

DIRECTORS' UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2013

This is a joint report prepared by the Director of Investment & Regeneration and the Director of Housing & Customer Service. The report provides City Board Members with a general overview and update on current issues.

New Build

The community led new build project pioneered through Osmaston Community Association of Residents (OSCAR) will be making a start on site in April 2013. In total 95 homes are being built with 40 of them owned by OSCAR for rent. Derby Homes have been appointed as development agent and will also manage the homes on OSCAR's behalf through a management contract.

The larger regeneration of Osmaston is still progressing and the Council's Regeneration Team is working closely with Derby Homes and the local community to select a delivery partner for the regeneration of the Rolls-Royce sites. Derby Homes is forming partnerships with remaining bidders to enable it to manage, maintain and possibly own any affordable homes.

We have planning approval for 17 bungalows on two sites in Derwent and work is underway.

Asset Management/Planned Maintenance

We remain on schedule to complete replacement kitchen and bathrooms to all pre-war homes by 2016, our final phases are in Osmaston and Derwent. The door replacement programme will re-commence shortly as we re-procure this service as a result of the previous supplier going into administration.

We continue to make good progress with our planned repair programme and have had to work around the poor weather over recent weeks.

We have made a start on the refurbishment of Oakvale House, delivering the project in-house with support from local sub-contractors.

Energy Efficiency

We are making good progress across pre-war estates with the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) and will complete all work within the next few months. Many homes will benefit from extra insulation and new heating systems. Grant funding for this work may top £4M by the end of the current programme. This will then be superseded by further grants through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) this will enable us to complete insulation to all solid walled homes in areas not currently benefiting from CESP.

Repairs Team Update

Performance across all areas of repair work remains good. We are forecasting savings against our budget for the second year running.

Services funded by Supporting People

City Board members will recall that we were progressing proposals to review the existing Supported Living Service and replace this with a new service of enhanced housing management for vulnerable tenants.

Unfortunately we have been unable to reach agreement with Derby City Council Revenue & Subsidies team on the eligibility of our new charge for housing benefit purposes.

The current position is that the Council Cabinet will be considering a proposal in March 2013 to fund the newly revised service from reserves whilst we continue to seek a mutually agreeable way forward to fund the service in the longer term.

Consultation is on-going with employees and service users to keep them informed of the situation.

Relocation to newly refurbished Council House

We have now completed our employee moves to the third floor of the newly refurbished Council House. Cardinal Square is no longer a public facing office of Derby Homes and the remaining employees within Personnel and Investment and Regeneration will be relocating to our London Road offices during week commencing 8 April 2013.

Over the coming months we will be continuing to work with our colleagues within the ground floor Customer Service Centre to identify any further improvements to the front line customer facing service that we provide.

Recruitment to Senior Management Positions

City Board members may now be aware that Maureen Davis our Operations Manager will be retiring on 31 March 2013. Following a review of our Senior Management structure recruitment is now underway to recruit two new Heads of Service. One post holder will lead on all front line housing and neighbourhood management issues and a second post holder will be responsible for income management and advice. The costs of the restructure will be contained within existing budgets and a review of existing management arrangements beneath these new positions will be forthcoming. I am confident that this new structure will provide the resource and resilience to cope with the challenges ahead.

OSCAR have been shortlisted for UK Housing Awards 2013

The awards, which recognise outstanding work by housing organisations to improve the lives of people in their communities, are organised by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and *Inside Housing* magazine.

Now in their 17th year, this year's awards attracted more than 300 entries from all over

the UK.

OSCAR is now one of five left in the running for the Most Innovative Project category.

The winners will be revealed at a ceremony at the Lancaster London Hotel on 16 April.

CIH Chief Executive Grainia Long said: “The UK Housing Awards are about celebrating the dedication and commitment of organisations and professionals across the industry.

They not only recognise success, they also give housing providers the opportunity to learn from each others excellent work and innovation. For CIH, they help us to fulfil our role in maintaining, improving and promoting standards in an increasingly challenging environment.

The quality of the entries we’ve received this year is evident from the fantastic standard of the finalists, and I’d like to congratulate all the organisations that have been shortlisted. Their work can inspire us all.”

Stuart Macdonald, Editor of Inside Housing, said: ‘The quality of the entries rose again this year so even to get this far is an amazing achievement. In the face of some really stiff competition OSCAR has shown it is performing at the highest level - well done!’

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author.

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None

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