

**THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED**

**Riverside North Divisional Meeting Held at 4.00pm on  
Thursday 21 January 2016 at The Royal Station Hotel, York**

**Minutes**

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<b>Present:</b>	Darren Warneford	Chair	DW
	Bill Barkworth		BB
	Patrick Rice		PR
	Steve Ward	Director, North Division	SW
	Chris Leavy		CL
	Peter Clark		PC
	Andy Gladwin	Group Financial Controller	AG
<b>In attendance:</b>	Ray Hogben		RH
	Kevin O'Flanagan	Asset Manager	KO
	Carl Mitchell	Assistant Director, Operations	CM
	Simon Aldred	AD Finance	SA
	Carly Hodgson	PA	CH
	Matthew Hyam	BLM Law	MH

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Diana Pearce, Mark Pearson and Sally Trueman.

SW suggested we send a get well soon card and flowers to ST wishing her a speedy recovery. The Board agreed to this CH to make arrangements. CH

The Chair welcomed Matthew Hyam from BLM Law to the meeting.

**Declarations of Interest**

None

**149 Minutes of the last Divisional Board Meeting held 19 November 2015. Action**

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

**150 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from previous minutes.

**151 Whole Board Appraisal – BLM Law Presentation**

- a. MH from BLM Law delivered a presentation on Whole Board Appraisal which covered all aspects of what is required to run an effective and functioning Board.
- b. SW informed the group that the decision had been made that WBA are now to be done every 2 years. Individual appraisals will still continue to be done on an annual basis.
- c. A discussion took place following the presentation and the Chair read through results from previous appraisals, which showed a weakness on training and development but confidence in driving success.

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- d. It was agreed that members should be free to explore any training courses that are of interest to them externally and provide feedback to everyone at board meetings. Also if there was a topic that was of interest to the group as a whole then we can get an expert in to attend a future board meeting. A chance to discuss any training ideas can take place at the end of meetings.
- e. Board briefings are now available electronically for those who are unable to attend in person.
- f. SW stated that he felt the North Divisional Board members are a very committed and experienced group.
- g. The Chair advised the group that we need to ensure that we follow up on training sessions.
- h. The Chair thanked MH for his presentation.

### 152 Financial Performance Report

The Board noted the contents of the financial performance report which covers the first 8 months of the year. The following points were discussed:

- a. Forecast was based on actuals to end of September. A more recent forecast has since been prepared. Major variances are still in line with previous reports.
- b. Attention is drawn to rental income, adverse variance due to additional major voids earlier in the year and the delayed handover of new build properties. In particular, 9 properties at Gibson Close still not handed over.
- c. Repairs costs, currently a significant overspend across both responsive, mainly due to exclusions, and voids, due to a larger proportion of major voids. Reported forecast has been realigned with budget – new processes and monitoring are in place to limit future expenditure. The more recent forecast acknowledges an overspend on voids.
- d. Overheads savings in salaries, with some asset management recruitment delayed, and some costs shared with Cumbria.
- e. Significant savings still in bad debts, running at around 0.7% against a budget of 3%.
- f. Lower major repairs expenditure, and associated capitalisation. Partly due to timing, with some programmes only recently started. Also some real savings, identified to offset some net book write offs associated with early component replacement.
- g. Reported disposals forecast anticipated transfer of the Tameside and Salford properties. Most recent indications are that only the Salford transfer to Salix Homes is likely this financial year. Tameside is complicated by the issue around mixed ownership with the local authority. The final Own Place sale at North Bransholme completed on 20 January, and a small number of Tyneside flats are currently being marketed or are sold subject to contract.

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153 Divisional Director's Report

The Board noted the contents of the Director's report and agreed to the recommendation to acquire Riverside's Leigh and Wigan stock from colleagues in Mersey North. The following points were discussed:

- a. SW informed the group that the North Bransholme Area Board closure is scheduled to be completed by 29 January 2016. The Board will be kept apprised of developments.
- b. Approvals and consents have now been finally received from Cheshire East Council (CEC) for an initial 5 year term for the leasing of The Open Arms Centre. The question was asked by JW whether there is a need for us to spend the money to continue with the re-design of these premises due to the current climate; however SW informed the board he is hoping to continue with the process and will know the outcome of this tomorrow. The Board gave their backing for the continuation of the Colshaw Farm Office/Open Arms project.
- c. The GRC have approved the appointment of Mr Hogben for an initial three month period whilst the formal recruitment process to find a permanent TBM is concluded. We have received 2 applications for the post, interviews are to be scheduled and conducted by SW, Vice Chair MP and as a former TBM PR has agreed to assist in the absence of ST. CH to send some suggested dates to PR.
- d. The recent 1% rent reduction has had a severe impact on Riverside's longer term financial planning, with every department and division being challenged to contribute additional budget and efficiency savings. SW asked the Board to consider making appropriate cost savings from within the governance budget
- e. Some suggestions are to only provide tea and coffee at meetings, use cheaper venues or VC facilities at Riverside offices, no overnight stays and Board dinner prior to Stock tours/away days, combining tours supplemented with videos/presentations or completely replacing stock tours with a programme of videos/presentations.
- f. SW made the board aware of some editing equipment we have the use of through the marketing team, which can assist in producing our own videos ~~as the cost of a professional one can be around 2-3k.~~ The idea is that new schemes can be recorded on a tablet and edited to produce ~~a video~~ to show, rather than doing a huge stock tour. A member added it would still be useful to do an "on foot tour, but maybe scrapping the evening team bonding event. A suggestion was also made that members could visit their local area by arrangement with local staff.
- g. To cut down on travel expenses everyone agreed to trial video

CH

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conferencing facilities for the March Board meeting, subject to the approval of those members not currently present.

- h. The Board are willing and agreed to assist with the cost saving process.

#### 154 Operational Reports

##### 154.1 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, marketing update and a report in relation to the Your Place service. The following points were discussed:

- a. CM reported that the strong performance continues on stock voids with re-let figures at 15.2 days.
- b. Rent arrears is still struggling, more targeted action days are scheduled to take place as another push to collect rent. They have been successful and have generated lots of referrals.
- c. SW confirmed that £500k or more was collected in December which was due to our new approach.
- d. BLM Law have been attending court cases on behalf of staff members which has increased the success of cases. CM to provide a summary from Matty at BLM Law at next meeting. A member added that it was positive to see that the arrears balance figures are coming down. CM
- e. CM updated the Board on the proposal to introduce the Your Place (environmental services team) service to the Langley and Colshaw estates within the Greater Manchester area of the North Division.
- f. OCS are currently contracted to deliver grounds maintenance services to the estates. However, there seems to be a lack of consistency in quality and frequency of work undertaken as well as lack of accountability from the contracts in place, so Riverside have very little control or influence on the standards the service has delivered previously.
- g. A Riverside Your Place team have been operational since April 2013 within North Bransholme, Hull area and the aim is to mirror the success of this service.
- h. Rochdale Borough Council have agreed to pay Riverside [REDACTED] to deliver the Your Place services to the land owned by RBC within the Langley estate. RBC have also agreed to invest s106 money to bring up to maintainable standard 5 pieces of land within the Langley area.
- i. The deal has been agreed in principal there is a meeting taking place next week to finalise.
- j. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) regulations

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will apply to staff working for OCS on the contract with Riverside. Riverside North Human Resource Business Partner, Victoria Warner, will be working on the details of the TUPE implications prior to the new service starting.

- k. Everyone agreed what a tremendous achievement this was. The board thanked CM for all his hard work to get this scheme up and running.

#### 154.2 Asset Management Report

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

- a. KO updated the board on the performance and relevant activities of the Asset Management department for 1 April to 30 December 2015.
- b. KO reported that December's figures are still strong, although emergency repairs fell slightly below 100% the team are however looking into this to resolve any outstanding issues.
- c. First time fix performance across the division remains strong, the team have been working closely with Riversides Central Repairs Team and Evolve to ensure that the parameters for how first time fix is reported is consistent group wide and helps ensure performance is a true reflection.
- d. Gas performance is consistently strong again and has achieved some fantastic results, there were only 2 properties since November that were classed as overdue, however access to these was completed before the end of December, so we therefore achieved 100%
- e. North region voids are currently running at 0.95% stock void.
- f. Asset officers are in the process of carrying out a programme of re-inspections which will help to reduce the outstanding health and safety works.
- g. KO updated the board on proposals for the Stock rationalisation transfer to Salix Homes. The Group currently own 37 General Needs properties in Salford that are located in an area where there are less than 50 general needs properties. Negotiations have since taken place with Salix Homes, with the aim of completing the transfer within this financial year. To date, surveys and valuations are complete and the consultation process is underway in order to keep our customers informed and comply with regulatory expectation. Further update will be provided at the next meeting.
- h. The MOT programme is still up and running and has been since September 2015, 100 actual surveys have now been completed and Evolve are undertaking the necessary works. The aim is to complete a quarter of the divisions stock within the year.

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- i. 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.

**155 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. SW advised the board of a scheme at Rochdale, the Falcon where they are currently working on site E, sales for Keepmoat have been going so well that a request has been made to start on sites F and G which is great news.
- b. SW informed the board of a potential mixed tenure scheme at Congleton and made the group aware of the great relationship we are forming with Cheshire East, who has offered us 9 super sites (approx. 150 units) in and around Sandbatch, Cheshire. This will be a chance to achieve excellent rental values.

**156 Any Other Business**

- a. An additional paper produced by Liz Archer, Neighbourhood Services Manager was provided to the Board. The report was to notify the Board of the allocation of a tenancy to close relatives of a Riverside Employee at North End Close, North Broomhill. The Board noted the contents of the report.
- b. A member queried the effectiveness of the divisional Scrutiny panel. It was confirmed that the initial launch failed, however the new regime and the training that has gone into this has made it much more streamlined. The group are currently looking at re-letting activities so the first formal report will be ready for the May Board meeting.

**157 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next Riverside North Divisional Board Meeting will be held on **Thursday 17 March 2016 at 4:00 pm**. It was agreed that we trial this meeting using VC facilities, therefore meeting will be held at Riverside Gateshead Office with Board members dialing into Gateshead Mobile from their nearest Riverside office as shown below:

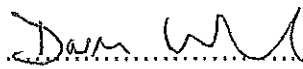
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<b>Office</b>	<b>Board member</b>
Tenant Resource Centre, 7 Lingmell Close, Langley, Middleton, Manchester, M24 4HS	Mark Pearson Bill Barkworth Chris Leavy Andy Gladwin
Riverside care and support scheme 216 St Georges Road, Hull, HU3 3QE	Peter Clark Ray Hogben
6 Staithes, The Watermark, Gateshead, NE11 9SN	Darren Warneford Diana Pearce Patrick Rice Sally Trueman Steve Ward Lee Middleton

Signed and Approved by Chair

Signature:  .....

Date: 4/4/2016 .....

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

**Minute Numbers**

149 – Minutes of Divisional Board meeting held 19 November 2015

152 – Financial Report

534 – Divisional Director's Report

154 – Operational Reports

154.1 – Operations Report

154.2 – Asset Management Report

155 – Development Report

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