

# **DERBY HOMES LIMITED**

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

**Held on Thursday 28 April 2011**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

### **Board Members Present:**

Dennis Rees (Chair), Bob Osler, Paul Bayliss, Bob Troup, Ian Veitch, Tony Holme, Ken Whitehead, Patrick Molson, Win Buchan, Jim Elks, Lyn Gilbey, Harry Margett, Margaret Redfern,

### **Officers Present:**

Phil Davies, Shaun Bennett, Maria Murphy, Lorraine Howe, Paul Cole, Margaret Wardle, Shelley Merrett, Julie Wren

One minute silence was held for Betty Cooney, City Board Deputy who passed away on 23 March 2011.

### **11/24 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Maureen Davis, Mick Barker, Brian Perry and Jack Wray.

### **11/25 Admission of Late Items**

There were none.

### **11/26 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.

### **11/27 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 24 February 2011 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

## **11/28 Matters Arising**

**Minute 11/02 Confidential Item** - The Director of Housing and Customer Service informed the City Board that a date of 15 May has been received for the possession of the flat on Rauche Court. This had been closed down by the Police due to it being used for drugs and prostitution.

## **11/29 Questions from members of the public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

## **11/30 Items from Part B to be discussed**

The City Board agreed to discuss items B2 and B6. All other reports on Part B of the agenda were noted but not discussed.

## **11/31 Training for City Board members**

The Chair informed the City Board Members that they should contact Jackie Mitchell, Governance Services Manager, if they have any requests for training.

Harry Margett referred to the walkabouts carried out by Housing Officers and asked if it was possible to shadow one. The Director of Housing and Customer Service agreed to circulate the dates and arrange this with the Local Housing Managers.

### **Agreed**

The Director of Housing and Customer Service will circulate the dates for estate walkabouts.

## **11/32 Items from Contractor Partners**

There were no items from Contractor Partners

## **11/33 Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' Items**

The City Board received a report detailing issues raised at Housing Focus Groups (HFG's), Leaseholders Focus Groups and Equality Groups.

The Resident Involvement Officer advised that the one outstanding issue has now been resolved.

Win Buchan advised the City Board that she had 3 issues she would like to raise. The first was an issue with a door control system not working at a block of flats which took 5 weeks to address. She referred

to the policy for missed appointments and suggested that Derby Homes' considers something similar for leaseholders not receiving prompt action.

The second issue was about the contractor not reopening the drying areas after they carried out work to a flat roof.

The third issue related to a presentation by Murray Chapman on the Concierge system which had shown that the estimated annual service charges contained increases for both the concierge and communal cleaning charges but in her opinion the amount was excessive and that Derby Homes should not be entitled to make this increase.

The Chair advised Win Buchan that charges for communal cleaning had been brought to the City Board several months ago. Tony Holme said leaseholders are now paying the amount that they should, but the issue is that the percentage it has gone up by. The Chair advised that these issues should be raised at Leaseholder meetings.

The Director of Investment and Regeneration informed the City Board that he would look into the issues of the door entry system and the driers and provide comments back.

### **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

## **11/34 Local Issues – Verbal Update**

Harry Margett raised a query regarding the gardening scheme. A tenant has reported that Vale has not been to their area since November. However a letter had been sent advising that Derby Homes is taking this work over. A calendar has also been sent showing the dates they will visit. The Chair asked the Director of Investment and Regeneration who would be doing this work as it was confusing tenants. The Director of Investment and Regeneration confirmed the work will be carried out by Vale and that he will get clearer clarification. He asked that Harry Margett provide him with the address of the tenant so that he can follow this up.

Paul Bayliss raised the lack of bins on the Keldholme Lane estate and Garsdale Court area. Complaints have been received from tenants that they do not have a 3 bin system and are unable to recycle waste. The Chief Executive replied that he has emailed and met with Tim Clegg, Director of Streetpride, who is keen to work with Derby Homes. He added it was difficult to engage regarding recycling and that a recent issue at Rivermead House was only resolved due to a Councillor's intervention.

The Director of Investment and Regeneration said he has been in contact with Ian Drury, Streetpride Area Manager, who has a more proactive role with Derby Homes.

Paul Bayliss referred to consultation with Derby Homes' tenants on the recycling bins and said that as far as he is aware there has been none.

The Chief Executive advised the City Board that he would invite Tim Clegg to attend the next meeting.

Tony Holme raised a problem on the Rykneld estate with digital retuning. He has been told by tenants that they are losing lots of their channels. He rang and reported this to the Enquiry Centre who advised him that this issue would be dealt with. However only the blocks reporting this problem have been included and not the entire estate. He has now been told that this issue cannot be resolved until later in the year and that the problem is around the aerial system. The Director of Investment and Regeneration said he would look into this issue and report back.

### **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

## **11/35 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids**

The City Board received a report on bids for funding from the Quick Fix fund within Estates Pride, in response to known problems, in particular to reduce crime, nuisance and vandalism.

The Director of Investment and Regeneration reported that there are 4 bids for funding in total.

The Chair asked about a rumour that the company doing the fencing had gone bankrupt. The Director of Investment and Regeneration replied it had but a replacement contractor is in place.

The Director of Investment and Regeneration referred to the Climbing Wall and that a bid has been received to sustain this further into next year. The Chair replied that the City Board will need to know the amount required. The Director of Investment and Regeneration advised the final costs for each scheme supported and any any carry over will be brought to the next meeting.

### **Agreed**

The City Board approved the following bids:

1. **2- 12 Quarn Gardens** – To supply and fit 1m high black metal fence and two single lockable gates. Dig out and lay 1.5m of concrete to enable access to the gate.
2. **St Annes's Close** – To install two drop down bollards, remove wooden posts and supply and fit 1m high black metal bow top fencing. Remove two metal benches and make good the ground.
3. **108 Cornwall Road** –To supply and fit 1.8m high recycled plastic fencing and gate to front boundary.
4. **Pickering Rise** – To supply and fit two drop down bollards.

## **11/36 Welfare Adaptations Policy**

The City Board received a report on the review of the Welfare Adaptations Policy.

The Director of Investment and Regeneration advised the City Board that the responsibility for adaptations has moved to a new Specialist Works team headed by Tony Billingham. They are aiming to achieve improved value for money within a budget of £700k a year.

The Director of Investment and Regeneration reported that where large scale adaptations are needed, alternative accommodation will be sought. Where a tenant refuses to move the case will be reviewed and decision delegated to the Chief Executive to agree whether or not to go ahead with the works.

Margaret Redfern asked what would happen in a case where adaptations had been made to a property for a child who had then grown up and moved out. She asked whether the tenant would be required to move to another property. The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised that Derby Homes would need agreement from them to move. The Chief Executive asked if this could be incorporated into the policy. The Director of Housing and Customer Service agreed to do this.

### **Agreed**

The City Board agreed to approve the adoption of the revised procedure for Welfare Adaptations subject to amendment as discussed.

## **11/37 Product Supply – Kitchens**

The Director of Investment and Regeneration provided the City Board with a presentation on the future options for the supply of kitchens.

He explained that Derby Homes wants to put into place a procurement process as previously there was none.

Derby Homes is a member of Efficiency East Midlands and the option put forward is to join together with other housing organizations who are also members to maximize buying power and therefore make savings.

Various staff and tenants recently attended an East Midlands Efficiency event at Castle Donington, followed by a visit to the suppliers to look at the designs of kitchens available.

Paul Bayliss referred to the holding of stock and the need for Derby Homes to be aware of which parts break and need replacing more frequently.

The Director of Investment and Regeneration asked the City Board for permission to provisionally move ahead with this proposal.

### **Agreed**

The City Board agreed to delegate the final decision on the choice of suppliers and selection of materials for kitchens and bathrooms to the Director of Investment and regeneration in consultation with the chair of the City Board.

## **11/38 Use of Community Rooms**

The City Board received an interim report on the progress of the review of community rooms.

Derby Homes manages 25 community rooms. In order to achieve value for money a review is to take place of usage and resources across the City. To identify priorities for action, a traffic light system will be used; for example red will signify underused schemes. An action plan will be brought to a future meeting of the City Board for approval.

Currently the common rooms with little usage are Centurion Walk, Colville Street and Oakleigh Avenue. Paul Bayliss asked what efforts are being made to market them and suggested ways they could be used such as for mobile working, meetings, Councillor and Police surgeries. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that they have contacted Councillors and the Police regarding using these for their surgeries but once a fortnight is still not enough. She has also looked at hiring the rooms out but the insurance cost is prohibitive.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service informed the City Board that proposals for the future of these rooms will be looked at by the SHOUT group before any decision is made.

The Chair said he was not in favour of the traffic light system and would rather see the usage shown as a percentage. The Director of Housing and Customer Service agreed to do this.

Bob Osler asked what will happen when the review has finished. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that an action plan will be brought back to the City Board highlighting community rooms with low usage and unlikely to improve. There will also be an overarching report and case study.

Win Buchan said that many of the community rooms contain too much furniture which leaves little room to move around. The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised her that Lorraine Testro, Customer Services Manager, is aware of this and is looking into it.

### **Agreed**

The City Board noted the report and approved the progress being made.

## **11/39 Recharging Tenants for Missed Appointments**

The City Board received a report containing a review of the consultation carried out with tenants on the proposal to charge tenants for missed appointments.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised that various methods of consultation had been carried out with mixed responses received back.

Paul Bayliss said that in principle he supports the proposal however care needs to be taken with implementation. He suggested a warning period of 4 to 6 months is put into place to advise tenants that if in future they miss an appointment they will incur a charge. During this period comments and objections can be looked at.

Harry Margett asked if it would be possible to have a 2 hour appointment slot allocated for a repair. The Director of Investment and Regeneration said that currently a morning or afternoon appointment is offered and it will cost more to provide that level of service. Bob Osler said that he believed another year is needed with the Repairs Team before pushing for changes.

### **Agreed**

The City Board approved the policy and procedure to charge tenants for missed appointments.

## **11/40 Directors' Update**

The City Board received a joint report provided by the Director of Investment & Regeneration and the Director of Housing and Customer Service containing a general overview and update on current issues.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**11/41 Review Mini Status Survey**

The City Board received a report highlighting the main findings of the mini STATUS survey carried out between November 2010 and February 2011. Tony Holme referred to the percentage of tenants satisfied with the outcome when reporting anti-social behaviour and asked what was being done to improve on this. The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised him that Julie Eyre, Performance Manager and Mary Holmes, Customer Services Manager are currently putting together an action plan to address this.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**11/42 Customer Feedback**

The City Board received a report containing detailed analysis of customer feedback received between 1 January 2011 and 31 March 2011. The report also outlines key figures for the year 2010/11.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**11/43 Derby Homes Performance Monitoring Information Quarter Four 2010/11**

The City Board received a report submitted by the Chair's Group to highlight key performance issues arising from the discussion of quarter 4 2010/11.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**11/44 Equalities Performance Monitoring Information**

The City Board received a report providing detail of equalities monitoring during 2010/11.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**11/45 Flat Inspection Update and Progress Report on the Sterile Area Initiative**

The City Board received a report containing an update on flat evaluations carried out since July 2010 and presented in September 2010.

Jim Elks referred to the sterile area initiative and asked when the 3 category 2 schemes would be included. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that Kestrel House is already included. Construction work is still ongoing at Rebecca House so they will hold off on this until the work is complete. She will check on Whitecross House.

**Agreed**

The City Board noted the report.

**11/46 City Board Elections 2011**

The City Board received a report informing members of the arrangements for the conduct of City Board Elections 2011.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**11/47 Board Training Programme 2011/12**

The City Board received a report setting out the proposals for the Board's annual training programme for 2011/12.

**Agreed**

The report was noted but not discussed.

**Any other business**

The Chair spoke of the recent error made regarding the processing date for direct debit payments. He was contacted by the Derby Evening Telegraph and provided them with positive comments on the way Derby Homes had dealt with the issue. However he was concerned that tenants will now mistrust direct debit as a method of payment. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that tenants will be compensated for any bank charges and costs incurred as a result of the error. She added that staff have reported that they have since reduced the margin for error.

**Date of next meeting**

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday 30 June at 6.00 pm at London Road.**

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm.

.....

CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 28 April 2011