

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED

**Riverside North Divisional Meeting Held at 4.00pm on  
Thursday 19 November 2015 at the National Railway Museum**

**Minutes**

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<b>Present:</b>	Darren Warneford	Chair	DW
	Bill Barkworth		BB
	Patrick Rice		PR
	Mark Pearson		MP
	Steve Ward	Director, North Division	SW
	Sally Trueman		ST
	Chris Leavy		CL
<b>In attendance:</b>	Ray Hogben		RH
	Mike Boyle	Asset Manager Cumbria	MB
	Glenn Martin	Contracts Manager	GM
	Carl Mitchell	Assistant Director, Operations	CM
	Andrew Williamson	Development Manager	AW
	Sharon Thomas	Community Engagement Team Leader	ST
	Carly Hodgson	PA	CH

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Andy Gladwin, Peter Clark, Diana Pearce, and Simon Aldred.

Guest speaker Sarah from BLM Law was unable to attend due to train delays, SW advised she will attend the next meeting subject to availability.

**Declarations of Interest**

None

**141 Minutes of the last Divisional Board Meeting held 17 Sep 2015. Action**

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

**142 Matters Arising**

PR expressed his thanks to the Board for their approval of his appointment as in Independent Board member.

**143 Financial Performance Report**

SA was unable to attend the meeting, SW updated the group in his absence. The Board noted the contents of the financial performance report. The following points were discussed:

- a. SW reported that the performance is good overall and margin is on target. The budget for the year predicts a full year surplus of £12,385k with the latest forecast, based on actuals for the first four months, indicating a surplus of £11,384k

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- b. SW asked the Board if there were any questions for SA
- c. The Chair queried when the SOR pricing would change, MB confirmed that it has started this week.
- d. A query arose on the rent and rates overheads, SW confirmed that this was the outstanding settlement from when we vacated the Green Lane office, we are getting £15k back from the former landlord.
- e. A member queried the office communications overheads and what this included, SW to find out from SA and report back. **SW**
- f. A member asked if there was any feedback received from any tenants on the RSL transfer of properties. SW confirmed that at present we don't capture this information. SW to find out and report back at the next meeting. **SW**

#### 144 Divisional Director's Report

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

- a. The group were advised that the recent November NBAB was the last ever meeting, at which the members agreed to move forward and operate as the shadow "Community Partnership Forum" until the dissolution of the NBAB is formally concluded, we are awaiting the legal side of things to be finalised.
- b. SW informed the Board that Bob Hall has handed in his resignation and moved on due to family commitments. A thank you card was circulated for the Board to sign.
- c. The resignation of BH leaves us with only 1 Tenant Board Member. SW advised that we need to have at least 2 TBM's present for the group to be quorate. SW confirmed he is putting together a report to go to the GRC Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> December. The proposal is that Ray Hogben be appointment as interim TBM for a term of 3 months whilst the position is advertised. The Board approved the appointment of Ray Hogben. **SW**
- d. Slow progress continues to be made with Colshaw Farm Office relocation. To avoid the need to incur a punitive lease charge under s.123 of The Local Government Act, the premises will need leased from Cheshire East Council (CEC) for 5 year term with an option to renew, which will enable CEC to grant the sub-lease to RN at a peppercorn rate. This will bring the community centre back into use, Manchester Police will also be using the property as a drop in base.
- e. The 1% rent reduction has led Home Group to reconsider the extent of the overall stock transfer acquisition from Riverside It is likely the Division's stock will still be transferred to Home, but currently no timescale for the transfer has been indicated.
- f. SW delivered the TOM presentation to the group, and sought the Boards comments to the 3 questions contained within the presentation:

Question 1: What do you think is the biggest priority?

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Answers: Service to customers; One Riverside; Communication and to make sure everyone understands what we do.

Question 2: What is the biggest Challenge?

Answers: Everyone needs to buy into the One Riverside culture; the 1% rent reduction economic situation we are in as it is out of our control; getting procurement right; IT changes is a massive challenge

Question 3: Do you think anything is missing?

Answers: Communication is the biggest fall down (lack of clarity); working with tenants, are we engaging enough with the right tenants at the right time; Not learning from peoples mistakes

- g. SW advised that a group is being put together by Paul Hillard to review governance, SW asked Board member BB if he was happy to be involved with this, BB agreed
- h. SW informed the group of the recent ED visit held last week in Gateshead/Newcastle, which was a great success. We visited one estate that we are struggling with, and visited some community engagement initiatives such as the Gateshead Food bank. EDs expressed that this is one Division, which the general direction is going forward.
- i. SW welcomed any further questions from the Board.
- j. A member asked what the timeline was like in terms of structure, will there be more to feedback by January Board, SW advised that Group Board is mid February so should have an update by then.
- k. What is known is that the organisation will look and feel different and there will be fewer people in at the end of the process.
- l. North division had an 83% response rate for the Best Companies survey, the actual results are not yet known.
- m. SA provided the Board with a report on savings made as a result of the merger of Riverside Pennine and Riverside North East in April 2013 and reported that governance costs have actually decreased rather than increased.
- n. The topic of mileage costs came up they have increased, however not by much, a member also suggested that Skype should be a tool we could use for future meetings to cut down on travel costs.
- o. The Chair informed the group that Board Briefings can now be viewed from home.
- p. Further to the WBA action plan submitted to the group it was agreed there needs to be more think forward awareness, members to provide feedback from any training events and also need to think about what is required for new tenant board members in terms of training.

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**145 Operational Reports**

**145.1 Operations Report**

The Board noted the contents of the Operations Report which included an update on Monthly Performance KPIs, income collection dashboard, legal action summary, customer feedback, community projects and marketing update. The following points were discussed:

- a. Contents of the monthly performance KPIs were discussed, voids stands at 1.24 % operational voids are consistently good. Re-let days currently stands at 15.2, which is great the team are really focussed going forward.
- b. CM updated the group of the recent action days to collect arrears in the Hull and Manchester areas which was a great success, the income team did over 300 visits in 2 days by knocking on residents doors. £18,000 in payments was taken there and then, £700 worth of weekly payment arrangements were set up. The plan is to do another in Hull and Langley before the year ends.
- c. The action day also generated referrals for money advice, employment and training as well as affordable warmth.
- d. CM to feedback at the next meeting on the progress of Income Collection action days.
- e. The data quality KPI is mainly due to missing emails, all staff are to be tasked with contacting tenants to collect as much of the missing information as possible.
- f. A member asked if we collate information on working tenants who struggle to keep appointments, it was confirmed we don't capture this information at present but the TOM process would be looking into this.
- g. The Board were updated on the complaint relating to alleged reports of anti-social behaviour that was referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). The HOS have now issued their final determination, and have not upheld the complainant's case, stating there was no maladministration by Riverside in how the complaint had been dealt with. The case is now closed. Chair asked that the groups thanks be passed on to all those involved.
- h. A member was pleased with the upward trend showing we are getting more compliments through, 32 received for the first half of the financial year.
- i. Responsive Repairs remains the category with the highest number of complaints at 89.88%, and is at a slightly higher rate than the Group, which is reported at 84.19% for the reporting period.
- j. The bid to the NEA Innovation Fund for 18 "off-gas" properties in Durham was successful. Riverside has been awarded £133k.
- k. The Employment and Training Project Officer has now engaged with over 100 tenants and non-tenants and has worked successfully to assist 37 into work, and several other long term unemployed are doing volunteering and work placements

**CM**

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#### 145.2 Asset Management Report

Mike Boyle introduced himself and Glen Martin to the Board and advised that he deals with reactive day to day issues and Glen deals with planned cyclical compliance side of things. The Board noted the contents of the Asset Management (AM) Report and approved:

- a. The disposal of 123 Portman Street
- b. The transfer of Mount Street and Long Street on receipt of an Impact of Sale

The following points were also discussed:

- c. MB informed the group that all teams are now in place, they are working closely with Evolve to cement a good working relationship and make sure performance remains good. MB feels that there has been a step change in Evolve who now know and think of themselves as a partner in Riverside and not just a contractor.
- d. Gas servicing has been maintained at 100%
- e. It was agreed that IT is the biggest issue, need to integrate Evolve as a partner, they currently operate a different system which is not compatible causing issues, DRS is an operated time system.
- f. Despite the above reallocation of works to replace kitchens and bathrooms in Wakefield there is still an expected underspend on each of these component. Given we are in the second half of the year we are planning to utilise this underspend to increase the number of roof renewals and boiler replacements in Greater Manchester as both programmes are planned to continue in 2016/17.
- g. A member expressed concerns about access issues, and wondered if lessons had been learnt to communicate better with the tenants. MB advised that the call centre is to be given copies of programmes for any queries that may come through CRM system
- h. The Property MOT programme continues to work on a 70/30 split between programmed properties and those being delivered based upon live repair rates. If a property has a sudden surge in repairs being reported the MOT team will react accordingly and assess the needs of the particular tenant.
- i. A member asked for properties that refuse works, how do we ensure that the kitchens are fit for purposes, MB advised that stock condition surveys will be done to establish this.
- j. It was agreed we need to be better at validating the budget for next year by doing it sooner rather than later.
- k. A member added that the contact between the customers and planners needs to be better. GM to discuss with RH after the meeting to discuss in more detail.
- l. Performance within appointable repairs has again improved during September. An error was identified between the internal interfaces that link Riversides Academy system with the Property Services Team's "ivolve" system. This led to a high proportion of repairs being left as "work

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- in progress" This means although work has been completed within our properties we are unable to close these jobs within academy. All operatives have since been reminded of the importance of correctly completing jobs on their handheld devices.
- m. Riverside have recently introduced an appointments management system called DRS. The system is designed to ensure the most practicable appointment is selected when a resident reports a repair.
  - n. Since DRS has been introduced the report used for monitoring appointments made and kept has not been available. Riversides IT department are currently working on a fix for this.
  - o. MB confirmed that the new full schedule of rates have come into play this week, this is to be the same across all divisions.
  - p. When undertaking day to day inspections the Asset officers are now using their tablets to that any items can be ordered straight away.
  - q. When doing the MOT programme it has been agreed that the MOT and Housing Officer will attend the first visit inspection, MB to monitor this and feedback to the asset officers. **MB**
  - r. MB confirmed that we tend to target properties with a higher number of repairs with a 3 pronged approach: Stock condition surveys, EPC's if needed and get buy in from the tenant.
  - s. A member queried what would happen to those properties who don't report repairs, it was confirmed that the target was for every property to have an MOT within 4 years.
  - t. A member queried whether the MOT team were trained in customer care for when entering resident's homes. MB advised that yes they were, as part of the recruitment process for the asset team it involved a 1/3 technical knowledge, a 1/3 level of skills and 1/3 customer focussed.
  - u. It was agreed that we need to ensure we are maintaining properties and doing it smarter, procurement is the way to do it,
  - v. The Chair thanked everyone for their comments.

### **146 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. AW provided an update to the board on current schemes either on site or due to start on site.
- b. AW updated the group on a scheme at Wakefield, Gibson Close where we are having issues with the contractor over the drainage. The issue is now in hand and the contractor is on site now resolving the problem.
- c. It was confirmed that the development team is also being reviewed as part of the TOM model.
- d. A member asked if we are still going to develop in the sector, SW

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confirmed that the CE has made it clear that yes we will continue to grow, if an opportunity comes along we will take it as well as also seeking to take a transfer in. It was confirmed that we have been getting interest from other RSL's.

- e. AW confirmed that we are also seeing developers coming back to us on offers that were previously not accepted, as some RP's are pulling out of agreed deals

**147 Any Other Business**

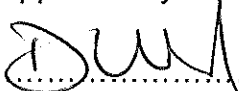
- a. A member suggested that emails could be sent to the group highlighting any key headlines. SW confirmed that Hugh from Speke office is good at picking out and issuing housing news, SW to speak to him to request.
- b. SW confirmed that the Christmas lunch was scheduled for Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 12pm at Babuchos on the Quayside.

**SW**

**148 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next Riverside North Divisional Board Meeting will be held on **Thursday 21 January 2015 at 4:00 pm** (refreshments available from 3.45pm) venue to be confirmed.

Signed and Approved by Chair

Signature:  .....

Date: 21/11/15 .....

**Papers shown as an Appendix to the Minutes**

**Minute Numbers**

*141 – Minutes of Divisional Board meeting held 17 Sept 2015*

*143 – Financial Report*

*144 – Divisional Director's Report*

*145 – Operational Reports*

*145.1 – Operations Report*

*145.2 – Asset Management Report*

*146 – Development Report*

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