

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONAL BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 2 September 2021

The meeting started at 6.00 pm

Operational Board Members present: Lucy Care, Natasha Cover, Kevin Ellaway, Tony Holme, Bob MacDonald (Chair), Dennis Rees, Jsan Shepherd

Officers present: Annabelle Barwick, Steve Bayliss, Helen Brown, Paul Cole, David Enticott, Ashton Garner, Holly Johnson, James Joyce, Michael Kirk, Kas Sahota, Lorraine Testro, Ian Yeomans

21/46 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mike Ainsley and Jackie Mitchell.

21/47 Admission of late items

There were no late items.

21/48 Declarations of interests

The Council Board Member was noted as declaring their interest in matters relating to Derby City Council.

The Tenant and Leasehold Board Members declared their interests as tenants and leaseholders (as defined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association) of Derby City Council.

Bob MacDonald and Dennis Rees both declared they are now members of the Housing Ombudsman's Resident Panel.

Natasha Cover declared after the meeting that she is an employee of Community Action Derby, which is involved in delivering the Youth Alliance project on Item A8.

21/49 Chair's Announcements

None.

21/50 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 May 2021 were accepted as a correct record, subject to an amendment to Minute 21/30 Performance

Management 2021/21 Quarter 4, to read:

(Paragraph 2)....'It is likely that with stricter enforcement options available in 2021/22....'.

21/51 Matters Arising

Minute 21/31 Demand for Larger Homes

It was confirmed the average stay for Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation fluctuates throughout the year but the average at the end of July was 23 days.

It was confirmed the key to avoiding eviction is prevention work, Derby Homes does a lot of work to avoid homelessness by working with Landlords and Customers.

21/52 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

21/53 Performance Management 2021/21 Quarter Q1

The Operational Board received a report which presented a summary of performance for quarter one 2021/22, from key performance measures reported to Derby City Council. Overall performance remained positive with a few issues to be addressed where possible.

The Operational Board was advised that the outstanding gas and electrical compliance inspections are unlikely to be for the same properties due to the difference in cycles.

It was confirmed that LOLER stands for lifting operations and lifting equipment regulations.

Proactive work is being done with those not active on Homefinder to establish if they still need to be on the register and are removed if directed otherwise. When bids are considered on Homefinder properties are allocated to the person who is determined to have the highest needs to be rehoused and it may be that it takes some time to be allocated a property, however not always the first person on the list is successful. The Private Rented Sector needs to be explored as demand is huge for stock turnover and Derby Homes has a dedicated team to provide support to people through the bidding process.

The actual numbers of approaches for domestic abuse will be confirmed and it was agreed to show both the percentage and numbers in future presentations.

Derby Homes is looking at what work needs to be done on properties in the future when looking at SAP(Standard Assessment Procedure) efficiency. There is some funding from the Green Homes Grant and Derby Homes is working along side the Council on bids for this and other green funding. SAP relates to the physical structure of the building whereas EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) considers the environment, on average Derby Homes is already at a high C rating and above the baseline for the future.

Working locations have been flexible during lockdown to help those struggling with mental health and managers have continued to have regular one to ones with employees. These have covered conversations regarding health and wellbeing and managers have been coming up with their own initiatives for their teams. Derby Homes also provides access to Workplace Wellness, which is an external support service for all staff to use.

There is a 10% tolerance on the performance measures shown in red and targets can vary throughout the course of the year to reflect periodic changes.

The Operational Board advised they found some of the slides difficult to read, it was agreed this would be amended for future presentations.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the 2021/22 quarter one performance trends.

21/54 Demand for Larger Family Homes

The Operational Board received a report that presented an overview of the current demand for 4+bedroom homes by looking at the number of households on the housing register and balances this against the number of larger family homes that were available for allocation during 2020/21.

The report also provided information on the actions being taken to increase access to larger family homes through purchase, extensions and other means.

There is more demand for 3 bedroom properties than the demand for 4 and there is a bigger turnover for 3 bedroom properties. The private rented sector is working hard to try and purchase more stock and Derby Homes often negotiates with the customer and the landlord to try and provide a more suitable offer .

Generally, the make up of families in larger bedroom properties is families with a larger number of children rather than extended families and overcrowding is reviewed by the Housing Management Team but can only be resolved as quickly as another property can be found.

Derby Homes contacts tenants identified as under occupying to try and work with them to encourage them to move to smaller accommodation; incentives for under occupying tenants to move are currently being reviewed.

Agreed

The Operational Board

1. noted the level of demand for larger properties and the number of properties that were re-let during the financial year 2020/21.
2. noted the measures being taken to increase the availability of larger family homes.

21/55 Employee Supported Volunteer Policy

The Operational Board was asked to consider an amendment to the Employee Supported Volunteer Policy which gives staff the option to volunteer for a day a year, and be paid, as long as it is adding value to the community.

It was proposed to amend the policy to include that the Managing Director is given discretion to consider requests that fall outside the scope of the policy and may agree additional volunteering time in exceptional circumstances.

Agreed

The Operational Board agreed to amend the Employee Supported Volunteer Policy to allow the Managing Director discretion to consider requests that fall outside the scope of the policy and may agree additional volunteering time in exceptional circumstances.

21/56 Part B Supplementary Questions

There were no Questions raised.

The Operational Board requested that any acronyms used in documents to be stated in their full form at the beginning before using throughout the rest of the document.

21/57 Operational Board Forward Plan

The Operational Board considered the Forward Plan of agenda items for the period December 2021 – May 2022.

The Operational Board requested that the Grounds Maintenance and Communal Cleaning Update report for the December meeting also includes

an update on tree inspections.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the Forward Plan.

21/58 Value for Money Annual Report 2020/21

The Operational Board, as part of its functions, receives reports on a regular basis that monitor Derby Homes' performance. Value for Money considerations must be balanced between cost and performance; the Operational Board considered an annual report updating on that balance.

The report included:

- Report on the Housemark figures for 2019/20 (latest available) and comparisons
- Report on the outturn figures for Derby Homes for 2020/21 compared to the RSH (Regulator of Social Housing) averages for 2019/20
- Comments on the VfM of Derby Homes

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the Value for Money Annual Report 2020/21.

21/59 Former Tenants Arrears and Sundry Debts Policy

The Operational Board considered a report explaining that the Former Tenants Arrears (FTA) and Sundry Debts Policy has been reviewed in accordance with Derby Homes key policy review schedule.

There were no changes proposed to the existing Policy which was attached at Appendix 1.

There is a separate policy for Leaseholders. If they are in debt and a payment plan is arranged. When a leaseholder sells their property any remaining debts have to be repaid first before the lease can be passed on, so any debt is eventually recovered.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the Former Tenants Arrears and Sundry Debts policy for a further three years.

21/60 Localised Customer Priorities Quarter 1 Update

The Operational Board considered a report with an update on the Local Customer Priorities from April 2021 to June 2021 and a proposed workplan on how we will identify future local customer priorities.

Work is being undertaken to try to involve local neighbourhoods by getting community groups involved, to speak to people who know the area and through door knocking and liaising with existing forums.

The Council has car clubs where people can have access to locally parked cars for a small cost, which would be a useful initiative. Lucy Care agreed to pass on further information to Lorraine Testro.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the Local Customer Priorities Quarter 1 update and approved the proposed workplan for identifying future local customer priorities.

21/61 Estates Pride Programme 2021-22 Update

The Operational Board considered an update on the Estates Pride Programme 2021-22. Derby Homes allocates funds each year from its Capital and Revenue allocation to deliver improvement works that are identified by Tenants, Councillors Local Housing Office staff and other local agencies/partners. The works can potentially include fencing and gates, lighting, landscaping, and improving access.

This report updated the Operational Board on the progress made to the schemes approved at the December 2020 meeting for the 2021/22 capital programme.

Agreed

The Operational Board noted the updated Estates Pride Programme 2021-22 and approved the allocation of any spare 2021/22 HRA Capital funding towards the existing Hardstanding Capital works as outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

21/62 Customer Voice – Quality of Repairs Report and Recommendations Update

The Operational Board considered an update on progress of the recommendations made in a report, brought to the Operational Board last December, in response to the Customer Voice - Quality of Repairs Report.

The Operational Board agreed there has been a lot of progress since the last update and it is clear there is a good working relationship between Customer Voice and Derby Homes.

Agreed

The Operational Board

1. noted the Quality of Repairs review carried out by the Customer Voice.
2. noted the continued dialogue regarding outstanding recommendations provided in appendix 1.
3. thanked all staff involved

21/63 Youth Alliance Grant 2021/22

The Operational Board considered a report on the Youth Alliance which is an innovative collaborative approach between the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) and Derby City Council (DCC) to co-design and deliver youth provision within the City. The purpose of the group is to align interests of parties whose aim is to reduce risk and improve wellbeing and services for young people in Derby.

The Operational Board supported the 6 month pilot project, which was delivered successfully and were asked to consider a continued grant commitment to the Alliance through 2021/22.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved a 2021/22 grant to the Youth Alliance of £100,000 to deliver preventative and diversionary activities that reduce risk and improve wellbeing and services for young people living on estates managed by Derby Homes, subject to the approval of Derby City Council.

21/64 Derwent Café Project Grant 2021

The Operational Board considered grant funding, up to £20,000, the Derwent Café project which has been developed to benefit Derwent and Chaddesden wards and create much needed community space. The project looks to reinvent the large, accessible space within St. Philip's church on Taddington Road, rejuvenating the space and working with partners to be provide a stronger offer for the local community.

Other funding of £11,000 has been committed to the project including from Derby Diocese and Derwent Neighbourhood Board.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved a grant of £20,000 to the Derwent Café project, as a one-off contribution, subject to approval from Derby City Council.

21/65 Derby Homes Volunteering Strategy 2021-2023

The Operational Board considered a report that included:

- An update on Derby Homes Volunteer Strategy 2021-2023 for approval.
- An update of the progress of the Volunteer Strategy 2018-2021
- An acknowledgement of the successful partnership developed between Community Action Derby and Derby Homes
- An update of the development of the Employer Supported Volunteer Scheme (ESVS) as part of the Volunteer Strategy 2018-2021
- An update on Derby City Council's support for Volunteering.

The Operational Board was informed that long standing members of the youth panel are now guaranteed an interview for an apprenticeship with Derby Homes. Derby Homes confirmed that a candidate was successful for an apprenticeship this year following this initiative.

Agreed

The Operational Board

1. Approved the reviewed Volunteer Strategy 2021-2023 (appendix one) which celebrates volunteering through on-going support to Derby's Volunteer Centre, hosted by Community Action Derby.
2. Noted that the coronavirus pandemic has impacted the delivery of the strategy.
3. Noted the intention to further develop and promote the Employee Supported Volunteer Scheme.
4. Noted Derby City Council's Strategic Support for Volunteering, which is in conversations with Derby City Council's Community Development Manager and Community Action Derby.
5. Agreed to receive an update on Derby Homes volunteering projects at a future meeting.

21/66 Derby Homes Welfare Adaptations Policy Review 2021

The Operational Board considered a report detailing a review of the Welfare Adaptations Policy.

It was proposed that the current cost threshold allowing works up to £10,000 to be approved is increased to £30,000, with any work above this figure assessed by the Managing Director.

It was confirmed that low level costs would be covered where adaptations were needed for a regular visitor to a tenant's homes.

The Operational Board was advised that the process for considering cases for adaptations has been improved especially regarding overcrowding, but the budget may need to be increased in future years depending on whether it can be delivered.

Agreed

The Operational Board approved the revised Welfare Adaptations Policy.

The following items were noted by the Operational Board

21/67 Service Update

The Operational Board noted a report that provided a general overview and update on current issues.

21/68 Homelessness Report Quarter 1 2021/22

The Operational Board noted a report on:

- Homelessness Approaches
- Homelessness cases resolved under Prevention and Relief Duty
- Homelessness Acceptances

21/69 Complaints and Compliments Quarter 1

The Operational Board noted the report providing detailed analysis of complaints received between 1 April and 30 June 2021 (Q1).

21/70 Customer Survey Quarter 1

The Operational Board noted the report providing detailed analysis of the satisfaction results from the first quarter of the Customer Survey 2021 – 2022. Full details can be found in Appendix 1.

21/71 Anti Social Behaviour Quarter 1 2021/22

The Operational Board noted the report providing some key statistics for Derby Homes ASB service for the first Quarter of 2021/22

21/72 Annual Report for Customers 2020/21

The Operational Board noted the report introducing the final working draft of the Customer Annual Report and explaining the aims of this year's production.

21/73 Derby Homefinder Year End Report 2020/21

The Operational Board noted the report providing information on Derby Homefinder for the period April 2020 - March 2021.

21/74 Equalities Monitoring Report – 2020 /2021

The Operational Board noted the Equalities report presenting a demographic comparisons of Derby City, alongside the East Midlands and England and our equalities performance information as at April 2021.

21/75 Derby Homes Board Minutes 2 June 2021

The Operational Board noted the Minutes of the Derby Homes Board meeting held on 2 June 2021.

21/76 Draft Minutes of Derby Homes Board Meeting 29th July 2021

The Operational Board noted the draft Minutes of Derby Homes Board meeting held on 29th July 2021.

Date of next meeting

Potential date for the next meeting to be held on 9 December 2021

The meeting ended at 8:45 pm.

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 2 September 2021.