

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED

**Riverside North Divisional Meeting Held at 9:30am on
Thursday 26 May 2016 at Riverside Offices
Unit 6 Staithes, The Watermark, Gateshead, NE11 9SN**

Minutes

Present: Mr D Warneford (Chair) Mrs D Pearce, Mr L Middleton, Mr S Ward, Mr C Leavy, Mr B Barkworth, Ms S Trueman,

In attendance: L. Archer, S. Aldred, K. Doran, J. Gray, J. Riseborough and C. Hodgson

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mr Peter Clark, Mr Andy Gladwin, Mr Mark Pearson and Mr Patrick Rice.

Declarations of Interest

None

167 Minutes of the last Divisional Board Meeting held 17 March 2016 Action

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

168 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from previous minutes.

169 Financial Performance Report

The Board noted the contents of the financial performance report for period April 2015 to March 2016. The following points were discussed:

- a. SA reported that the year to date operating margin of 39.5% falls short of the budget of 40.9% by 1.4% however was quite close to our forecast.
- b. Some of the major variances in the year to date are:
 - Overspend on responsive repairs, due to exclusions in the Greater Manchester Evolve contract and also additional void repairs expenditure to bring major voids in Greater Manchester back into use. SA confirmed that these issues have now been addressed for the current year, as reports are done daily.
 - Underspend on overheads, mainly due to reduced bad debts and salary savings.
 - For the full year forecast one of the major variances was the reduced rental income due to late handovers and increased policy voids
- c. SA reported that the 37 properties to Salix homes were sold, however the Tameside portfolio was still on going as no longer expected to take place in 2015-16 due to complications over title and leasehold interests, and the combination of Care and Support properties in the portfolio.

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170 Business Plan Update

The Board noted the contents of the Business Plan for 2016-21. The following points were discussed:

- a. SA reported that a number of high level adjustments and proposed savings still sit within the Group's central budget, pending the outcome of the TOM, but the divisional plan has been approved and forms the basis of the divisional budget for 2016-17.
- b. The group discussed the table at Appendix A which showed the breakdown comparisons between the Year to Date, Full year 2015/16 and 2016/17 business plan. All rates are consistent
- c. SA outlined some of the main changes which include a reduction in the Bad Debt provision, from 3.0% to 1.8% across the board and changes to the depreciation of properties to include amortization of associated grant, to comply with FRS102.
- d. A board member asked how we plan to reduce voids, it was confirmed that there has been a culture change and we now have a new approach "clean, clear, safe" for example carpets are no longer removed and walls are dirty they are washed rather than re-painted etc. The budget however is still tight. The same principles apply for care and support schemes.
- e. The "clean, clear, safe" principle works in tandem with MOT lights which is used as a marketing tool where new tenants are advised if any refurbishment works etc. are required.
- f. A member asked what the difference was between an MOT and Property Investment survey (PIS), PIS checks the lives of components so that we can establish what repairs need doing now. Access is valuable so we take the opportunity to do the surveys when the chance arises.
- g. It was confirmed that safe guarding will be a core skill for all front line workers to ensure people are safe in their homes, training sessions will be taking place going forward. It is down to teams to report back to the office any issues they spot i.e. to see if any help can be offered to the tenant. This procedure is now in action. There have also been reports of abuse by tenants to contractors which is being dealt with.
- h. Personal safety and personal responsibility advice given to staff members from SW is if they feel uncomfortable remove yourself from any danger. The new lone working procedure consists of GPS tracking technology.
- i. ST asked how tenants were made aware of MOT's and PIS's, as a letter had been received by some residents advising someone would be attending their property, but no one ever came out so there was some confusion about what was happening. KD confirmed that MOT's are targeted at high repairs first, so not sure why blanket letters were issued on this occasion. KD to look further into this and report back.

KD

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171 Divisional Director's Report

The Board noted the contents of the Director's report and;

- a. Approved the Riverside North Local delivery plan 2016-17 set out in Appendix 2.

The following points were also noted:

- b. SW confirmed that negotiations are still underway with Hull Solicitors to amend the transfer agreement that will replace the North Bransholme Area Board with the North Bransholme Neighbourhood Forum. SW is hopeful that they will sign the agreement and will keep the board up to date with developments.
- c. SW informed the Board that the Group Membership Committee (GRC) approved Lee Middleton's membership of the RN Divisional Board which took effect from 21 April 2016 and will last for an initial period of 3 years.
- d. SW updated the group of some historic safety failures across the group and Division in relation to gas safety certification. The impact of this scenario has meant that the divisions gas safety KPI score for 2015-16 which was shown as "green" with a "100% compliance score" has now been retrospectively "marked down" to "amber"
- e. SW delivered a presentation on the Best Companies results of which almost 90% of staff completed. Riverside North Division achieved a 1 star very good rating. Overall we received some great results, particularly in the wellbeing and my team categories, our HR business partner is overwhelmed by what we have achieved in the North.
- f. SW updated the Board on some items contained within the Riverside North Local delivery plan 2016-17. Some initiatives include the introduction of Ad Hoc property guardians into our void properties, they charge the occupier market rent on a short term letting and pay us a standard fee of £30per week. The person in acts as a care taker to the property, and also pays the council tax etc. so that we don't need to. In many cases a longer term let has been offered. The properties being used have been offered for disposal, so putting guardians in until sold is ideal to reduce void costs.

172 Operational Reports

172.1 Operations Report

The Board noted the contents of the Operations Report which included an update on Monthly Performance KPIs End Year and Period 1, income collection dashboard, analysis of positive customer experience KPI, Performance Improvement KPI action plan, legal action summary, customer feedback, community projects update and marketing update. The following points were discussed:

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- a. LA updated the Board on the year end KPI's which resulted in a fantastic performance with the majority showing as green. Arrears, H&S and call backs were amber and the only red was positive customer experience.
- b. LA briefed the Board on the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) which is brought to board on an annual basis and identifies actions to help us achieve targets that we work to during the course of the year. Some issues identified in the PIP include:
- Increasing percentage of back to back lets, targets have been set at 25% for all management areas. These practices were adopted during 2015/16 to date there have been 11 back to back lets since the start of the year.
 - Asset management have adopted a zero tolerance approach to call backs, staff have been informed that repeated non compliance will result in a disciplinary. Systems have been put in place for busy periods: KD confirmed these call back reports are sent back to Evolve each month. A board member confirmed that Evolves reports are really helpful at the local scrutiny meetings they attend and would be useful if they were to come to board, KD to pick this up at core group.
 - To improve our Positive Customer exit KPI a "talk before you walk" interview has been introduced and in place but needs revitalised. A collective team approach is currently ongoing to ensure increased communication with outgoing tenants during the notice period.
- c. JG advised that Carol Kershaw from the development team should also be added as responsible manager for same actions as JG to the PIP. LA
- d. The Chair and the Board agreed that the PIP was a really good piece of work.
- e. The Board agreed that the report provided by the scrutiny panel was really good. The Board requested a response from Riverside to thank the Scrutiny panel for their work and to provide feedback to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel. Board suggested that future Scrutiny meetings could include rent patterns (48, 50, 52 week cycles) and tenancy agreements (starter vs assured). KD/LA
- f. A member asked for some feedback on the introduction of the Your Place team in Manchester. There have been 2 launches one at Colshaw and other at Langley, a few staffing issues occurred however so far no complaints received. It was brought up that grass cutting was not being done consistently in the area and unless it improves they felt that we may get some complaints. KD suggested a grounds maintenance calendar could be introduced to keep residents notified, this has proven to be very helpful in Carlisle. KD to email the example calendar to CH to pass to the team. KD

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172.2 Asset Management Report

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

- a. KD updated the board on the performance and relevant activities of the Asset Management department for period 1 April to 31 March 2016.
- b. It was reported that overall performance is good in the area which is down to the new performance systems that have been put in place which are included in the PIP.
- c. Board members noted that it has been a good year overall and offered their congratulations on the excellent results achieved.

173 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 details of the draft Housing and Planning Bill and Autumn statement has clarified this Governments intent to increase housebuilding with a strong emphasis on home ownership. The Voluntary Right to Buy agreement includes the principle of 1:1 replacement of every home sold.
- b. Riverside is being asked to commit to increasing the number of homes it builds at a time when our business is undergoing significant financial challenges.
- c. In February 2016 Group Board approved increasing the proportion of shared ownership homes above the original 25% target for 2014-17. It also approved the following principles to help form a sustainable 2017-21 Development Business Plan which can be delivered without subsidy from Riverside.
 - Focus reinvestment of Voluntary Right to Buy receipts on new affordable rented homes
 - Reinvest Recycled Capital Grant Funds generated from property disposals on affordable rent
 - Increase the Shared Ownership programme to 200 homes per annum
- d. SW suggested to JW that at September's meeting we will bring the development team to Board to discuss what our view is, where we should be going and what our targets are etc.

174 Allocation of a Tenancy

The Board noted the contents of the allocation of a tenancy report for the property [REDACTED] Langley which has been allocated to a close

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relative of a Riverside employee.

175 Any Other Business


None.

176 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next Riverside North Divisional Board Meeting will be held on **Thursday 21 July 2016** at 4.00pm (refreshments from 3.45pm).

Meeting will be held at The Priory Street Centre, York, YO1 6ET

Signed and Approved by Chair

Signature: 

Date: 21/7/16

Papers shown as an Appendix to the Minutes

Minute Numbers

167 – Minutes of Divisional Board meeting held 17 Mar 2016

169 – Financial Performance Report

170 – Business Plan Report

171 – Divisional Director's Report

172 – Operational Reports

 172.1 – Operations Report

 172.2 – Asset Management Report

173 – Development Report

174 – Allocation of a tenancy

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