

DERBY HOMES LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC BOARD MEETING

Held on Thursday 30 January 2025

The meeting started at 6pm

Board Members Present:

Jsan Shepherd – Chair **(JS)**
Mike Ainsley **(MA)**
Councillor Lucy Care **(LC)**
Councillor John Evans **(JE)**
Ellie Jackson **(EJ)**
Bob MacDonald **(BM)**
Iain MacDonald **(IM)**
Councillor Jamie Mulhall **(JM)**

Officers Present:

Shaun Bennett, Director of Property **(SB)**
Chloe Gaskell, Governance Officer **(CG)**
Andrew Grover, Lead Procurement Officer **(AG)**
Jane Haywood, Governance Manager **(JH)**
Holly Johnson, Head of Quality and Consumer Regulation **(HJ)**
Michael Kirk, Finance Director and Company Secretary **(MK)**
Taranjit Lalria, Head of Governance and Corporate Services **(TL)**
Clare Mehrbani, Director of Housing **(CM)**
Maria Murphy, Managing Director **(MM)**
Helen Samuel, Head of Finance and Income **(HS)**

Others Present:

Ian Fullagar, Head of Strategic Housing, DCC **(IF)**
Councillor Shiraz Khan **(SK)**

DH25/01 Apologies

There were no apologies.

DH25/02 Admission of Late Items

There were no late items.

DH25/03 **Declarations of Interests**

The Council Board Members were noted as declaring their interest in matters relating to Derby City Council.

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

DH25/04 **Announcements from the Chair**

JS noted that the January edition of Inside Housing included an article on ALMO's having the best 2023/24 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) performance, and the article also included a quote from MM.

JS informed the Board that member appraisals will be complete soon, and that the Chairs meeting minutes are being distributed to all members.

JS also informed the Board that she has attended the Strategic Partnership Board meeting and chaired the JCC meeting.

DH25/05 **Statements from Members of the Board**

MA commented on ALMOS success in the TSMs.

BM noted that he had attended the Housing Ombudsman residence meeting, where they went through some of the annual figures.

DH25/06 **Questions from members of the public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

DH25/07 **Committee Chairs' Feedback**

Operational Committee – 5 December 2024

BM informed the Board that the Committee has covered the Income Management Strategy, Performance Management, and the Responsive Repairs policy, amongst other items.

Governance Committee – 12 December 2024

MA informed the Board that the Committee had looked at a review of the schemes of delegation. There were minor updates, and all were approved. MA also noted that the purpose of the Governance Committee had been discussed, as it will now be receiving further documents. He stressed that Board Member attendance at this meeting is recommended as important topics are being covered, especially now there are fewer Board meetings.

DH25/08 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting on 31 October 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

DH25/09 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

DH25/10 Action Monitoring

The Board noted the Action Monitoring Status.

DH25/11 Forward Plan

The Board noted the Forward Plan.

DH25/12 Board Champion Positions

The report sought to appoint Board Champions to the roles set out in the main body, following an email circulated to Members on 2 January 2025 seeking expressions of interest.

- BM put himself forward for safeguarding.
- EJ put herself forward for customer service/complaints champion and asked to work alongside BM temporarily in the role.
- IM will continue in Health and Safety. The possibility of JM taking up this role once IM's term expires was discussed.
- JS will continue as Equalities and Inclusion champion.

Agreed

The Board approved the following appointments:

- Health and Safety Champion – Iain MacDonald
- Equalities/Inclusion Champion – Jsan Shepherd
- Customer Service/Complaints Champion – Ellie Jackson
- Safeguarding Champion – Bob MacDonald

DH25/13 Disclosures under the Insurance Act

Under the Insurance Act 2015, Derby Homes is obliged to disclose to insurers relevant information, at both the insurance tender/renewal time (April) and within the year if relevant issues occur.

Agreed

The Board agreed there is no new relevant information that should be disclosed to our insurers, as required under the Insurance Act 2015.

DH25/14 Board Members Attendance at Meetings

The Board noted Members' attendance.

DH25/15 Executive Directors Report

The report provides an overview of national and local issues affecting social housing and sets out key areas of progress delivered through the Executive Team since the last Board meeting.

The report contained information on the following matters:

- Performance Update – Damp, Mould and Condensation
- Repairs service update
- Stock condition surveys – results to date and future plans.
- Government consultations – future social housing rent policy and reforming the Right to Buy
- Health and safety update
- Quarter 3 2024/25 – Delivery Plan update
- 2025/26 delivery plan timetable
- Quarter 3 – strategic risk and operational risk register update
- English Devolution White Paper.

MA noted that he'd been discussing the effect of the Devolution White Paper on the ALMO movement with Eamon McGoldrick (NFA) – and commented that as a well performing ALMO, Derby Homes may have future opportunities.

IM commented that, where he'd experienced an amalgamated council authority before, there had been initial negative thoughts, however it had worked well and became positive.

JM commented that there is general preference for a larger city council incorporating some neighbouring councils. However, Derbyshire County Council do not agree and prefer Derby City to remain as current and all other Councils create an increased Derbyshire council. Derbyshire could have their new authority by 2027 / 2028.

Damp Mould & Condensation (DMC) - JM asked – in regard to the 116 DMC property issues – if the repairs are being addressed. SB confirmed that systematic property related issues are addressed immediately. Many systems are used to identify property related issues, and the team return 3 months after the repair to check it. SB confirmed that the team are currently

looking at factors such as family compositions and overcrowding to build a picture of the causes of damp, mould, and condensation.

IM queried the process when the team goes back to a property where non-property issues are the cause of DMC, and no improvements have been made despite giving advice. MM confirmed there is a system in place which evidences advice given, and work done, and this will be tested either under the introduction of Awaab's law or under Housing Ombudsman findings.

JM queried if there was a further reduction in the backlog of responsive repair jobs as the number had dropped to 3,908. SB confirmed that this number reflects normal outstanding workflow.

JM asked – with regard to the 6,620 stock condition surveys completed – what budget was used for repairs when a problem has been found. SB confirmed that this is currently a pressure on the day-to-day repairs budget.

JM queried if the Right to Buy changes will have an effect on Derby City Council stock. MK confirmed that the number of planned new homes and acquisitions will be similar to the numbers lost to Right to Buy, and housing stock should stabilise over 30 years rather than significantly drop. MM commented that the demand is still much higher than the current supply.

Agreed

The Board noted all sections within the report.

DH25/16 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy

The report sought Board Members' approval for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2025-28. The strategy has been developed following the review of the proposed Inclusion Strategy in September 2024, as well as the revision and update of the Equalities Strategy 2018-2021.

IM queried the inclusive procurement wording, which suggests a contractor may be discriminated against for not having an EDI policy. Due to financial resource constraints, Derby Homes should continue assessing contractors on price and quality. AG confirmed that smaller sized could potentially not be reaching out as they may be discouraged, and this wording intends to try and bring in a few more contractors. CM clarified that there is no requirement to be able to demonstrate an EDI policy, and a contractor without one wouldn't be disadvantaged.

Agreed

The Board approved the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2025-28

along with its supporting policies and procedures.

DH25/17 Performance and Compliance Report

The report gave an update on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) and electrical safety testing.

BM queried if the telephone surveys being conducted by the Customers Services team is at a detriment to their phone availability for customers and if allowances for (call handling) performance were being made for the team. MM confirmed that the surveys are conducted by the Customer Service team, at the least busy times and that allowances are made to the call handling time targets.

MM confirmed that she will condense these reports down and report to the Councils Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet Member SK, to ensure suitable oversight on this area by the Council.

Agreed

The Board noted the improved performance for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures for Quarter 3 2024/25 performance.

The Board noted performance on electrical safety testing for quarter 3.

The Board noted the position of Derby City Council and Derby Homes nationally from the RSH 2023/24 publication.

DH25/18 Complaints and Feedback

The report provided detailed analysis of complaints, compliments and lessons learned between 1 October and 31 December 2024 (Quarter 3). The report updated the Board on performance year-to-date and to provide assurance of the work within the Complaints and Engagement service area.

MA queried if there was any evidence of "complaints farming". HJ confirmed there had been incidents in the past, however there are none currently. The complaints process will be actively changing with 4 officers, and they will be contacting the customer for further clarification on their issues before beginning the formal complaints process to decide the best way of solving them.

LC welcomed conversations with customers before introducing the formal complaints process.

Agreed

The Board noted the information in the report and appendices.

The Board noted the 2023/24 Annual Landlord report from the Housing Ombudsman.

DH25/19 Delivery Plan 2024/25 Q2 Update

The report presented an overview of performance, in line with the commitment made in the latest Derby Homes Delivery Plan, as at quarter 2 2024/25.

LC queried if there was capacity for cross sector liaison with other housing providers. IF confirmed that staff capacity is low, however the recent approach is working with CM to work jointly to tackle a particular issue.

Agreed

The Board received assurance on the achievements made against the key priorities at quarter two 2024/25 and highlighted areas where the achievement of specific objectives has varied from the agreed plan.

The Board noted the amendments to the 2024/25 Derby Homes Delivery Plan (post Q2).

DH25/20 Finance Report

The report updated the Board that the 2024/25 Quarter 3 management accounts are indicating a small surplus of £0.4m for the year. This is an increase from a breakeven forecast at Q2.

MK verbally updated the Board, that since drafting the report, Derby Homes have been informed by the Council of a £0.4m backdated charge to the management fee in relation to overpayments linked to the employer's national insurance allowance. This covers the years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

MK assured the Board that the 2023/24 management fee has been updated as necessary and that the correct allowance is now in the annual management fee going forward.

MK noted that the Derby Homes External Auditors have been informed and that the £0.4m correction can be applied in the current year financial statements without the need to restate prior year financial statements.

Agreed

The Board noted the Quarter 3 2024/25 management accounts forecast of a £0.4m surplus for the year and the revision to a breakeven forecast following the management fee correction.

The Board approved the delegation to the Finance Director and Company Secretary, and the Managing Director, to progress payment on the backdated £0.4m management fee correction.

DH25/21 Operational Budget

The report presented the operational budget for Derby Homes for 2025/26 and outline forecasts for 2026/27 and 2027/28, for consideration by the Board.

Capital plans – Vans - LC queried if hybrid vans had been considered as an option. MK confirmed he would take this suggestion on board.

LC queried the £50k budget pressure associated with furniture pack indirect costs. MK confirmed that Derby Homes anticipated recharging £50k a year to Derby City Council to recharge these costs. However, the Council has not accepted this charge, stating that such costs are already within the annual management fee.

LC queried the £2.7m figure shown as Long-Term Liabilities. MK clarified that these are loans from the Council, secured against Derby Homes owned properties.

Agreed

The Board approved the budget for 2025/26 along with the 2025/26 pressures and savings.

The Board approved, in principle, the budgets for 2026/27 and 2027/28, along with the indicative pressures and savings requirements.

The Board noted options to be considered by Derby Homes and the Council in balancing the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Derby Homes budget over the medium term.

The Board approved the updated capital programme.

The Board approved, in principle, the planned use of cash reserves.

The Board noted the review of £3m over 3 years “stress test” on the budgets and that the company remains financially resilient, with reserves and cash

(via borrowing if necessary) available to fund losses at the stress test levels.

The Board noted the comments on, and the level of net spend on, activities other than social housing activities.

DH25/22 Housemark Benchmarking Results 2023/24

The report reviewed and commented on Derby Homes' cost and performance information as detailed in the Housemark cost and performance benchmarking report 2023/24.

MK noted the excellent performance showing both Management and Maintenance areas as top quartile ranking of "Good Performance – Low Cost".

Performance is excellent with satisfaction survey scores remain high in comparison with the peer group, with six out of seven headline measures in the top quartile.

LC commented that it would be useful to know where other providers sit within the Performance / Cost table.

Agreed

The Board noted the findings of the report.

DH25/23 Any other business

There was no other business.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 24 April 2025 at 6:00pm

The meeting ended at 7.50pm

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CHAIR

Signed as true and accurate record of the meeting held on 30 January 2025.