

# **DERBY HOMES LIMITED**

## **MINUTES OF THE CITY BOARD MEETING**

**Held on Thursday 28 February 2013**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

### **Board Members Present:**

Mike Ainsley, Susan Boon, Win Buchan, Jim Elks, Tony Holme, Wendy Jessop, Bob MacDonald, Harry Margett, Bob Osler, Brian Perry, Janice Platt, Dennis Rees (Chair), Peter Simpson, Jolanta Szatkowska, Ian Veitch, Fiona Walker, Michael Waplington, Linda Winter

### **Officers Present:**

Mick Archer, Head of Repairs  
Maureen Davis, Housing Operations Manager  
Jim Joyce, Resident Involvement and Resource Centre Manager  
Julie Wren, Directors' Secretary

Introductions were made for the benefit of Bob MacDonald, the new casual South East City Board Member.

The Chair informed City Board that this would be Maureen Davis' last City Board meeting as she will be retiring at the end of March. He thanked her for her hard work for Derby Homes and previously the Housing Department.

### **13/01 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Shaun Bennett, John Keith, Maria Murphy, Margaret Redfern and Ken Whitehead

### **13/02 Admission of Late Items**

The Chair agreed to include two late items under any other business.

### **13/03 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.

**13/04      Update on Derby Homes Review**

Maureen Davis provided a verbal update on the Council's review of Housing Services.

The Chair informed the City Board that Chris Langstaff has now finished his interim appointment with Derby Homes. He acknowledged the contribution Chris made in his short time with Derby Homes.

**13/05      Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13 December 2012 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

**13/06      Matters Arising**

**Minute 12/116 – Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups Items –**

Richard Holman, Contracts Manager and David Beadle, Derby City Council's Arboricultural Officer met with Harry Margett to inspect the trees at Shirland Court. The tree policy was explained and on inspection of the trees it was noted that they are healthy and of a suitable height. A further inspection will take place in a year's time.

The Chair said that Derby Homes pays a lot of money for this service but is unclear as to what we actually receive. A plan of future works will be provided for the next meeting along with a copy of the tree policy.

**13/07      Questions from members of the public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

**13/08      Items from Part B to be discussed**

**Agreed**

The City Board agreed to discuss Part B Items 1, 5, 7, 8, and 10.

**13/09      Items for representatives from Contractor Partners**

There were no representatives present.

**13/10      Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' and Equality Groups Items and Feedback from HFG Facilitators**

The City Board received a report with details of 2013 meeting dates for

Housing Focus Groups (HFGs), Derby Leaseholder Focus Group (LFG) and the Equality Groups.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/11 Training for City Board Members**

The City Board received a report of available training sessions.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/12 Tenants Rewards Review**

The City Board received a report on proposals for a revised Tenant Rewards programme. The aim of the scheme is to reward tenants who pay their rent regularly and on time as well as those who have fallen in to arrears but are maintaining agreements to clear their debt and rewarding other behaviours such as signing up to Direct Debit etc.

Following a review it was proposed that the scale of Tenant Rewards is contained within a £10K budget and that prizes are given in high street vouchers, rather than decoration vouchers or rent free weeks.

Some City Board Members were unhappy that tenants would be rewarded for paying their rent as this is within their tenancy agreement.

It was suggested that the £10K budget could be better used helping tenants who will struggle following the impending Welfare Reforms. The City Board was informed there is a Hardship Fund set up for those tenants affected who are struggling to pay.

It was clarified that a tenant cannot enter both draws, as detailed against the first two bullet points in paragraph 3.7. A comment was made that there are more draws for having a clear rent account rather than having an active Direct Debit account. This will be a disincentive for tenants to move to Direct Debit.

It was also felt that the qualifying criteria of being a Council or Derby Homes tenant for at least three months is too short a time.

## **Agreed**

The City Board did not approve the report and requested a revised report be brought back to the next City Board meeting.

### **13/13 Tenant Panel Review - Local Offer 20**

The City Board received a report showing the findings of the Tenant Panel's review of Local Offer 20 'Encourage and support projects that benefit the communities in which our tenants live', and presenting recommendations.

Peter Simpson spoke of a project in the Spondon area he is involved with. An area of land has been pledged on which it is hoped to create a youth club/chill-out area. The plan is to get young people in the area involved. Jim Joyce offered support and involvement by the Resident Involvement Team. Peter Simpson will contact Jim Joyce with all the details.

Discussion took place around the good work carried out within the T16 programme. The funding for T16 ended resulting in the loss of the Derby City Council's Youth Service Project Co-ordinator. The possibility of Derby Homes' funding this post was raised. The Chair advised that until the outcome of the Review is known, no decisions can be made.

Bob Osler said that if the outcome of the review is positive Derby Homes may be in a position to offer more support for these projects. He suggested planning a day to brain storm and put together a plan of action. He asked that an update is brought back to the June City Board meeting.

## **Agreed**

The City Board noted the recommendations made by the Tenant Panel and that an update will be brought back to the June meeting.

### **13/14 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
- Services funded by Supporting People
- Relocation to the Council House
- Recruitment to Senior Management Positions
- OSCAR shortlisting for UK Housing Awards 2013.

Clarification was requested regarding the proposal to replace the Supported Living Service with a new service of enhanced housing management for vulnerable tenants. Maureen Davis advised that Derby Homes had proposed a service charge to deliver this service but unfortunately it did not meet housing benefit requirements. The proposal is to fund the service from reserves for a 6 month period until a firmer solution is found.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/15 Equalities Monitoring Quarter 3 – Impact of Welfare Reform and Arrears**

The City Board received a report looking at the impact on our customers of the Under Occupancy Charge, contained within the Welfare Reform Act 2012, broken down by equality characteristics/ information.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/16 Performance Monitoring – Quarter 3**

The City Board received a report detailing Quarter 3 performance against targets reported to Derby City Council.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/17 Performance Monitoring – Local Offers Quarter 3**

The City Board received a report detailing Quarter 3 performance against the Local Offers set by the Tenants and Leaseholders of Derby Homes.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/18 Complaints and Satisfaction – Quarter 3**

The City Board received a report providing detailed analysis of complaints received between 1 October and 31 December 2012.

A query was raised as to why there appears to be higher numbers of complaints. Maureen Davis advised that Derby Homes now registers more issues as complaints.

A comment was made regarding only 50.2% of tenants being satisfied with the opportunities for participation in management decision making. Maureen Davis said she was unsure what else could be done to increase this as we currently try various methods to get involvement. Peter Simpson said he believed there is a lack of awareness.

It was noted that the figures in the table on page 75 (questionnaires sent out) is incorrect. Maureen Davis will look into this.

Bob Osler said it was a good report, however he would like an action plan showing how Derby Homes intends to make improvements to areas of low satisfaction.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/19 Repairs Service Update**

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

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/20 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids**

The City Board received an update on Quick Fix bids approved by Housing Focus Groups.

Jim Joyce spoke of the climbing wall. He has been trying to book 3 events however there are no Council staff available to run the sessions. Derby Homes has suggested its own staff could be trained but no response was received. The Chair asked that this is chased up.

Reference was made to the unallocated balances. Maureen Davis advised that tenants need to tell us what they want doing. Harry Margett spoke of a meeting he attended where areas where Sodexo (grounds maintenance and cleaning contractor) could go out and make improvements were identified.

Jim Joyce said that tenants struggle to come up with large scale projects on our estates. However if they can come up with lots of small ideas we could then get 2 or 3 Sodexo staff to go out and tackle the jobs all in one visit.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/21 Rent Arrears and Welfare Reform – Update**

The City Board received a report containing an update on

- progress on arrears management this year in comparison to last year
- an updated assessment of how the under occupation charge (sometimes called the 'bedroom tax') will impact on rent arrears during next financial year
- preparation for Welfare Reform, including information on the direct payment 'demonstration projects'. The potential impact of the introduction of Universal Credit on rent arrears levels can be gauged by this.

An event on Welfare Reform is to take place at the Assembly Rooms on 19 March. All tenants likely to be affected will be invited.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/22 Service Access Report (Website & Enquiry Centre Update)**

The City Board received a report explaining the progress on implementation of Derby Homes Customer Service Strategy.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**13/23 Enhanced Housing Management Service**

The City Board received a report containing an update on the commitment and the ongoing work being carried out to secure funding for an Enhanced Housing Management Service for elderly and vulnerable tenants.

## **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report and progress being made.

### **13/24 Any other business**

Janice Platt raised an issue on behalf of a neighbour who has complained about damp in their property and has been told it is condensation. Mick Archer will get full details and look into this. She also complained that when she went to the Council House to get a new Pay Point card, which she uses to pay her Council Tax and rent, the member of staff she saw claimed they did not know what this was. Maureen Davis advised her that Derby Homes staff are now placed at the Council House and will be able to help her.

Peter Simpson asked if it would be possible for members of the City Board to have a business card as people in his area are not aware that he is a member. This could contain other useful contact numbers. The Chair agreed this idea could be looked into. Bob Osler asked that the Marketing Team is contacted and asked to look at ways we can get promote members. A suggestion was made to have a web-page containing profiles. This could also include details of how tenants can become involved.

### **13/25 Confidential Report**

Under Part IV of the Derby Homes Governance Arrangements, members of the public were excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential information as defined in Standing Order 18.2(b).

### **13/26 Review of the Community Watch Patrol**

The City Board received a report regarding the delivery of the Community Watch Patrol service.

## **Agreed**

The City Board agreed to the proposal.



**Date of next meeting**

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday 18 April at 6.00 pm at London Road.**

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 28 February 2013.

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