

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE CITY BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 22 August 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, Brian Perry, Margaret Redfern, Dennis Rees (Chair), Peter Simpson, Ian Veitch, Fiona Walker, Michael Waplington.

Officers Present:

Paul Cole, Resident Involvement Officer
Julie Eyre, Performance Manager
Mary Holmes, Customer Services Manager
Jim Joyce, Resident Involvement & Resource Centre Manager
Matt Hands, Head of Investment
Julie Robinson, Directors' Secretary
Jackie Westwood, Head of Income Management & Advice

Others Present:

Richard Avery, Contract Manager, Sodexo
Paul Donnelly, Regional Director, Sodexo
Ben Scott, DCC Arboricultural Officer

13/74 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Shaun Bennett, Maria Murphy and Bob Osler.

The Chair advised City Board Members that any personal issues should be raised with a member of staff before or after meetings or reported to their local housing officer.

13/75 Admission of Late Items

There were none.

13/76 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.

13/77 Update on Derby Homes Review

The City Board was advised that a Derby Homes Board Away Day took place on 29 June to look at the Council's proposals put forward on the future of Derby Homes. The Board accepted the Council's partnership model. Work is taking place to go through the governance changes.

The review is now focusing on support services teams as the Council and Derby Homes can see scope to integrate some back office functions. Staff in teams affected have been invited to attend a staff briefing on 11 September. There is no timescale set as yet.

13/78 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 June 2013 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

13/79 Matters Arising

There was none.

13/80 Questions from members of the public

There was none.

13/81 Any items from Part B to be discussed

The City Board agreed to discuss Items B2, B3, and B7.

13/82 Items for representatives from Contractor Partners

City Board members were introduced to Ben Scott, Arboricultural Officer, in the Council's Arboricultural Services Team.
The Chair spoke of complaints received from tenants regarding overhanging trees that need cutting back and of trees unnecessarily being cut down.

Ben Scott reported that in the past most of the work carried out was reactive however they are now being more proactive. The Council has a tree policy but is more flexible with the work carried out for Derby Homes.

Margaret Redfern suggested it would be helpful to publish a policy for tenants advising on the rules followed around tree cutting. Ben said he would arrange for this to be done, kept simple and with photographs. Matt Hands will be taking Ben Scott around the local offices to meet staff so they can point out any problem areas. He suggested that if a City Board member knows of a tree that needs inspecting they report it to their local office.

The Chair thanked Ben Scott for attending and asked that he attends a future City Board meeting to provide further updates.

City Board members were introduced to Richard Avery and Paul Donnelly, from Sodexo.

The Chair raised a recently reported incident where Sodexo had spread weed killer over a large area of land destroying the grass. Richard Avery said he had been to inspect the area and admitted that it was bad and following on from this he has spoken to all Sodexo staff. There is also a contract assessment panel set up to look at ways for improvement. The panel is made up of Derby Homes' staff, tenants and leaseholders.

The Chair said that tenants do not know what service they will receive when signing up for the garden maintenance scheme. Paul Donnelly advised that their target is to provide 15 grass cuts between the months of March and November and 2 hedge cuts. The Chair asked Sodexo to produce a leaflet for tenants advising them of this. Matt suggested these are sent to the DACP.

The Chair thanked the Sodexo representatives for attending.

13/83 Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' and Equality Groups Items and Feedback from HFG Facilitators

The City Board received a report with details of Customer Service Management cases/issues raised at Housing Focus Groups (HFGs), Derby Leaseholder Focus Group (LFG) and the Equality Groups.

Previous reports contained numbers of CSM cases open and closed in each area but did not distinguish which these were. The report has now been changed to show this information.

Margaret Redfern commented that the areas listed are not easy to identify such as North East. She would prefer it to be by Ward name for example Derwent. Jim Joyce advised that a review of Resident Involvement is taking place looking at the way services are delivered and how areas are named. The service will be re-launched with more door to door and face to face involvement.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/84 Closure of In-House Mediation Service

The City Board received a report informing them of the current provision for in-house mediation within Derby Homes and of the changes to the service and staffing arrangements.

A comment was made that local office staff do not become involved early enough when issues are raised and instead ask tenants to complete diary pages. The City Board was advised that Clare Mehrbani, the new Head of Housing Management, is keen for staff to become more involved in face to face working.

Agreed

The City Board:

1. Agreed that the mediation function within Derby Homes is managed at a low level by housing officers in partnership with the Police and high level cases be outsourced.
2. Agreed that Derby Homes runs low level mediation using staff and partners (as it has since December 2012).
3. Supported the management decision to delete the post of the Resident Involvement & Mediation Officer.

13/85 Directors' Update

The City Board received a report providing a general overview and update on current issues including

- New Build
- Asset Management/Planned Maintenance
- Energy Efficiency
- Repairs Team
- National Federation of ALMO's Best Partnership Award
- Welfare Reform
- Availability of new homes

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/86 Repairs Service Update

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

Mike Ainsley referred to a recent repair's benchmarking exercise carried out by EEM and asked if it was possible to view this. Matt Hands said he would send him a link to the report.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/87 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids

The City Board received a report containing an update on Quick Fix bids which have been approved by Housing Focus Groups.

Matt Hands advised of fencing work being carried out on estates and advised that recycled plastic wood is now used. Although this is not cheaper than using wood, it needs less maintenance. Peter Simpson asked if it was possible to see samples of the different types of fencing available. Matt agreed to bring samples to the next City Board meeting.

Margaret Redfern questioned why the application for improvements to the Sussex Circus play area has been rejected. She pointed out that the Neighbourhood Board had offered to pay more than half of the cost. Clare Mehrbani will investigate and report back.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/88 Rent Arrears and Welfare Reform – Update

The City Board received a report giving details on:

- The year-end position on rent arrears
- Current performance
- Current impact of the under occupation charge
- Introduction of the Benefit Cap.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/89 Performance Monitoring – Quarter 1

The City Board received a report detailing Quarter 1 performance against targets reported to Derby City Council.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/90 Local Offers – Quarter 1

The City Board received a report detailing Quarter 1 performance against the Local Offers set by the Tenants and Leaseholders of Derby Homes.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/91 Complaints and Satisfaction – Quarter 1

The City Board received a report providing detailed analysis of complaints received between 1 April and 30 June 2013.

Tony Holme noted that no stage 3 complaints are mentioned in the report. Julie Eyre reported that a stage 3 complaint is coming up and will be in the Quarter 2 report. Tony asked if the Tenant Panel members training would need refreshing. Julie replied they do not. However, following the complaint hearing she will sit with Panel members to review their experience.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/92 Schedule of Standards for the Garden Maintenance Scheme

The City Board received a report providing an update on the target standards from the grounds maintenance contract as requested at a previous meeting.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/93 Customer Access Update

The City Board received a report detailing progress on implementation of Derby Homes Customer Services Strategy.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/94 DACP Ready to Let Void Inspections

The City Board received a report summarizing the findings of the Ready to Let Void Inspections.

Agreed

The City Board noted the report.

13/95 Draft Minutes of Derby Homes Board meeting held on 25 July 2013

The City Board noted the draft minutes of the Derby Homes Board held on 25 July 2013.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 24 October at 6.00 pm at London Road.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 22 August 2013.