

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE CITY BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 18 October 2012

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Board Members Present:

Mike Ainsley, Win Buchan, Jim Elks, Tony Holme, Wendy Jessop, John Keith, Harry Margett, Brian Perry, Dennis Rees (Chair), Margaret Redfern, Ian Veitch, Fiona Walker

Officers Present:

Murray Chapman, Paul Cole, Craig Congreave, Julie Eyre, Chris Langstaff, Maria Murphy, Julie Wren

Observers Present:

Peter Simpson, Michael Waplington

Others Present:

Sodexo – Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning Contractor:

Richard Avery – Contract Manager
Paul Donnelly – Regional Director
Nigel Payne – Operations Director

12/107 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Shaun Bennett, Bob Osler, Janice Platt, Linda Winter

12/108 Admission of Late Items

There were none.

12/109 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.

12/110 Presentation – Capital Programme Update

Carried forward to the next meeting.

12/111 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 30 August 2012 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

12/112 Matters Arising

Minute 12/88 Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups and Equality Groups Items – the issue of tenants receiving several unspecific repair text messages is being looked at.

Minute 12/90 Complaints Procedure Review – a dedicated Officer has been appointed to handle all stage 1 complaints.

12/113 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

12/114 Any items from Part B to be discussed

The City Board agreed to discuss items B1, B3, B4, B5 and B9. All other items were noted but not discussed.

12/115 Items from Contractor Partners

The City Board members were introduced to 3 representatives from Sodexo the grounds maintenance and cleaning contractors.

The contract is being monitored closely, primarily the grounds maintenance side as the cleaning side is satisfactory. The main issues have been the weather and communication to ensure customers understand the problems experienced and action being taken.

Richard Avery advised the main aims for Sodexo are compliance, control, consistency and most of all communication. They will meet with Derby Homes on a regular basis and agree performance targets. Sodexo has spent £140K on investment and extra staff.

Win Buchan said some leaseholders had been under the impression that window cleaning was part of the contract. She asked that it is made clearer only windows in communal areas are included. She added the cleaning service was excellent and the operatives very pleasant.

An email has been received from Councillor Sara Bolton regarding grounds maintenance issues in Chaddesden. The Councillor asked that the work carried out with the Maintenance Operations Manager to resolve the issues is noted and she has acknowledged the apologies given.

The Maintenance Operations Manager has met with the lead petitioner and has also contacted all other petitioners from Holly Court and Hilton Close, Mickleover regarding grounds maintenance.

An issue was raised regarding the collection of grass cuttings on the Rykneld Estate; this will be picked up in the seasonal programme.

There will be a rolling programme to clear leaves commencing 9 November with completion mid January.

A Sodexo representative was invited to attend the Housing Focus Group meetings in November.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Sodexo for attending.

12/116 Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' and Equality Groups Items

The City Board received a report detailing Customer Service Management (CSM) cases/issues raised at Housing Focus Groups (HFG), Derby Leaseholder Focus Group and the Equality Groups.

Sonia Hardy, Welfare Reform Project Officer, has been invited to attend a Leaseholder meeting on 7 November to discuss Welfare Reform.

The Chair facilitated the North East HFG and reported it had been a good meeting.

Brian Perry facilitated the North West HFG and said it was a good meeting and well attended. He hoped the issue of trees causing TV interference, showing as closed (CSM76884), had been resolved. The Director of Housing & Customer Service will follow this up with the Local Manager. Harry Margett said this problem was also experienced by tenants in the Shelton Lock area. He was advised to speak to his Local Manager, Graeme Walton.

The Director reported that Ken Whitehead attended the South East HFG which had been well attended with a good volume of discussion and points raised. The main issue had been new build defects.

Ian Veitch asked what water harvesters are (CSM76948). The Director explained they are tanks placed underground in back gardens to catch rain water. This water is then pumped back into the house for flushing the

toilet. There have been problems with the technology and they have been disconnected. Work is taking place to either re-commission or remove them. The Interim Chief Executive advised this work was grant funded and was something the Government had encouraged authorities to do. He asked that the issue is kept open to ensure we continue to monitor the situation.

Due to a Neighbourhood Board taking place on the same evening, only 2 people attended the South East 1 HFG. The Resident Involvement and Resource Centre Manager co-ordinates dates and checks Council calendars and Neighbourhood meetings to try to avoid clashes.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

12/117 Training for City Board Members

The City Board received a report listing forthcoming training events for Board and City Board members. The Chair advised City Board Members to contact Jackie Mitchell, Governance Services Manager, if they have any requests for training.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

12/118 Home Release Scheme

On 30 August 2012 the City Board agreed to reduce cash incentive payments from £1000 to £500 and asked the Director of Housing and Customer Service to examine the feasibility of replacing the cash payment with a contribution towards carpets, curtains and decoration.

At the main Board meeting on 20 September 2012 Roy Webb asked that consideration be given to undertaking decorating for elderly tenants releasing a family home by moving to ground floor accommodation.

The City Board was offered three options to consider.

The Director advised that for Options 2 and 3 Derby Homes would have to carry out a procurement exercise to identify a supplier who could offer a range of goods at affordable prices and located in areas tenants could get to. Also additional administration procedures would not make the proposals cost effective.

Peter Simpson referred to the Welfare Reform changes in April which will bring serious financial implications for under-occupancy. He suggested keeping the cash incentive but reducing the incentive based on the property size. He also suggested having a rent free period.

The Performance Manager advised a rent free period was not an option as it would interfere with benefit claims.

The majority of City Board Members were in favour of Option 1.

The second recommendation in the report would assist elderly tenants releasing family accommodation and moving to smaller ground floor accommodation. Elderly tenants usually leave accommodation in good condition and it would make the transition easier if the new accommodation is fully decorated.

Agreed

The City Board

1. Approved Option 1 as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report.
2. Approved changes to the Home Decoration Service to allow elderly tenants moving from family accommodation to ground floor accommodation to have the whole property decorated. Normal phased decoration service to then commence from year three within the scheme. Service charges to apply for the service, currently £4.87 per week.

12/119 Hoarding Procedure

The City Board received a report detailing a Hoarding Procedure which would become a subsection of Derby Homes Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

Derby Homes has developed a Hoarders Procedure to ensure that action is taken to deal with this issue in Derby thereby reducing the risk to residents of fatal fires and also to tackle public health issues.

Local Housing staff will work in conjunction with other organisations such as the Mental Health teams, Environmental Health and the Fire and Rescue Service.

Brian Perry asked if Derby Homes' staff have a way of identifying tenants who are likely to be hoarders. The Director advised that the in-house gas team are working hard to recognise potential problems with a tenancy and refer these through to the local office.

Margaret Redfern commented that no timescale had been included within the flow chart in Appendix 1. She suggested that because this has health and safety implications there should be a marker of time.

Agreed

The City Board approved the Hoarding Procedure which will become a subsection in Derby Homes Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

12/120 Update on Review of Derby Homes

The Interim Chief Executive provided an update on the review of Derby Homes.

A review is taking place of Housing Service provision within the City which includes Derby Homes. The Council need to make a 28% cash reduction therefore massive cuts will be needed. They are looking at the benefits of bringing Derby Homes back into the Council.

The process of the review is becoming clearer and a timetable is now in place. A report will be taken to Council Cabinet in January containing proposals for Derby Homes. There will then be a 13 week period of consultation with tenants and leaseholders followed by a report back to the May meeting of Cabinet. .

A Steering Group has been set up consisting of Cath Roff, the Council's Strategic Director of Adults, Health & Housing Councillor Baggy Shanker, Cabinet Member Housing & Advice, Chris Langstaff and Bob Osler. The Council has asked that a tenant representative also be invited to join the group. Additional to this will be an operational working group consisting of the three Directors and Officers from the Council. This group will look into the detail of opportunities and costs.

A special Board Meeting has been arranged for 1 November and will be a single item agenda.

Harry Margett added that a DACP Open Meeting will be taking place on Monday 22 October and has asked all tenants to come along.

Win Buchan asked if the proposal is that Derby Homes ceases to exist and reverts back to being part of the Council. The Interim Chief Executive advised that the proposal is to review all housing options, part of which includes going back into the Council but hopefully other options will be identified.

The Chair asked for suggestions as to who the tenant representative could be. The Director recommended that this is someone not already

involved in another capacity. It was agreed that the Chair will try to identify a suitable representative at the meeting taking place on Monday. Margaret Redfern commented that the majority of ALMO's going back into the Council have held a ballot of tenants. The Interim Chief Executive advised that the recent tendency has been to not carry out ballots however the Department for Communities and Local Government has issued guidelines encouraging ballots.

12/121 Directors' Update

The City Board received a report containing a general overview and update on:

- New Build
- Asset Management/Planned Maintenance
- Energy Efficiency
- Repairs Team Update
- Priority Families/Family Intervention Project
- Volunteering Opportunities
- Community Initiatives
- The Big Chat 2

Tony Holme referred to volunteering opportunities and stated that if Derby Homes goes back in-house all the good work achieved will finish. The Chair asked if there is a dedicated Officer overseeing volunteering. The Director advised that Annabelle Barwick is the responsible Officer.

Win Buchan asked about energy efficiency and the reference to insulation to all solid wall homes in the areas not currently benefiting from the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP). The Director will ask the Director of Investment and Regeneration to provide further information.

The City Board was advised Councillor Sara Bolton has requested a number of issues are raised at the meeting:

- clarification that the new build bungalows on Max Road and Stratford Road are in the Derwent Ward and not Chaddesden.
- improvements made by the Repairs Team but that further improvements are needed.
- work carried out by the recently integrated Family Intervention Project and the Children and Young Peoples Department. She said it is crucial that teams work together and congratulated Derby Homes on the work carried out.
- Councillor Bolton has been working hard with the residents that use the Oakleigh Avenue Common Room and has recently secured £100 for the Christmas Party.

The Chair congratulated Councillor Bolton on this achievement and thanked her for her comments.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

12/122 Equalities Monitoring – New Tenancies, Tenancy Terminations and Tenancy Sustainment Team

The City Board received a report concentrating on all new tenancies between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

12/123 Complaints and Satisfaction – Quarter 2

The City Board received a report providing detailed analysis of complaints received between 1 July 2012 and 30 September 2012.

Reference was made to the Councillor and MP enquiries received. A request was made to show a breakdown by Ward and the subject of the enquiries received. The Performance Manager will have this information available for the next meeting.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

12/124 Repairs Service Update

The City Board received an update report on the progress and developments the Repairs Team have made.

Tony Holme complimented Derby Homes on achieving 100% of all homes having a current gas certificate issued.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

12/125 Open Contractor Update

The City Board received an update report on the implementation and progress to date of the Open Contractor system.

The implementation of Open Contractor will provide more information resulting in improvements to the service provided. The Interim Chief Executive added it will provide a breakdown of cost for each activity and we will be able see costs on a job by job basis.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report

12/126 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids

The City Board received a report on quick fix bids which have been approved by the Housing Focus Groups.

Agreed

The City board noted the report

12/127 Direct Debit Pilot

The City Board received a report containing details of a pilot carried out to assess which new tenants had access to bank accounts that supported Direct Debits.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

12/128 Performance Monitoring – Quarter 2

The City Board received a report detailing quarter 2 performance against targets contained in the Monthly Indicator Link.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

12/129 Jam Jar Style Accounts and Universal Credit

The City Board received a report on progress made to set up Jam Jar accounts for new and existing tenants.

Many tenants living in social rent accommodation currently have their rent paid directly to the landlord. With the introduction of Universal Credit this will in future be paid direct to the tenant through a direct payment into a bank account. Unfortunately one in six tenants does not have access to a bank account.

Credit Unions in the East Midlands have formed a consortium which can offer access to Jam Jar accounts. Derby Homes is working with Erewash to set up these accounts for new and existing tenants.

Jam Jar accounts are split into various pots for example spending, savings, bill payments etc. A pot could be set up for rents to ensure the payment is made.

Mark Crown, Housing Project and Research Officer, will be attending the meeting on 22 October to provide further details.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

12/130 Minutes of the Derby Homes Board meeting held on 20 September 2012 (draft)

The City Board noted the draft minutes of the Derby Homes Board held on 20 September 2012.

Date of next meeting

The date and time of the next meeting will be confirmed by the Derby Homes Board on 29 November 2012.

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm.

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CHAIR

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