

## THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED

### A meeting of the Board of Riverside Cumbria was held at 4:00pm on Thursday 13 March 2014 at English Gate Plaza, Carlisle

#### Minutes

**Present** Mr M Little (Chairman), Mr P Atkinson, Mrs A Bishop, Mr D Butterworth, Ms C Carre, Mrs P Harkness, Mrs O Luckley, Mr D MacKay, Mrs E Mallinson, Mrs R Notman.

In attendance were K Doran, S Kellock, R Kenvyn\*, P Taylor, S Taylor-Gage, L Gaddes (minutes). (\*part of the meeting)

**Apologies** Mr J Bainbridge, Ms H Bruce, Mr D Cox, Mr S Layden.

#### 477 Apologies for Absence

477.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Bainbridge, Ms H Bruce, Mr D Cox and Mr S Layden.

477.2 The Chair announced that the joint meeting of the Board and the Cumbria Scrutiny Panel had been rearranged and would take place at 4pm on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014. He continued by encouraging Board members to attend.

#### 478 Declarations of Interest

478.1 E Mallinson advised of a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 relating to Longtown press coverage as her husband is the City Councillor for this area.

478.2 No further declarations of interest were received.

#### 479 Minutes of the last meeting held on 21 November 2013

479.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2014 were approved and signed.

#### 480 Matters Arising from the Minutes

480.1 It was noted that all matters arising were included for detailed discussion on the Board meeting agenda.

- 481 Divisional Directors Report
- 481.1 D Butterworth took the Board through the report and highlighted current issues of interest including Longtown Press Coverage, Board Appraisals, Media Update and the Office Re-organisation.
- 481.2 D Butterworth provided the Board with an update on the Longtown heating issues specifically in relation to the press coverage. Board members noted that over 170 heating systems had been installed in Longtown, some concerns have been raised by tenants that the heating systems are expensive to run. An external consultant has investigated this issue and has proven that this is not the case. One of the causes of the increase in costs is that homes have moved from coal to electricity so bills plus the cost of fuel has increased during the two years since installation.
- 481.2.1 It is acknowledged that the thermal efficiency of some could be improved and a programme of thermal efficiency work is due to commence on these properties in June 2014. Efforts will be taken to improve this for the affected tenants. Currently Riverside is liaising with all tenants again to see how we can help them.
- 481.2.2 A new post of Affordable Warmth Officer is to be recruited within the Division to assist tenants with managing fuel poverty and the effects of increased utility costs. E Mallinson advised that there was already an Affordable Warmth Officer at Carlisle City Council and working together would be beneficial.
- 481.3 Board Members noted that it was the time of year when the appraisal process would begin with both individual Board member appraisals and the Whole Board appraisals.
- 481.3.1 The Chair provided feedback to the Board from the first meeting of the Board Sub Group set up to coordinate the Whole Board Appraisal Action Plan. He advised that the main points of the discussion focused on changes to the Board member role including an expectation to attend at least one patch walk a year and appointing Board Champions for specific areas of the business. Another area of focus was a Board Restructure refining a clear recruitment process and induction plan to include succession planning.
- 481.3.2 E Mallinson welcomed the verbal report and advised that she felt it would be useful going forward to have a Board Member with a link to public health. P Atkinson added that monthly meetings may be more appropriate as issues would be able to be dealt with more quickly rather than in the press.

481.4 D Butterworth advised due to the long term absence of the Divisional Marketing Officer interim arrangements were in place to ensure that Riverside Cumbria is promoted effectively.

481.5 Board members noted that the office reorganisation had taken place. D Butterworth took the opportunity to thank all staff for their roles in making the office look more efficient.

481.6 The Board noted the content of the report.

482 Development Programme

482.1 R Kenvyn took the Board through the report and highlighted that the current development programme was progressing well with the full programme now on site. Some of the sites are close to completion with handovers expected in the next three months.

482.2 The Board noted that Riverside's Group Directors have approved the local authority areas of Eden and Carlisle for new development in Cumbria. This means that the Allerdale has been removed from the list and it is expected that the pipeline scheme at [REDACTED] will fall out of plans. The plan is to find an alternative scheme to enable retention of the allocated funding.

482.3 R Kenvyn provided an update on the progress of the pipeline schemes. P Atkinson offered assistance by liaising with Carlisle City Council (CCC) and R Kenvyn to see if progress can be made on developing sites owned by CCC which have been identified for development.

P  
Atkinson

482.4 The Board noted the progress of the current development schemes.

482.5 The Board approved the pipeline programme in terms of complying with the strategic priorities of both the Division and Group.

R Kenvyn left the meeting.

483 2014/15 Divisional Revenue Budget and Business Plan

483.1 S Kellock took the Board through the report and highlighted that although the most up to date draft had been sent out with the papers some changes had come through yesterday which make a very small difference to the bottom line. She added that the Division had been asked to make additional savings on voids and increase pension contributions for employees previously employed by Carlisle City Council. Funding for the Your Place Team for next year has been re-

instated and costs for the three new posts identified within the Community Engagement Review will need to be considered within the plan.

- 483.2 A Bishop asked about the income increase indicated in years 4 and 5 under Wider Action Services. S Kellock advised that predominantly these figures referred to the Careline scheme incorporating the aspirations of the Business Development post in Careline to start to bring in income. Board Members asked for a verbal update at the next meeting regarding Careline. P Taylor
- 483.3 C Carre highlighted that there was a conflict with the use of both CPI and RPI figures which would eventually stop working effectively. S Kellock agreed that she would raise this issue with Group. S Kellock
- 483.4 O Luckley asked why salaries and vehicles were combined within the budget. S Kellock advised that the figure included mileage rates for staff who use their own vehicles for visiting tenants.
- 483.5 The Board were informed that affordable rents do not apply to service charges and the cost is the true value plus small admin fee. There are also optional charges such as a warden service which customers can choose.
- 483.6 In line with the Group Framework Agreement the Board approved the Revenue Budget and Summary Business Plan. As detailed in the report the approval is subject to any subsequent amendments as defined by Group. It was noted that subsequent amendments would be agreed by the Treasurer and / or Chair and reported to the next Board Meeting. Board members noted the Riverside Group (Group) central budgets being applied for the delivery of Riverside Cumbria based activities/ projects. It was noted that the recommendation constitutes the Divisional Boards' responsibility in influencing the Group Business Plan to be approved in April 2014.
- 484 Top 10 Key Performance Indicators 2014/15
- 484.1 A report which will go to the Housing Services Committee for approval was circulated along with the proposed local targets for the Cumbria Division.
- 484.2 S Taylor-Gage took the Board through the report and highlighted that seven of the Top 10 KPI's for 2014/15 were the same as last year and three were different.

- 484.3 Customer Call backs within 24 hours is a new target driven by the ability of the CRM reporting facility to track calls and report back on performance. S Taylor-Gage advised that this would be a challenging target as staff get used to using the new system with an expectation that the target would be met by Q2 of the financial year.
- 484.4 The Health and safety compliance target has been redefined based on addressing the actions which were identified through the risk assessment process which took place this year. S Taylor-Gage advised that currently Cumbria has no high or medium recommendations and only a few low cases which at present require no action.
- 484.5 Gas servicing performance has been changed to highlight the positive compliance with an aim of 100% rather than 0%.
- 484.6 It was noted that a realistic target of 1.8% had been suggested for percentage stock void. Although this target has been missed the last three years the Division has aspirations to improve from the current 2%.
- 484.7 Board members were advised that the target for the relet period of voids would be 28 days. Although the voids project is progressing well this target will be very challenging a range of measures will need to be in place to enable this achievement. However, the Division is confident that this target can be achieved by the end of the financial year.
- 484.8 It was noted that the proposed Divisional current arrears target is a cumulative figure of 6% incorporating 3.1% for general needs and 2.9% for leasehold debt. Discussions are taking place at Group to determine the best way to report this breakdown at future Boards. The Division is confident that this target can be met.
- 484.9 The remaining proposed performance targets including two which exceed and five which match the proposed Group targets were discussed.
- 484.10 The Board noted and approved the proposed Top 10 KPIs for the Cumbria Division.
- 485 Board Scrutiny of Evictions
- 485.1 P Taylor took the Board through the report and highlighted that progress had been made with identifying issues where non-dependents are failing to give the tenant their share of the rent

leading to tenancy arrears. Around 30% of cases have non-dependents with a significant proportion of these being family members. A Further piece of work is to take place to analyse the issues with non-dependents in more detail.

485.2 The Board reviewed the report and provided the authority required to proceed with eviction.

486 Asset Disposals

486.1 K Doran took the Board through the report and highlighted that the report summarised the land and property sales within the Division.

486.2 The Board noted the land and property sales within the Division during 2013/14.

487 Risk Management

487.1 D Butterworth advised the Board that the Group Corporate Audit team is looking to reissue by June 2014 and that the Division would be creating its own Operational Risk Plan to ensure it identifies, understands and mitigates all risks within the Division.

487.2 A questionnaire will be sent out to the Board for members to identify issues which they think should be taken into account within a Divisional Operational Risk Plan. D Butterworth added that feedback would be given to the June Board in order for members to take ownership of the risks.

488 Presentation: Cash Collection Dashboard

488.1 The Board received a presentation focusing on interpreting the performance shown within the graphs of the cash collection dashboard. P Taylor spoke about the arrears performance and D Butterworth spoke about the void performance.

488.2 Board members welcomed the analysis and acknowledged that a challenging year was ahead, although the trend information indicates that there is some room for optimism.

KD left the meeting.

489 Management Accounts and Performance Information (Incorporating Cash Collection Dashboard)

489.1 S Kellock took the Board through the report.

- 489.2 The Board noted the contents of the Management Accounts and Performance information for the 11 months to 28 February 2014.
- 490 Board Tour Programme
- 490.1 D Butterworth advised the Board that the annual tour scheduled for 10th April would feature a visit to a number of development sites in Penrith in the morning, returning to the office for lunch before visiting Newfield Grange and Raffles in the afternoon. He added that an invite would be sent out to establish expressions of interest in order to arrange transport.
- 491 Governance
- 491.1 The Board noted the proposed changes in governance within the Group specifically referring to extensions of Board member service.
- 492 Items for Information
- 492.1 Board Members noted the following items:  
a Management Team briefings of February and March 2014.  
b Housing Services Committee Minutes of 28.11.13 & 30.01.14
- 493 Any Other Business
- 493.1 Concerns were raised regarding the amount of time between Board meetings when Board members would not receive updates on emerging issues. D Butterworth agreed that an ad hoc briefing to discuss leasehold issues should be arranged, dependent on diary availability, and that inter board bulletins would be circulated to Board Members where appropriate. D Butterworth
- 493.2 Board members agreed that rather than the usual buffet their preference was to only have fruit, cake and biscuits served at future Board meetings. L Gaddes
- 494 Date and Time of Next Meeting
- 494.1 The next meeting was set for 4:00pm on Thursday 19 June 2014.