

CLOSURE OF CASH OFFICES AT SUSSEX CIRCUS AND ALLENTON HOUSING OFFICES

Report of the Director of Housing Management and Customer Service

1. SUMMARY

The Board received a report on 30 September 2010 from the Executive Team recommending efficiency savings which were outlined in the proposals in the Delivering Efficiencies in Corporate and Transactional Services (DECATS) report. One of the recommendations was to close remaining cash offices.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Board approves the closure of the cash offices at Sussex Circus and Bingham Street Housing Offices by January 2011, subject to consultation with the City Board, local tenants and ward Councillors. The final decision to be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chairs.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 In 2003/04 Derby Homes reviewed the future of its cash offices.

The recommendations from the review were to close lowest used cash offices and were approved by the Board in April 2005.

These recommendations were based on changing circumstances including:

- the introduction of plastic rent payment cards and access to rent payment facilities at Post Offices and corner shops
- the introduction of on-line payment facilities and Direct Debit payments
- the reduction in fee paid to Derby Homes by Derby City Council for processing Council Tax receipts.

3.2 The number of cash offices was reduced, after full consultation with local residents, and advice to all tenants on alternative payment methods.

3.3 The delivery of front-line housing services is constantly evolving. In 2005 Derby Homes was invited to consider co-locating some Housing Offices to newly built or refurbished libraries. This resulted in Sinfyn and Alvaston Housing Offices moving into the libraries and closure of the cash offices. In 2010 Mackworth Housing Office also relocated to the newly built library and the cash office closed. Following all these changes the number of cash offices has reduced from 15 to two: Sussex Circus and Bingham Street.

- 3.4 In 2009 Derby Homes commissioned PriceWaterhouseCooper to undertake a DECATS exercise to identify areas for efficiencies. The report identified an opportunity to make ongoing savings of £1.2m a year. Amongst the proposals for delivering these efficiencies was a recommendation to close the remaining cash offices. The proposals were approved by Resources and Remuneration Committee on the 29 April 2010 and noted by Derby Homes Board at the meeting on 27 May 2010.

4. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

Consultation is currently underway in the neighbourhoods affected and with ward members. This report will also be considered by the City Board in December.

5. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Derby Homes will lose £20,000 a year from Derby City Council for the collection of council tax. However, efficiency savings will arise - £10,500 in Securicor services and £40,000 in cashier salaries and on costs.
- 5.2 Rent arrears have not increased following the closure of cash offices. Derby Homes has to make reductions in its costs of over £2m. The reduction in cash offices is an opportunity to reduce costs, whilst not adversely affecting services.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Some staff posts will be deleted, and all staff affected will be put on the 'at risk' register.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report

- Legal and Confidentiality
- Environmental
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- Health & Safety
- Risk
- Policy Review

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or the Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org - Tel 01332 711010

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Background Information: None.

Supporting Information: Board 28 April 2005 Item A6, Resources & Remuneration Committee 29 April 2010 Item C3, Board 27 May 2010 Item A4, Board 30 September 2010 Item B4