

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONAL BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 25 August 2016

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Operational Board Members present:

Paul Bayliss, Jim Elks, Tony Holme, Samantha Hudson, Bob MacDonald (Chair), Dennis Rees, Jsan Shepherd, Anna Skrobisz, Mick Whitehead

Officers present:

Murray Chapman, Paul Cole, David Enticott, Chris Forrester, Heather Greenan (DCC), Richard Holman, Andrew McNeil, Sophie Reynolds, Daniel Robertson, Leon Taylor

Others in attendance:

Mike Ainsley

16/66 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Beresford, Richard Bruford, Elastus Mwaba

16/67 Admission of late items

There were no late items.

16/68 Declarations of interests

The Council Board Member was noted as declaring their interest in matters relating to Derby City Council.

The Tenant and Leaseholder Board Members declared their interests as tenants and leaseholders (as defined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association) of Derby City Council.

16/69 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 30 June 2016 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the exception of:

Minute 16/43 Declarations of Interest

Jsan Shepherd asked for the word 'secure' to be changed to 'provides funding'.

16/70 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

16/71 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

16/72 Workshop – Customer Communications Strategy

Paul Cole advised that the previous strategy was produced in 2008 and since then a lot has changed with regard to social media and the organisation's need to communicate with tenants. He informed the Operational Board that he will be leading on the new strategy.

Some new communication methods that will be used include Meme's, Gif's, Snapchat, Instagram (which is being used to reach mainly the Youth Board), Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, WhatsApp, Vine and YouTube. YouTube will be used to share 'How to Videos' for tenants to carry out simple jobs to which we currently send operatives, for example boiler restarts.

In the next 12 months the new strategy will be communicated, internally and externally once it has been approved by the Operational Board.

Dennis Rees asked if the new plan will work.

Paul advised that the plan hasn't yet been created but he will apply research to the plan to ensure it works.

Dennis Rees asked if Derby Homes News can have a consistent publishing date.

Paul Cole advised that it is intended to be published quarterly but material can sometimes become out of date by the time it has been published so the focus will be on features, alongside key messages, so that it is interesting to read.

Paul Cole asked for views on whether Derby Homes News should be printed or distributed digitally.

Dennis Rees replied that it has been published digitally in the past, but only as a preview.

Paul Cole noted that Derby Homes is currently upgrading its data system therefore and it is hoped to establish a log of emails addresses which could enable digital distribution in the future.

Paul Bayliss advised of the need to ensure that the new strategy is in line with Derby Homes' business plan and that responding to media outlets can sometimes get difficult as it is an easy platform for tenants to communicate through. He expressed the need for caution and to ensure each media platform shares the same information.

Paul said that he would expect to see the new strategy costed, he recommended not publishing Derby Homes News quarterly and added that it is also just as important to communicate messages to staff. Paul offered to share his expertise if the Communications Team needs any assistance with the new strategy.

Jsan Shepherd noted that due to how quickly social media platforms can change, there will be a need to ensure the plan has the flexibility to adapt if needed in the future.

The Chair advised caution with the amount of new media platforms used as it is difficult to manage people's expectations.

16/73 Part B Supplementary Questions

Questions relating to items on Part B of the agenda raised prior to the meeting are attached at Appendix 1. The following supplementary questions. were raised:

B1 – Service Delivery Update

Tony Holme asked whether it is it clear in the gas servicing appointment letter that tenants have the option to ask for an AM or PM appointment.

Steve Stokes advised that the letter does state clearly that tenants can call and alter their appointment, but if tenants want to move their appointment then that's when it can be changed to an AM or PM time allocation, but only if they contact and make the request.

Dennis Rees asked how many gas service jobs operatives have a day. Steve Stokes said it is an average of 7 jobs for each operative a day.

Dennis Rees asked how many missed appointments on average are recorded each day. Steve Stokes informed him that this varies from every appointment.

Jsan Shepherd asked whether any cost benefit analysis had been carried out, about benchmarking with other providers to see how / whether they offered appointments. Steve Stokes said there was a review planned to look into whether appointments could be offered. Jsan asked for timescales of the review and updates from the review to be brought back.

The Chair asked if the Gas Servicing Team has thought about extending appointments to 8 pm.

Steve Stokes informed him that the team is looking into this but nothing is concrete just yet.

B6 – Estate & Flat Inspections Quarter 1

Paul Bayliss raised a supplementary question regarding the number of overgrown garden cases over 3 months old and asked if this number could be reduced by April 2017. He also requested a review of the options to help people who are not able to do their own gardens. Murray Chapman agreed to report back before March 2017 on actions taken on gardens, what is currently done and a review of procedures, to improve the figures.

Samantha Hudson asked what Derby Homes will do to help tenants who struggle to maintain their gardens.

Murray Chapman informed her that there are several schemes already set up such as the gardening scheme and Derby Homes currently lends equipment depending on a tenant's circumstances.

Dennis Rees said he would like see some of the categories reported, further broken down by type of case. Murray Chapman agreed to look at how this could be done.

Richard Holman advised there are currently 400 properties on our garden assistance scheme which is fully accessible for tenants on Housing Benefit. If there is an able bodied person living in the property then they are not eligible for the scheme.

B7 – Customer Survey Quarter 1

Dennis Rees noted that the Customer Survey states 55 respondents were dissatisfied, and suggested that they be contacted.

16/74 Operational Board Forward Plan

The Operational Board received a copy of the forward plan. Amendments and comments were welcomed.

Dennis Rees asked when the Operational Board will receive a progress update regarding the DACP. The Chair advised that Clare Mehrbani will talk to the Operational Board.

Mike Ainsley agreed that there are a lot of statistics submitted via Part B reports therefore these could be submitted electronically and only Part A reports printed.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the Forward Plan and agreed that only Part A reports will be printed for future meetings and Part B reports will be made available electronically.

16/75 Performance Management Q1

The Operational Board received a report providing a summary of performance for quarter one 2016/17 from key performance measures reported to Derby City Council.

Jsan Shepherd said she would like more detail around the pressures and commentaries on voids and relets for future reports.

Andrew McNeil noted the Maintenance targets will never go blue as the target is 99% so it will always hit above target (Green).

The Chair asked if the long term sickness issues are work related.

Andrew McNeil informed him that Derby Homes Senior Management Team monitors this but it is very hard to tell.

David Enticott advised that long term sickness makes the statistics rise, as short term sickness is low and the amount of staff off sick is low in general.

Paul Bayliss suggested that the Operational Board receives another report to establish what Derby Homes can do to improve PMO4 (number of households placed in bed and breakfast accommodation) and PM06 (number of homelessness acceptances).

Paul Bayliss said that the re-let times need to be addressed. Mike Ainsley advised that Derby Homes is working with the Council to improve this as it isn't entirely in the control of Derby Homes.

Mike Ainsley said that having an annual target does not work for New Build and that the long time target is better to look at as there are loads of factors to consider.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report and requested future reports contain more details around the pressures and commentaries on voids and relets.

16/76 Value for Money Strategy and Annual Report

The Operational Board received their first annual report on the issue of Value for Money (VfM). Each year, the Derby Homes Board publishes its accounts. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) require Registered Providers (RPs) to include in those accounts a Value for Money statement which concentrates on the Value for Money that has been delivered.

The Operational Board also considered the revised Value for Money Strategy.

Dennis Rees pointed out an error on page of the VfM Statement, ie the second sentence in the paragraph headed Partnership Working should read "... the Derby Association of Community Partners".

Agreed

The Operational Board:

1. Noted the Value for Money Statement and Housemark report
2. Approved the Value for Money Strategy.

16/77 HCA Compliance Statement – Consumer Standards

The Operational Board received a report and appendix that provided a self-assessment of Derby Homes' compliance with the HCA Consumer Standards. Registered providers are required to complete a self-assessment and consider where they have evidence of meeting the standard and any gaps.

Jsan Shepherd suggested strengthening 1.2d and 3.4 of Appendix 1 and suggested that 2.1a should involve the tenant panel for decisions.

Agreed

The Operational Board confirmed that Derby Homes meets the HCA's Consumer Standards as outlined in Appendix 1 subject to the alterations suggested above.

16/78 No Smoking Policy – Communal Areas

The Operational Board received a report which explained a policy on smoking in communal areas, following complaints by residents. The policy explains that smoking in communal areas is not allowed and outlines the action Derby Homes will take to deal with it.

Paul Bayliss asked when this Policy will be effective from. Murray Chapman informed that it would be effective immediately.

Richard Holman said that doorways and gardens need to be specified in the policy as these can be considered as communal areas.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the policy for immediate implementation subject to the following being incorporated into the Policy;

"All forms of smoking are banned within these areas. This means anything that can be smoked, including cigarettes, pipes (including water pipes such as shisha and hookah pipes), cigars and herbal cigarettes and it also applies to electronic cigarettes (also known as e-cigarettes) and "vaping". Tenants must smoke at least 3 metres away from the building at all times. In shared gardens, smoking is still permitted but only beyond the 3 metre limit."

16/79 Crowding and Space Hazards Policy & Procedure

The Operational Board received a report which provided an update on the progress in dealing with known overcrowding cases. It explained that the existing procedure has been split to provide separate procedure and policy documents and that the procedure has been amended to take account of changed working practices with the Council.

Paul Bayliss asked if there are legal requirements for officers to carry out the inspections. Murray Chapman advised that there are not.

Agreed

The Operational Board

1. Noted the progress made in dealing with known overcrowding cases
2. Approved the policy Crowding and Space Hazards in our properties
3. Noted the amended procedure.

16/80 Large Scale Estate Improvements Progress Report

The Operational Board received a report outlining progress on Large Scale Estate Improvements and sought approval for additional schemes listed in paragraph 3.6.

Andrew McNeil advised the Trenton Green scheme was part of the 2015/16 programme and has been completed but approval for the final stage payment is required in this financial year.

The Chair asked for an update on the plans for Watermeadow Road.

Andrew McNeil informed him that this improvement is no longer required as there is sufficient street parking there.

Tony Holme asked if this report covers improvements at New Sinfen.

Richard Holman advised that it does, but the improvement works have been shelved as no current Council match funding was available and anti social behaviour has reduced.

Tony Holme asked what the 'framework' reference means.

Andrew McNeil informed that it is a term for when we buy our goods. Once the framework is in place it means we no longer need to tender for work.

Tony Holme asked whether lifts improvements fall within this report.

Andrew McNeil said that they are not.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the progress made so far and approved the additional schemes.

16/81 Service Delivery Update

The Operational Board received a joint report from Heads of Service providing a general overview and update on current issues.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/82 Operational Board Members Appraisal

The Operational Board received a report which sets out the arrangements for Operational Board Members appraisal as recommended by the Governance Committee on 14 April 2016 and approved by Derby Homes Board on 26 May 2016. The report also included the outcome of the peer review of Derby Homes governance arrangements by Rykneld Homes.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted:

1. The arrangements for the annual appraisal of Operational Board Members
2. The outcome of the peer review of Derby Homes governance arrangements by Rykneld Homes

16/83 Derby Homefinder Statistics

The Operational Board received a report which provided information on Derby Homefinder for the period 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/84 Petition – Whittington & Carter Street

The Operational Board received a petition from 10 residents of Carter Street and Whittington Street. The Petitioners complained that the alleyways that service their properties are not maintained.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the petition and the action taken.

16/85 Rent Arrears and Welfare Reform Update

The Operational Board received a report giving details on:

- June position on rent arrears.
- Detail of Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Welfare Reforms and how we are mitigating the impacts.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report and agreed to continue receiving further update reports.

16/86 Estate & Flat Inspections Quarter 1

The Operational Board received a report which gave details on the number of cases by type arising from monthly flat and estate inspections carried out by area for the last quarter.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the content of the report and the appendices.

16/87 Customer Survey Quarter 1

The Operational Board received a report providing detailed analysis of the satisfaction results from the Customer Survey 2016 Quarter 1, carried out during April 2016 – June 2016.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report and details in Appendix 1.

16/88 Customer Priorities Quarter 1

The Operational Board received a report providing detail against the 10 Customer Priorities, to the end of Q1 2016/17.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/89 Complaints & Compliments Quarter 1

The Operational Board received a report providing detailed analysis of complaints received between 1 April and 30 June 2016 2016.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the information as detailed in Appendix 1.

16/90 ASB Statistics Quarter 1

The Operational Board received a report which gave some key statistics for Derby Homes Anti-Social Behavior (ASB) service for the first quarter of 2016/17.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/91 Tree Update

The Operational Board received an update on the Council's work to trees in the City.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the report.

16/92 Draft Minutes of Derby Homes Board meeting held on 28 July 2016

The Operational Board received the draft minutes of Derby Homes Board meeting on 28 July 2016.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the draft minutes of Derby Homes Board meeting on 28 July 2016.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 20 October 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Large Training Room at London Road.

The meeting ended at 8:10 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on Thursday 25 August 2016.

Operational Board 25 August 2016

Part B Queries

B1: Service Update

Gas Inspections - while congratulations are in order for achieving 100% inspections, feedback from various Tenant meetings are that an a.m. or p.m. service should be made available. With Derby Homes well known 'Can Do' approach to issues it was disappointing that the reply at today's DACP Meeting was so negative to achieving this customer request.

The Gas servicing team does offer Am or Pm appointments for our customers. However we do this on a request basis as this enables us to provide the service to those that want it without increasing the cost to the budget. In fairness we have had very few requests from our customers for this service. To offer this additional appointment choice, from our inquiries could add an additional cost to the budget in the region of 10 – 15%. Obviously in the current climate this is not something we would be looking to do. Please be assured that if any of our tenants need us to specify an Am or Pm appointment, if they ring the number on the letter they receive, we will be more than happy to arrange this with them.

B2: Operational Board Member Appraisals

I am fully in agreement with the Rykneld Homes review report on their assessment of the Operational Board. I think we ought to have some reports that actually present options for the Board to consider and give direction to DH, too many are just statistics which while of interest do not really provoke us to change anything.

The Operational Board will continue to be presented with reports for decision/approval as and when required as shown on the Operational Board Forward Plan (Item A2). The Operational Board has recently agreed to consider receiving decision making reports in different formats in particular to increase their understanding of complex issues such as the workshop being held at Thursday's meeting on the Customer Communications Strategy. The Chair of the Operational Board has discussed with officers issues around Part B reports and this will be subject to review and further discussions with the Operational Board Chair and Vice Chair.

B7: Customer Survey Q1

While the customer survey results were largely positive for DH that for Improvements to Area (pages 188 & 9) that over 50% of respondents were unaware of these. What is DH going to do to address this?

We are looking to re-engage with customer engagement with regard to all planned capital works which will include area based improvements. Whilst this will focus on customer satisfaction with works it gives us the opportunity to look again at publicity and promotion. The managers are to be tasked with creating proposals for customer engagement in the autumn of this year.

B6 Estate & Flat Inspections Q1

What is being done to resolve the issues of overgrown gardens that are 3 months old?

Most garden cases can be resolved quickly. The procedure, as with all similar situations such as antisocial behaviour, starts relatively informally with visits and warning letters. In the case of gardens we also take photographs at an early stage where people don't respond to initial visits and letters so that if we do have to go to Court, we have evidence

There are however, some cases which do not respond to initial informal interventions. They fall into two main categories. The first kind is those individuals who have the capability to look after their garden, but simply refuse to do so. Often those cases include people who respond initially then let the matter deteriorate again, or who do a bit, but never enough. Those cases can take longer to sort out as we often have to apply pressure, up to and including eviction. I would say though that eviction is extremely rare, we haven't carried out an eviction for gardens for several years. Along with applying pressure, we will normally be working with the tenant to try to help them as well.

The second category is those individuals who may have a range of different vulnerabilities which result, in amongst other things, in them not being able to look after the garden. They may well have a number of other problems too. Those cases are often worked on by our Intensive Housing Management service as well as Housing Officers and other staff. In terms of the garden, we may be working with relatives or voluntary services to try to help or it may be that in some cases people move to more suitable accommodation.