

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE LOCAL HOUSING BOARD SOUTH MEETING

Held on Thursday 17 June 2010

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Board Members Present:

Paul Bayliss (Chair), Stuart Boon (arrived at 6.30pm), Susan Boon, Win Buchan, Lyn Gilbey, Tony Holme, Trevor Lamb, Harry Margett, Mary Rowland (arrived at 6.30pm), Bob Troup, Ian Veitch, Ken Whitehead, Jack Wray

Officers Present:

Steve Astle, Paul Cole, Phil Davies, Andrew McNeil, Maria Murphy, Paula Solowij, Sophie Wood

Partner Organisations Present:

Mark Hilton and Caroline Hilton, Hi-Spec

10/47 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Tabani Ndlovu and Jane Todd.

10/48 Admission of Late Items

There were no late items.

10/49 Declarations of Any Other Business

There were no declarations of any other business.

10/50 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 (as defined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association) of Derby City Council.

The Chair declared a personal interest in relation to Paula Solowij, Neighbourhood Manager at Stockbrook Street.

10/51 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 April 2010 were accepted as a true and accurate record with the exception of an error at minute 10/21 as the Maintenance Manger was not present at a meeting that Tony Holme had with the Director of Housing and Customer Service.

10/52 Matters Arising

10/14 Mini Status Survey – South Areas

Tony Holme had raised concern at a previous meeting on ‘Keeping Tenants Informed’. At the last meeting the Director of Housing and Customer Service said that this will be an item for the next Local Housing Board South meeting. The Director of Housing and Customer Service has spoken to Tony Holme since the last meeting regarding this and a customer services strategy is in progress and will be a future agenda item.

10/36 Rechargeable Repairs

Derby Homes main Board approved the report on Rechargeable Repairs and it will now go to the Council Cabinet Member meeting.

10/38 Mobile Scooters

The Director of Housing and Customer Service has met with the legal advisor at Derby City Council twice since the last Local Housing Board meeting. She hopes to bring a report on Mobile Scooters to the next Local Housing Board meeting.

10/53 Questions from members of the public

The Local Housing Board noted the questions and responses.

10/54 Items from Part B to be discussed

The Local Housing Board agreed to discuss items B1, B3 and B5. All other reports on Part B of the agenda were noted but not discussed.

10/55 Items from Contractor Partners

Changes to the Cleaning Contract

The Local Housing Board received an update on the cleaning contract; the cleaning contractors Hi-Spec were in attendance to provide the

Local Housing Board with a verbal update and to put forward proposals for an improved service.

Caroline Hilton of Hi-Spec gave an introduction and an overview of the company's background. She advised the Local Housing Board of the service currently provided.

Currently two thirds of our flats are receiving this cleaning service and this is just once a fortnight. Blocks of flats will be added in manageable stages into the contract. The next proposed improvement will be to provide a weekly cleaning service with reasonable time allocated and caretaking time added in. Part of this work will include quarterly cleaning of windows in communal areas and an annual strip and reseal of vinyl floors, to enable them to be kept clean.

The service will be extended to most blocks, only excluding those where residents are already doing a good job. There will be a service charge introduced for each block and will be calculated based on actual costs, shared between residents.

Jack Wray asked about the cleanliness of the toilets in common rooms. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that Hi-Spec only get 20 minutes to clean a common room and suggested that Jack could raise this at the SHOUT Group.

Tony Holme said that since Hi-Spec have taken over there has been a massive difference in cleanliness.

Paula Solowij said that local managers receive weekly reports from Hi-Spec including any issues that have occurred from the cleaning and these are then investigated.

Connaught – Introduction to new partners

Andrew McNeil, the Regeneration and New Business Manager, explained that Connaught is the new gas contractor. He hoped that they would attend a future meeting.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board supported the:

- ongoing changes to increase the level of the cleaning service offered at blocks of flats
- aim to set a minimum standard of cleaning across all blocks
- the need to share the cleaning of communal areas between Derby Homes and tenants / leaseholders.

- Induction of new service charges, that reflect the correct cost of the service.

10/56 Housing Focus and Leaseholder Groups Items

The Local Housing Board received an update of unresolved cases discussed at Housing Focus Groups in the South of the City. Two cases remain open and action is being taken on all cases.

Win Buchan fed back on the recent Leaseholder Focus Group and issues discussed around ground maintenance, leaseholders Top 10 targets and flat maintenance finance. The Maintenance Manager will be attending the next Leaseholder Focus Group in August. Win Buchan asked if a report could be produced for leaseholders on flat inspections. The Director of Housing and Customer Service suggested that it could be a discussion topic to be discussed at the Process Improvement Team meetings. Steve Astle, Housing Manager will invite Win Buchan to the meeting.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the report.

10/57 Training for Local Housing Board Members

All Local Housing Board members were happy with the training.

The Chief Executive mentioned that the DACP is hiring a coach to Harrogate for the CIH Conference for anyone interested in attending and also the Board Housing Tour will be taking place on 20 July 2010.

10/58 Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids

The Local Housing Board considered bids for funding from the quick fix fund within Estates Pride. The bids were in response to known problems, in particular to reduce crime, nuisance and vandalism.

The bids for funding were

1. 62 Underhill Avenue – Remove hedge and fit 1m high black metal bow top fencing, one single and one double gate to boundary.
2. 92 -98, 104-106, 114-118, 116-118, 132-134 and 150 Gerard Street – Supply and fit 1m high black metal bowtop fencing and gates to properties. In addition, supply and fit 1.8m high metal bowtop fencing to the communal area between 96-106 Gerard

- Street.
3. Stockbrook Street Local Housing Office – Supply and fit 1.8m high metal fencing and gates to boundary.
 4. Drying areas around Stockbrook Street, next to 12 Edensor Square, opposite 19 Masson Walk and opposite 44 Melandra Court – Replace existing wooden fencing/gates with 1.8m high black metal bowtop fencing and lockable gates.
 5. 1-3 Summerbrook Court – Supply and fit a single gate.

The report also contained an update on other works agreed and customer satisfaction survey results for the quick fix projects.

Tony Holme asked if gates will be installed for access regarding the works to 92 -98, 104-106, 114-118, 116-118, 132-134 and 150 Gerard Street, the Regeneration New Business Manager confirmed that gates will be installed.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board

1. approved bids for funding at
 - 62 Underhill Avenue
 - 92 -98, 104-106, 114-118, 116-118, 132-134 and 150 Gerard Street
 - Stockbrook Street Local Housing Office
 - Drying areas around Stockbrook Street, next to 12 Edensor Square, opposite 19 Masson Walk and opposite 44 Melandra Court
 - 1-3 Summerbrook Court
2. noted the update on the works outlined in paragraph 3.6.

10/59 Review and Restructure of Community Watch Patrol/Concierge Services

The Local Housing Board received a report presenting proposals for the review and restructure of the Community Watch Patrol (CWP). These proposals seek to refocus the out of hours work undertaken by the CWP, more closely link in with the management of anti-social behaviour and develop a long term strategy around youth engagement.

Funding for the patrol ended at 31 March 2010 and it is necessary to review the existing arrangements and put in place long term plans which best meets the needs of Derby Homes' core business.

It is proposed to integrate the CWP within the Neighbourhood Safety Team. This will provide better links on the management of 'hot spots' and case management of anti-social behaviour complaints, witness protection and collection of evidence and monitoring.

It is proposed to carry out a separate review of the Concierge Service based at Rivermead House.

The recruitment process is now in place for CWP officers and once in post, they will be able to provide a patrol for six or seven nights a week.

Tony Holme said that Claire Dyson, Leaseholder Manager needs to be aware of this item and put onto the next Leaseholder Focus Group agenda.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board approved the proposals subject to further consultation with Housing Focus Groups and Process Improvement Teams and delegate on the implementation of the proposals to the Chief Executive of Derby Homes.

10/60 Fire Safety Management in Blocks of Flats

The Local Housing Board received a report proposing the adoption of a sterile area policy for the management of fire risks within the communal corridors, landings and stairwells of flats managed by Derby Homes.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRFSO) imposed new requirements to carry out fire risk assessments of blocks of flats with communal areas and communal fire escape routes. The fire risk assessments carried out on Derby Homes' managed properties identified items in common areas as a significant issue. Such items include pot plants, door mats, chairs, small tables etc.

Bob Troup said that in some blocks of flats people are told to stay inside their flat and wait to be rescued. The Chief Executive said that this should still happen in some cases but when the fire fighter goes to rescue they could trip over the plant pot in the communal area.

Tony Holme said that door mats are needed for cleanliness but could they be fire proof.

Trevor Lamb said that your natural instinct in a fire is to run and not wait so you could trip over a door mat.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board agreed that Derby Homes adopts a “sterile area” fire management policy for blocks of flats to help ensure the safety of residents.

10/61 Notice to Vary Tenancy Conditions

The Local Housing Board received a report proposing to introduce two new tenancy conditions for all new and existing tenants and have recently served a notice of this intention, as required by law. The notice of intention is the initial stage in the consultation process and tenants have 28 days to respond before a final decision is made.

The first proposal is a condition for fitting and servicing smoke alarms. Since 2005 Derby Homes has been working in partnership with the Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service in order to reduce the impact of fires on tenants through Home Fire Risk Assessments. Fitting smoke alarms is key to safety in the home in the event of a fire.

The second proposal variation involves sharing information with utility providers. The current tenancy agreement already covers sharing information with other departments and organisations. Currently if the utility company cannot trace the outgoing tenant at a forwarding address, Derby Homes’ bears the cost by paying the debt on the meter and suffers increased rent loss on voids due to delays in process.

Tony Holme said that leaseholders should also be included especially regarding smoke alarms and fires in flats. The Chief Executive said that Derby Homes could ask leaseholders if it is something they want and could include in all new leases.

Jack Wray asked how large the utility debt is usually. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that the majority can be around £20 but have been known to be £50.

Mary Rowland asked if a form will be used where you have to tick a box or another to agree to share information. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said there will not be a complex process and it will be worded correctly so that it is set out simply and easy to understand.

Harry Margett asked if the utility company frees the meter if the data is

passed on. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said confirmed that this will happen.

Bob Troup said is it dangerous telling people that Derby Homes pays off debts. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said yes but hopefully it will not happen anymore when this is introduced.

Ken Whitehead asked what happens if the address given to the utility company is wrong. The Director of Housing and Customer Service said as long as we have given the utility company an address it is then over to them.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board recommended to the Council the variation of the tenancy conditions.

10/62 Comedius and Roundabouts Trust UK – Relocation and Development Grant

The Local Housing Board received a report detailing a request for a grant of £10,000 in total, £5,000 from each Local Housing Board for Comedius and Roundabouts Trust, to enable relocation and future development of activities and initiatives. The Trust works with individuals who are, or have experienced, homelessness, and/or are socially excluded.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that the Local Housing Board North rejected the request for funding.

The Chair said that there was not enough information in their proposal and that they are not present to answer the questions that the Local Board has. On that basis the Chair said he is inclined to reject the request for funding.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service said that she had not heard back from other companies who are supposed to be backing the funding as to whether they had or not.

Harry Margett said that the Estates Pride funding should be used for estates.

Tony Holme said that the organisation is for a good cause but disappointing that they are not here to present their reasons.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board agreed to decline the request for funding as there was not enough information provided.

10/63 Directors' Update

The Local Housing Board received a report providing a general overview and update on current issues.

Tony Holme asked how the Environmental Services transfer went as he had heard that it was successful, he also asked whether there was any new senior management. The Chief Executive said that there was a staff briefing held on the 9 June 2010 which went well and that there is an Interim Head of Repairs.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the report.

10/64 Performance Monitoring

The Local Housing Board received a report highlighting key performance issues arising from the discussion of quarter 4 in 2009/10.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted, but did not discuss this report.

10/65 Update on Flat Inspections

The Local Housing Board received an update on the flat evaluations carried out in April 2010.

Tony Holme said that the issue he wanted to raise regarding this report had already been covered under the Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' Items.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the report.

10/66 Petition from the Residents of Bretton Avenue

The Local Housing Board received a report outlining a petition that was received at the Stockbrook Housing Office on 25 November 2009 from

14 residents living on Bretton Avenue. Residents were complaining about anti-social behaviour by a neighbour. An acknowledgment letter was sent to the lead petitioner.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the action taken by staff in response to the petition, but did not discuss this report.

10/67 Harvey Road Improvements

The Local Housing Board received a report updating on the progress of the masterplan for environmental works to Harvey Road. There are a number of proposals for works in the masterplan. Consultation with the local forums is currently in process. A proposal will be brought to a future meeting of the Local Housing Board South.

Susan Boon said that she went to the AORTA meeting and it was said that the proposals need to go to the Alvaston and Boulton Neighbourhood Boards. The Chair said that it has already been taken to the Alvaston Neighbourhood Board and that it will be going to the Boulton Neighbourhood Board later this month but it will not be agreed at those Boards as it is Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding and it will go to the Council from the Local Housing Board's recommendations.

Tony Holme asked if the Council are putting any funding forward. The Chair said that part will be from Highways and possibly Tesco as they are building a new store in the area. The Regeneration and New Business Manager said that some proposals that residents want are not covered by the HRA.

Trevor Lamb said that half a million pounds is a lot of money to spend in one area. The Regeneration and New Business Manager said that the full amount will probably not be spent.

Mary Rowland said that Finsley Walk residents asked for improvements at the same time as Harvey Road residents and Finsley Walk have had their improvements.

Tony Holme asked what happens with the owner occupiers on Harvey Road. The Regeneration and New Business Manager said that they would be offered a good rate if they wanted to join in the improvements.

The Chair suggested that the Local Housing Board could take a vote

on whether they wanted the proposals to take place.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted the report and agreed to take a vote to agree the recommendation for the proposals; it was a unanimous vote in favour of the proposals.

10/68 Minutes of Derby Homes Board 25 March 2010

The Local Housing Board received the minutes of the Derby Homes Board held on 25 March 2010.

Agreed

The Local Housing Board noted, but did not discuss the minutes.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 16 September 2010 at 6.00 pm at Cardinal Square.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on Thursday 17 June 2010.