member
Anthony Slater, Chairman of OSCAR
Gary Woolley, OSCAR Member

13/49 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Bob Osler and Jolanta Szatkowska

13/50 Admission of Late Items

There were none.

13/51 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.

13/52 Update on Derby Homes Review

A report was taken to the Council Cabinet meeting on 15 May on the future arrangements for Council Housing. A link to the report will be sent to City Board members.

At the Derby Homes Board meeting held on 30 May discussion took place on the Cabinet's decision. A Board Away Day has now been planned for Saturday 29 June to look at how the Board can implement the Council's proposals put forward.

Maria Murphy assured the City Board members that the proposals put forward on the future of Derby Homes are very positive. She has no concerns around the future of Derby Homes and the level of service tenants will receive.

13/53 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 April 2013 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

13/54 Matters Arising

Minute 13/36 Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups – the gates at the bungalows on Oakleigh Avenue have now been adjusted and working well.

Minute 13/39 Tenant Panel Review – Energy saving packs are being put together. The Chair asked if the Tenant Panel could have a look at a pack before they are handed out.

Minute 13/43 Repairs Service Update – Tony Holme reported that Matt Hands, Head of Investment, had attended a Leaseholder Focus Group. He had advised that there is currently no statutory requirement for the carrying out of gas servicing for leaseholders who live in their own flat. It is only a requirement if the leaseholder is a landlord and subletting the flat to their own tenant. A small proportion of newer leases do contain a lease obligation to have their gas serviced every year, however this is not statutory and so not open to prosecution.

Minute 13/45 Rent Arrears and Welfare Reform – the subject of reclassification of properties has been discussed by the Labour Group

and they have said they do not propose to go down this route. Some authorities, such as Nottingham, have taken this line. The Minister for Welfare Reform has issued a warning to authorities doing this that their Housing Benefit subsidy will be reduced accordingly.

13/55 Questions from members of the public

There was none.

13/56 Any items from Part B to be discussed

There was none.

Tony Holme asked that the Repairs Teams be congratulated on the excellent statistics achieved. The Chair commented that he would like to scrutinise these figures as he is still receiving complaints from tenants about the service.

A request was made that Sodexo attends the next meeting to respond to complaints raised on the service they provide. Shaun Bennett asked if these issues could be sent to him before the next meeting.

13/57 Items for representatives from Contractor Partners

There were no representatives present.

13/58 Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' and Equality Groups Items and Feedback from HFG Facilitators

The City Board received a report with details of Customer Service Management cases/issues raised at Housing Focus Groups (HFGs), Derby Leaseholder Focus Group (LFG) and the Equality Groups.

The HFG facilitators reported that meetings had been positive although some were poorly attended. A question was raised on the validity of attending the meetings as issues raised are not dealt with. Maria Murphy advised that there is half an hour prior to the meetings for tenants and leaseholders to flag up with staff any issues. She added that perhaps this needs to be publicised more.

Ian Veitch referred to the 6.00 pm start time for the HFG meetings which is when most people sit down to eat. He also commented that the location of meetings makes it difficult for people to attend, especially if relying on public transport. The Chair advised that this will all be looked at as part of the review of Resident Involvement.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/59 Training Update

The City Board received a report on the training available for City Board Members. However with the current review of Housing Services taking place it has been decided to postpone the planned Housing Management and Performance training sessions.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/60 Raising the Profile of the City Board

The City Board received a report containing proposals for the promotion of City Board members in their communities.

Proposals put forward include:

- Issue members with custom City Board Member referral cards
- Review the information on the Derby Homes' website to give more detail, highlight the work of the City Board and feature members' photographs with brief personal profiles
- Attendance of City Board members at HFG's. The members can then provide feedback from City Board meetings to the HFG and vice-versa.

A further suggestion is to hold a City Board surgery between 5.00 – 6.00 pm prior to the meeting to give members opportunity to raise individual cases.

Concerns were raised on the possibility of putting too much responsibility on City Board members. There is also a risk that we create another tier alongside Derby Homes' staff. Another issue raised was the possibility of people living in the area finding out the addresses of City Board members and approaching them or other family members.

Maria Murphy said she was in favour of the referral card however this item has opened a bigger conversation on the role of the City Board. She will sit down with Clare Mehrbani to discuss this further. The Board away day on 29 June will also look at further empowering the City Board.

Agreed

The City Board agreed to the proposals as outlined in Section 3 of the report.

13/61 Tenants Rewards Scheme

The City Board received a report containing proposals for a revised Tenants Rewards programme.

Michael Waplington said he did not agree to the criteria of using the dashboard and that tenants with 'no proven ASB in the last 2 years' could qualify as many cases are raised but cannot always be proven. Maria Murphy explained that tenants who use the dashboard save Derby Homes a lot of money which means the resources we have are used more effectively.

Comments made that tenants who are in arrears should not qualify as this will in effect mean we are paying off their arrears. Although it was noted that due to the under-occupation charge, some tenants are in arrears that never have been before, this cannot be distinguished from other arrears.

Maria Murphy proposed that City Board members agree to all proposals put forward apart from the eligibility of tenants in arrears. A vote was taken resulting in 13 in favour and 2 against.

Agreed

The City Board:

1. Agreed to the proposals in section 3.5 and 3.6 for a revised Tenant Rewards programme with the exception of the eligibility criteria for tenants in arrears.
2. Agreed that further consideration be given to the use of the balance of funding as a result of saving £23,000.

13/62 East Midlands Credit Union Consortium (EMCU)

In the absence of Derek Doran, Programme Manager for the East Midlands Credit Union Consortium, Mark Crown provided the City Board with a presentation on the EMCU.

Work has taken place with Erewash who are part of a consortium which is funded by RSL's. 30 social landlords have put a total of

£171K into the pot. Out of this Derby Homes has been given £13,500. For each tenant there is a cost of £10 joining fee which Derby Homes pays and £9 per year for collection of rent.

There are approximately 8,000 people classed as high risk groups who will be offered a rent payment account. These are broken into 4 groups which are:

- New tenants
- Tenants affected by the bedroom tax
- Those who do not pay by direct debit or any other bank account and are not in arrears
- Those in arrears who do not have direct debit

The benefit of this account is the rent gets paid each month therefore securing the tenancy. Also the tenant cannot go overdrawn.

A total of 33 staff have been trained to work on this. Peter Simpson asked if this was something City Board members could be involved with. Mark Crown said that tenants can become volunteers but they would need proper training first.

The City Board members thanked Mark Crown for the presentation.

13/63 Directors' Update

The City Board received an update report providing a general overview and update on current issues. The update included

- New Build
- Asset Management/Planned Maintenance
- Energy Efficiency
- Repairs Team Update
- Nomination for National Federation of ALMO's Award
- New Appointments
- Community Initiatives

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/64 Repairs Service Update

The City Board received an update on progress and developments the Repairs Team are continuing to make.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/65 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids

The City Board received a report containing an update on Quick Fix bids which have been approved by Housing Focus Groups.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/66 Rent Arrears and Welfare Reform – Update

The City Board received a report giving details on:

- The year-end position on rent arrears
- Current performance
- The initial impact of welfare reform – specifically the under occupation charge.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/67 Performance Monitoring – Year End

The City Board received a report detailing quarter 4 performance against targets reported to Derby City Council.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/68 Equalities Monitoring – Year End

The City Board received a report presenting a demographic picture of Derby City and equalities performance information for 2012/13 compared to previous years.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/69 Local Offers – Year End

The City Board received a report detailing quarter 4 performance against the Local Offers set by the Tenants and Leaseholders of Derby Homes.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/70 Complaints and Satisfaction – Year End

The City Board received a report providing detailed analysis of complaints received between 1 January and 31 March 2013.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/71 Tenant Panel Reviews 2013/14

The City Board received a report detailing the proposed reviews the Tenant Panel will be undertaking during 2013/14.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/72 Direct Debit Pilot

The City Board received a report containing an update on tenants who have access to bank accounts which facilitate direct debits and who would be able to pay by this method when migrated onto Universal Credit.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/73 Draft Minutes of Derby Homes Board meeting held on 30 May 2013

The City Board noted the draft minutes of the Derby Homes Board held on 30 May 2013.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 22 August at 6.00 pm at London Road.

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 20 June 2013.