

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 26 May 2011

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Board Members Present:

Paul Bayliss, John Bloxsom (arrived at 6.35 pm), Tony Holme, Iain MacDonald, Patrick Molson, Bob Osler (Chair), Brian Perry, Margaret Redfern (left at 7.35 pm), Dennis Rees, Bob Troup, Roy Webb.

Officers Present:

Shaun Bennett, Phil Davies, David Enticott, Susan Hill, Jackie Mitchell, Maria Murphy

Others Present:

- Brian Frisby, Director of Younger Adults and Housing, Derby City Council, left after the Chief Executive's Update
- Claire Turner, Director of the Landlord Information Network, left after her presentation
- Paul Cole, Resident involvement Officer, left after Questions to Derby Homes Board
- Rob Ellis, member of the public, left after Questions to Derby Homes Board.

11/57 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from John Keith, Tabani Ndlovu, Ken Whitehead, Councillor Ingall, Cath Roff, Maggie Fennell.

The Chair advised the Board that John Keith will be the new Councillor Board Member, replacing Mick Barker. The Chief Executive added that John Keith will become an official Board Member when Companies House has been informed.

11/58 Admission of Late Items

The Chair admitted a late item on the Supply of Materials for Kitchen and Bathroom and Supply and Fit for Solar Panels.

11/59 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.

11/60 Minutes of Previous Meeting on 31 March 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2011 were accepted as a true and accurate record subject to amendment of Minute 11/41 which should read 'the development of up to 900 council owned properties ...' in the first paragraph and 'Community Energy Saving Programme on pre war homes ...,' in the third paragraph on page 5.

11/61 Matters Arising

Minute 11/20 Corporate Responsibility Strategy

The Chief Executive reported he had arranged a meeting with staff at Nottingham City Homes in two weeks time to discuss their initiative on community activities for tenants and will feedback to the Board afterwards.

Minute 11/42 Insurance Renewal 2011/12 – Urgent Decision

Tony Holme informed the Board that the review of insurance claims history is on the next Value For Money meeting agenda.

Minute 11/45 Management Agreement

The Director and Company Secretary informed the Board that Derby City Council has given formal notice of intention to renew the Management Agreement so the 1 October deadline will not be enforced.

Minute 11/47 Business Disaster Recovery Plan Review

The Chief Executive referred to testing the Business Disaster Recovery Plan by carrying out a mock situation at a Local Housing Office (LHO). He advised the situation recently became a reality when a power cable, cut by a workman at Friar Gate this Wednesday, affected our computers. The Senior Management Team met to discuss a recovery plan, made suggestions to staff, for example, operating staff to visit estates, and contacted Carelink, who were fortunately still operating. He added that a mock situation will still take place at a LHO and review of the recovery plan.

11/62 Announcements from the Chair

The Chair announced the following:

- Derby Homes has been awarded the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Gold Medal for health and safety standards
- the Midlands ALMO Board Members Group meeting on 11 July 2011; he asked Board Members to contact the Board and Committee Support Officer if they wished to attend
- HRA training on 10 June in the afternoon; Councillors, Board and City Board Members have been invited. Paul Bayliss suggested inviting all Councillors to Derby Homes' Board training
- Alison Brown and Mick Barker, have both recently stood down from the Board, Councillor John Keith will be joining the Board
- Board Housing Tour on 9 June 2011. The Chief Executive added that the coach will leave Derby Homes at 4.30 pm and will return at 8.30 pm. There will be visits to the Elton Road new build properties, Russell Street travellers' site, London Road Depot and Rebecca House, where a meal will be prepared by the YMCA.

11/63 Statements from members of the Board

There were no statements from members of the Board.

11/64 Questions to Derby Homes Board From Members of the Public

A question was received from Mr Ellis, a tenant who lives in the Cowsley area.

Mr Ellis' question was "Why is the arms length management at Derby City Council/Derby Homes allowed to push the tenant as far away as possible?"

He also raised the lack of communication from emails to surveyors and Shaun Bennett and that these people were not available when he contacted the Enquiry Centre, having no hot water from their boiler for 13 days, which was very difficult for his disabled wife, and waiting for new flooring in the bathroom.

The Chair asked Dennis Rees to respond to the first question.

Dennis Rees said he believes that Derby Homes does not push tenants 'as far away as possible' and generally, 95% of the time they respond to tenants' complaints but there will always be a 5% slip up. He understood the problem Mr Ellis experienced and not having hot water for this length of time was ridiculous.

Shaun Bennett, the Director of Investment and Regeneration, replied that the communication issue on emails had been down to Mr Ellis' emails being trapped by the firewall as a result of the tags on the bottom of the messages. The issue on the hot water repair was with one of the small subcontractors that we were using following the collapse of Connaught; the level of authorisation for ordering spare parts also hindered this particular repair. Mr Ellis commented the final authorisation for the part was last week and was replaced yesterday. The Director of Investment and Regeneration replied that there were issues to learn from this and is keen to bed our own team in for this type of work to improve the reliability of the service; perhaps we should order parts that are best to keep in stock. Mr Ellis raised a concern that he would be labelled as a trouble maker for contacting the Enquiry Centre so many times.

Shaun Bennett added that he would need more information on the shower room flooring and will get back to him. The Chair commented that these issues were not acceptable. He asked Shaun Bennett to meet Mr Ellis to resolve the problem and to keep Dennis Rees and the Board informed.

Tony Holme suggested that one person in the Enquiry Centre should take responsibility for following through tenants' problems. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that was a good idea and best practice was for a Liaison Officer to take on the running of a serious complaint.

Roy Webb asked that a report is brought back to the next meeting, if not earlier. The Board should be seen to follow this issue through.

Agreed

The Board agreed a report on resolving the issues raised by Mr Ellis is brought back to the next meeting.

11/65 Questions from Derby City Council

There were no questions from Derby City Council.

The Chair agreed to bring forward the presentations by Brian Frisby and Claire Turner, Items 10 and 11.

11/66 Presentation by Brian Frisby, Director of Younger Adults and Housing, Derby City Council

The Board received a presentation by Brian Frisby, Director of Younger Adults and Housing, Derby City Council, on transforming the lives of people with a disability in Derby and how Derby Homes could help.

Roy Webb commented that Derby Homes could help by providing accommodation as we have an adaptations budget to adapt homes. Derby Homes could look at adaptations already made to properties which would be suitable for people with learning disabilities to move in independently. He suggested Derby Homes works with the Learning Disabilities Ambassadors who represent people with learning disabilities.

The Chair commented that we now have a 10 year contract and could plan ahead to work with learning disabilities services. Dennis Rees said he would like the Council to help with our budget to adapt more properties. The Chair added that Derby Homes needs to look at how adaptations are done and where we do them, including Extra Care schemes.

Paul Bayliss added that Derby Homes is very good at providing services to less able tenants. It is a good opportunity for Derby Homes to provide facilities to existing properties, and to carry out new build, to ensure there is sufficient provision for people with learning disabilities and move the agenda forward. Tony Holme commented that we should also work with communities and neighbourhoods to help and support disabled people.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service advised that we need to improve the relationship and partnership working with the care support providers so that people with disabilities can move into independent accommodation. However, training and education will be required for staff to work together and move the services forward.

The Chair thanked Brian Frisby for attending the meeting. A report will be brought to the next meeting providing details on how Derby Homes can move forward to help people with learning disabilities.

Agreed

The Board

1. noted the presentation

2. agreed to receive a report at the next meeting providing details on how Derby Homes can move forward to help people with learning disabilities.

11/67 Presentation by Claire Turner, Consultant, on the future 'Welfare Reforms and what Derby Homes needs to do to prepare'

The Board received a presentation by Claire Turner, Director of the Landlord Information Network, on the significant changes to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance which will affect tenants of social and private landlords and housing authorities.

Claire informed the Board that a workshop was arranged that afternoon to look at and minimise the impact that the changes will bring.

Iain MacDonald asked if there was a plan on what to do next. The Chief Executive replied that Murray Chapman, Customer Services Manager, will set up a group of staff, including the Council, to do more research on issues raised at the workshop. Arrears could go up and this may be caused by the increasing non-dependent deductions. Iain MacDonald highlighted that there are tenants who do not pay their rent and there should be a plan on how to resolve this. Paul Bayliss suggested looking at tenants' profiles so that tenants are not hit by the changes to Housing Benefit. It will be a massive problem for some tenants who will struggle with the changes and arrears will increase. John Bloxsom was pleased to hear that a group of staff will be working on the changes to Housing Benefit. He asked what the corporate approach was to the impact of these changes. The Chief Executive replied that the Council's Money Advice and Legal Teams are working with us and letters will explain the changes to Housing Benefit, however, he anticipated the need to set up additional project team to tackle this issue from now on. He will inform the Board of what progress has been made on the Housing Benefit changes in September.

Agreed

The Board

1. noted the presentation
2. agreed a report will be brought to the September Board meeting.

11/68 Committee Chairs' Feedback

Chairs of Derby Homes' Committees provided highlights from previous meetings.

Tony Holme, Chair of Audit Committee – 11 April 2011

- Training for Audit Committee Members on the roles of Internal and External Auditors
- Internal Audit – Update
- Internal Audit – Proposed Annual Audit Plan 2011/12
- Audit Committee Self Assessment
- Audit Committee Terms of Reference – item on this agenda
- Implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations.

Iain MacDonald, Chair of Resources, Remuneration and Regeneration Committee – 21 April 2011

- Derby Homes Risk Register – item on this agenda
- Senior Staff Salary Review
- Terms and Conditions of Employment
- New Business, Extra Care, Development and Regeneration Update
- Solar Panel Installations to Council Houses
- Allocation of Solar Panel Installations
- Retirement Policy
- Derby Homes Management Accounts Period 11 2010/11 (Management Fee and Repairs Team)
- Timetable For 2010/11 Year End Accounts
- ICT Strategy – deferred until the next July meeting
- Review of Non-Core Activities
- Feed In Tariff Registration
- Code for Sustainable Homes Cost Implications for New Build
- Employee Survey Results
- Attendance Management.

Dennis Rees, Chair of City Board – 28 April 2011

- Housing and Leaseholder Focus Groups' Items
- Local Issues on gardening scheme, lack of recycling bins
- Estates Pride Quick Fix Bids
- Welfare Adaptations Policy
- Product Supply for Kitchens
- Use of Community Rooms
- Recharging Tenants for Missed Appointments.

11/69 Standing Order 12

The Board agreed to waive Standing Order 12 to allow the meeting to continue after 8.00 pm.

11/70 Confidential Business

The Board agreed to exclude members of the public during consideration of the following item on grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential information as defined in Standing Order 20.2 (n) of Part IV of Derby Homes Governance Arrangements.

11/71 Chief Executive's Update

The Board received a report which included updates on:

- New Build
- Derby Homes Contract
- Partnership Working
- Osmaston Community Association Residents
- Travellers' Site, Russell Street, Osmaston
- Direct Debit Error
- Solar Panels.

Roy Webb asked if the travellers' site would be a permanent base for the travellers. The Chief Executive replied that it will be. Roy thought the point of the site was to use it as a temporary basis for travellers as they move on and not to use the base as a permanent site. The Chief Executive said he would look into this and report back to Roy Webb. However, it was discussed that tenants are not permanent, including mobile home parks tenants.

Agreed

The Board noted the report.

11/72 Derby Homes Risk Register

The Board received a report providing information on the end of year updates for the strategic and operational risks for 2010/11 and presented the revised strategic and operational risk registers for 2011/12.

Agreed

The Board noted the

1. update and review of the strategic and operational risk registers for 2010/11
2. revised strategic and operational risk management registers for 2011/12
3. revised risk scoring matrix to assess and prioritise Derby Homes' risks, and the management of those risks.

End of Confidential Business

11/73 To agree any items from Part C to be discussed

The Board agreed to discuss Item C2 Derby Homes Performance Monitoring Information Quarter 4, 2010/11. The rest of the items in Part C were noted but not discussed.

11/74 Health and Safety Update

The Board received details of recent health and safety performance and current issues.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service informed the Board that Derby Homes has won the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Gold Award for 5 years.

In the list of Violence and Aggression cases, partner agencies, for example Police and Social Services, have provided us with warnings regarding tenants in 5 of the 8 cases, and with the Board's agreement, she would like to continue to include this feedback from agencies.

The Director of Housing and Customer Service referred to the incident that occurred on 8 April 2011 by an owner occupier. Full support was provided by Derby Homes to the officer involved. The owner occupier has pleaded guilty and the Police has informed us that the owner is remorseful for what has happened.

Paul Bayliss asked if an injunction will be issued to the owner occupier. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that an injunction has been prepared. However, the Police's feedback is that the employee is in no danger as the owner occupier has shown remorse. Paul Bayliss replied that the employee was subject to ASB and a lesson should be learnt by the owner occupier. He favoured the injunction. Three Board Members, including Paul Bayliss, were in favour of an injunction and 6 Board Members were against.

Agreed

The Board noted the report and agreed to use feedback from partner agencies for Violence and Aggression cases.

11/75 Audit Committee Terms of Reference

The Board received a report proposing amendments to the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference. The last review was carried out in 2008 and a further review was undertaken and changes proposed at the Audit Committee meeting on 11 April 2011.

Agreed

The Board approved the revised Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

11/76 Board Compass

The Board received a report proposing a mechanism for the Board to monitor its own performance against 4 key objectives which were agreed at the Board Away Day:

- A high performing partner to the Council
- Fit for purpose Governance
- Getting the basics right and putting tenants first
- Effective 30 year HRA Business Plan

The Chief Executive informed the Board that the average scores will be brought to the next meeting and discussed and updated at each meeting.

Agreed

The Board agreed that the Board Compass be brought to future Board meetings for discussion.

11/77 Late Item - Supply of Materials for Kitchen and Bathroom and Supply and Fit for Solar Panels

The Board received a report seeking approval to change material suppliers for kitchen and bathroom projects and for a contractor to supply and fit solar panels.

Iain MacDonald requested an update report on the progress on kitchens and bathrooms and supply and fitting of solar panels at a later date.

Agreed

The Board

1. agreed that Derby Homes engages suppliers through the Efficiency East Midlands (EEM) buying consortium for the supply of materials for the kitchen and bathroom projects
2. agreed the selection of a contractor for the supply and fit of solar panels from the EEM framework for our solar panel project
3. delegated the final decision for the approval of specific suppliers for the above projects to the Chief Executive
4. a further report on progress on these projects be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

11/78 Draft Minutes of Committees and City Board

The Board received the draft minutes of recent Committee meetings:

- a Audit – 11 April 2011
- b Resources, Remuneration & Regeneration – 21 April 2011
- c City Board – 28 April 2011.

Agreed

The Board noted but did not discuss the minutes.

11/79 Derby Homes Performance Monitoring Information Quarter 4, 2010/11

The Board received a year-end report on Derby Homes' performance 2010/11.

The Chief Executive viewed the performance targets with the Board. John Bloxsom asked if there was early intervention to prevent arrears increasing, especially with the new Housing Benefit changes that could affect tenants. The Director of Housing and Customer Service replied that the number of tenants evicted was a lot lower than 2008/09. Unfortunately, there will be tenants who become familiar with the format of automated letters and who will delay paying their rent until the last minute. However, she will speak to Jaz Sanghera, Arrears Manager, to change the format of letters to discourage this.

The Director and Company Secretary informed the Board that the figure for invoices paid within 30 days 2010/11 should be 98%, and not 96.33%.

The Chief Executive commented that the average call wait had increased in 2010/11 due to the bad winter weather. He also explained that the Business and Delivery Plan and Service Improvement Targets were in the red due to delays outside of our control with external providers, for example, software suppliers. Certificates will be given to staff who have achieved their targets. The Chair expressed his thanks to the excellent performance of staff.

Agreed

The report was noted.

11/80 Review Mini STATUS Survey

The Board received a report highlighting the main findings of the mini STATUS survey carried out between November 2010 and February 2011.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

11/81 Recruitment of Independent Board Members – Urgent Approval

The Board received a report setting out a proposed procedure for appointing two Independent Board Members to replace vacancies following the resignation of Alison Brown on 4 April 2011 and notice by John Bloxsom of his intention to retire on 27 October 2011.

Tony Holme asked if there were further news on recruiting new Board Members. The Chair replied that there had been a meeting that afternoon and there were six very strong candidates. All six candidates will be invited to interview.

Agreed

The Board noted the Chair's urgent approval of the proposed person specification and process for appointing two Independent Board Members.

11/82 Delivering Our Plans Year End Report

The Board received a report detailing end of year performance against targets contained in the Delivery and Service Plans. Targets not met and proposed corrective actions had been discussed with the Chair's Group and were brought to the attention of the Board.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

11/83 Forward Plan of Agenda Items

The Board received a forward plan of agenda items for a six month period from June 2011.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

11/84 Board Diary Planner

The Board received a diary planner of events taking place for the six months from June 2011.

Agreed

The report was noted but not discussed.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 28 July 2011 at 6.00 pm at Cardinal Square.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 26 May 2011.