

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED

Riverside North Divisional Meeting Held at 4.00pm on
Thursday 17 September 2015 at the Riverside, 6 Staithes, Gateshead

Minutes

Present:	Diana Pearce	Vice Chair	DP
	Bill Barkworth		BB
	Bob Hall		BH
	Dr Nell Chang		NC
	Steve Ward	Director, North Division	SW
	Sally Trueman		ST
In attendance:	Kevin O'Flanagan	Asset Manager Cumbria	KO
	Simon Aldred	Assistant Director, Finance	SA
	Julie Gray	Assistant Director, Development	JG
	Julie Riseborough	Business Support Manager	JR
	Carl Mitchell	Assistant Director, Operations	CM
	Carly Hodgson	PA	CH

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Darren Warneford, Patrick Rice, Andy Gladwin, Peter Clark, Chris Leavy and Mark Pearson.

Diana Pearce stepped in as Chair in DW's absence.

Declarations of Interest

The Chair and the Board thanked Dr Chang for her years of service and wished her every success in future endeavours on the occasion of her last Riverside North Board meeting.

132 Minutes of the last Divisional Board Meeting held 23 July 2015. Action

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

133 Matters Arising

None.

134 Financial Performance Report

The Board noted the contents of the financial performance report. The following points were discussed:

- a. SA updated the Board on the Divisions financial performance against budget for the period April – July 2015.
- b. SA confirmed that some of the major variances reported to date were an increased number of policy voids; an overspend on responsive repairs, due to exclusions in the Greater Manchester Evolve contract which is yet to change to SOR pricing and an

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underspend on overheads mainly due to the reduced number of bad debts so the bad debt provision was therefore not utilised.

- c. SA advised that further investigation of these variances is being undertaken in conjunction with the Asset Management Team to understand them and influence the remainder of the year
- d. SA reported that void repairs are more or less in line with budget YTD. However, there are a large number of voids requiring significant works in the Greater Manchester area. Evolve are working through this backlog of major voids, following prioritisation by the lettings team. Handovers will take place on a phased basis through to October
- e. SA confirmed that every Division will be undertaking property MOT's. There is currently no budget line with effect from October onwards, SA, KD and IG are currently working on this. SA/KD
/IG

135 Internal Audit Report

- a. The Board noted the contents of the Internal Audit report which contains details of internal audit activity carried out within the Division during 2015. SA confirmed we have been given a clean bill of health and any issues have been dealt with.

136 Divisional Director's Report

The Board noted the contents of the Director's report. The following points were discussed:

- a. SW confirmed that a meeting took place on 16th September at Hull CC to decide on the future of the North Bransholme Area Board, the decision to disband the Group was approved by the Local Area Committee so therefore the last North Bransholme Area Board meeting took place in September. JR has already started working on the new vehicle that will replace it. Everyone agreed it had served its purpose so will no longer be required.
- b. SW updated the Board on the position of the Colshaw Farm/Open Arms leases, he advised we should have a decision from the Council by 21 September.
- c. SW advised that Patrick Rice has vacated his tenancy which means he is no longer eligible as a Tenant Board Member. SW conveyed to the Board that he felt it would be appropriate to retain Mr Rice's services as a Board member and re-designate him as an Independent Board Member. The Board approved PR as an Independent Board Member. SW advised he is still able to attend future meetings as an observer, until his re-designation gets approved at GRC meeting on 14th October.

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- d. SW informed the group that he and colleagues met with Anne Tyrrell to present her with her retirement card and gift. AT conveyed her best wishes to the Board.
- e. SW advised the group of the upcoming retirement of Dr Nell Chang whose tenure on the Divisional Board is due to end on 23 October 2015. SW presented NC with a retirement card and gift and everyone thanked her for her contributions to the Board. The group noted the retirement of NC.
- f. SW provided the Board with positive feedback from the Away Day at Manchester and Langley which was a great success. SW advised that we propose to hold the next event in and around Tyneside subject to the Boards approval at a date to be agreed. Everyone was happy with the suggested location. CH to suggest some dates. CH
- g. SW informed the group that the Whole Board Appraisal action plan needs to be submitted by tomorrow. SW discussed the results of the survey and requested feedback from Board members and advised that he and the Chair would produce the action plan from the comments provided and issue to everyone. SW/
DW
- h. SW announced that we have a guest speaker from BLM Law attending the November Board meeting.
- i. Everyone confirmed they have done the Campbell Tickell survey.
- j. BH briefed everyone on a recent training event he attended on 11 Sept entitled "Diversity and better decision making for board members" which included topics such as: Governance and Implications for the Board members; Diversity/collaboration; maximising legal risks; key insights on social care regulations/challenges.
- k. A member added that this could potentially be something that we can feed into our WBA action plan, Board members could provide feedback from any training events they have attended. Everyone agreed this would be a good idea as SW confirmed he received good feedback from the recent presentation presented by BB at the Away day, as well as BH providing good feedback at tonight's meeting.
- l. BH made a suggestion that a 10 minute brainstorming session could be done at future board meetings under the any other business item.
- m. ST added that members from the Tenant Fed would also be more than happy to attend future meetings to provide any updates.
- n. Carol's presentation was played to the Board and the most recent Think Forward Update slides were handed out and discussed.
- o. A member brought up the 1% rent decrease per year that was announced in the budget, which will have a massive impact on RSL's. [REDACTED] Riverside are to continue with affordable housing and providing services, the ED's plans will help to mitigate the impact.
- p. SW informed the Board that Group Finance are doing a revised projection of this year's budget for the next 30 years which is due to be handed back to the housing regulator in October.

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- q. The group were informed that the Think Forward project is not about cost cutting but about streamlining services. CM added that the project has brought us ahead of the game, as we had already started the process prior to the budget was announced
- r. JG informed the group that most companies have seen an impact on their development programmes which have been put on hold. JG confirmed that the CE I has made it very clear that it is business as usual for Riverside.
- s. JG confirmed that the National Housing Federation have written to the CE to advise that the one for one replacement is going to be voluntary, Riverside have expressed that we are up for it, There is a plan being put in place although no further details on this as yet.
- t. JG advised that the CE was thrilled with the adaptability of the Divisional Board.
- u. ST confirmed that she will be attending the National Housing Federation conference next week so will feedback to Board.
- v. It was agreed we need to do all we can to update MP's on all the good that Riverside do. CM suggested that perhaps this could be an item on the WBA action plan, the Board could influence local MP's to get them on Board.

137 Operational Reports

137.1 Operations Report

The Board noted the contents of the Operations Report. The following points were discussed:

- a. CM discussed details of the monthly performance KPI report with the group of which there is still a lot of reds and ambers showing which the team are looking to improve.
- b. CM advised that operational voids are relatively low, the stock void figure has impacted on long term voids of which some are waiting on the disposal list.
- c. CM advised that re-lets is currently all green which shows are strong performance at 15.9 days.
- d. CM informed the group that rent arrears is out of target due to the long standing management arrangements. CM is expecting this to be in a stronger position at December. The year on year figure has improved overall
- e. The data quality KPI is in amber due to missing information on the system such as email addresses etc. the data quality team have been working hard ringing tenants to obtain as much of the missing information as possible so this should improve over the coming months.
- f. CM informed the group that CRM call backs won't make target for the year to date, we are confident that people are ringing back just

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this has not been updated on the system. All staff have been made aware and have been advised to ensure the systems are updated accordingly.

- g. CM advised that Universal Credit doesn't appear to have made much of an impact as we first thought, there are 25 claimants at present in the North Division with arrears at £84, for group there are 528 with figures at £139.28
- h. The group noted the legal action summary.
- i. JR updated the board on the customer satisfaction survey results 2015. We have had some great results this year with overall satisfaction has increased by 4% from 79% to 83% since the last survey.
- j. The service area which has deteriorated the most is Your Neighbourhood (ASB) with a figure of 39%, a drop of -6%. This is mirrored for the group performance showing a similar decrease
- k. The introduction of the Langley Service charge has also affected the results under value for money which has seen a decline from 64% 2014 to 60%, drop of -4%. As with previous surveys, there are responses from customers who do not actually pay a service charge but the responses are still counted.
- l. The STAR survey results have been a positive experience this year we have received some very positive comments from customers as well as sharing them with the colleagues/teams some have been registered as compliments.
- m. We have been actively working with tenants and have followed up any comments made. The results also contribute to the production of the annual tenants report.
- n. JR provided an update on Community project activities. A member was particularly interested in the gas trial for 18 "off gas "properties" in Durham. A bid for £160k of funding has been submitted to the NEA Innovation Fund. The project will trial innovative heating solutions such as infrared, photo voltaic and batter storage for PV aiming to reduce the consumption for those households by at least 50-70%. We are still awaiting feedback, JR to keep the Board updated with any further progress.

JR

137.2 Asset Management Report

The Board noted the contents of the Asset Management (AM) Report and approved:

- The disposal of 9, 19 and 31 Barrasford Street, North Tyneside;
- The disposal of Woodside Medical Centre
- The disposal of 123 Portman Street, Middlesbrough
- The approach to dispose of void Tyneside flats based on an internal appraisal process.

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The following points were also discussed:

- a. KO advised the Board that the asset team have recently overhauled the repair response times moving away from the P0, P1, P2 & P3 categories. Jobs are now categorised as either emergency or appointable repairs. Emergency repairs will be split into 2 categories, with immediate Health and Safety risks having a response time within 2 hours and general emergency repairs with a 12 hour response time.
- b. KO noticed that actual figures were missing from the graphs, he will ensure that these are included for future reports. **KO**
- c. KO reported that there was 1 outstanding gas survey at end of August due to persistent non access, which has since been completed so we are now all up to date.
- d. KO updated the Board on the major works repairs programmes progress to date for 2015/16
- e. KO confirmed that Glen Martin is now in post as Contracts Manager
- f. KO informed the Board that a programme of works (POW) has been developed for the remaining 2015/16 financial year to complete property MOT's throughout the North & East region. The programme has been developed based upon properties classed as high repair reporters with the aim of reducing the amount of responsive repairs carried out by Riverside and moving towards a proactive repairs service.
- g. KO advised that Manchester MOT's are due to start on site week commencing 31 August 2015. Current void turnaround within the Manchester area would indicate 140 MOT's will be completed as a void between September and the end of the financial year.
- h. An action plan has been developed which has identified the steps required to start on site. This will become a working document used to map out the work undertaken by MOT teams.
- i. All relevant training has been identified for members of the MOT team. Training provided by external providers has been arranged in line with the central repairs reduction team.
- j. KO advised that the asset team will work closely with the housing services teams to gain access to properties that they have not been able to get into.
- k. A member asked if a clearer graph type could be used for reporting future repairs. KO to look at different graphs that could be used for future reports. **KO**
- i. SW suggested that Barrasford Street and Tyneside style flats could be a good street to visit for the next Board Away Day.

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138 Development Report

The Board approved the pipeline programme set out in table 2 of the report in terms of complying with the strategic priorities of both the Division and Group.

The Board also noted the contents of the Development Report and the progress of current schemes listed in table 1. The following points were also discussed:

- a. JG updated the Board on some of the current schemes underway which include Togston, Amble which is in the first phase. It is mix of bungalows and houses for rent. Also discussed was the Hull Extra care PFI scheme which is going well, regular updates for this appear on Twitter and via community engagement.
- b. JG discussed some of the pipeline schemes such as Silver Birch, North Tyneside which are family houses that are now all shared ownership. Also discussed is Crowtrees Lane, Bowburn, Durham which are houses for rent, these were predominantly affordable housing but now all shared ownership properties.
- c. JG has advised she has put together a paper to Group Board suggesting that we work with developers
- d. JG confirmed that 5 October is the deadline for any HCA submissions.
- e. A member asked for the definition of shared ownership/social rents /affordable rents. JG advised that shared ownership is where a resident wants to buy the property but can't afford full price so they buy a proportion of the property and pay rent on the remainder. e.g. If they bought 31% shared equity of property, they pay rent calculated at remaining cost which lowers over time, they also have the right to re-sell after a certain time period. Social rent is based on HCA formulas, they check affordability, income, value, number of bedrooms. Affordable rent is 80% market rent (target rent) and a scheme to get low income families into a home.

139 Proposed Board meeting Dates for 2016

The Board approved the proposed meeting dates for 2016

140 Any Other Business

DP gave her apologies for the November meeting.

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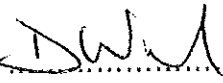
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140 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next Riverside North Divisional Board Meeting will be held on
Thursday 19 November 2015 at 4:00 pm (refreshments available from
3.45pm) at **The Royal York Hotel, Station Road, York, North Yorkshire,
YO24 1AA**

Signed and Approved by Chair

Signature: 

Date: 19/11/15

Papers shown as an Appendix to the Minutes

Minute Numbers

- 132 – Minutes of Divisional Board meeting held 23 July 2015
- 134 – Financial Report
- 135 – Internal Audit Report
- 136 – Divisional Director's Report
- 137 – Operational Reports
 - 137.1 – Operations Report
 - 137.2 – Asset Management Report
- 138 – Development Report

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