

THE RIVERSIDE GROUP LIMITED

A meeting of the Board of Riverside Cumbria was held at 4:00pm on Thursday 19 June 2014 at English Gate Plaza, Carlisle

Minutes

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

In attendance were M Irving, S Kellock, R Kenvyn*, P Taylor, S Taylor-Gage, P Birks, L Gaddes (minutes). (*part of the meeting)

Apologies Mr P Atkinson, Mr J Bainbridge, Mrs A Bishop, Ms H Bruce, Mr D Cox, Mr S Layden, Mr D MacKay.

495 Apologies for Absence

495.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Atkinson, Mr J Bainbridge, Mrs A Bishop, Ms H Bruce, Mr D Cox, Mr S Layden and Mr D MacKay.

495.2 The Chair advised Board members that Mr D MacKay had retired from his role as a Tenant Board Member on the Cumbria Divisional Board on 10 May 2014. He thanked Mr D Mackay for his contribution to the Board since he became a member in 2006. Members agreed that Mr D MacKay's input into Board meetings presented an honest tenant opinion which grounded them all.

495.3 The Chair advised that the annual Board Away Day will take place on 3rd July at the Hallmark Hotel.

496 Declarations of Interest

496.1 E Mallinson advised of a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 relating to communication with Rory Stewart MP in relation to Longtown as her husband is the City Councillor for this area and has been involved in the process.

496.2 O Luckley advised of a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 relating to disposal of properties on Welsh Road as she is on the Board of Cumbria Gateway who has expressed an interest in owning this property.

496.3 No further declarations of interest were received.

- 497 Minutes of the last meeting held on 13 March 2014
- 497.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2014 were approved and signed.
- 498 Matters Arising from the Minutes
- 498.1 Board members discussed the recent Board Tour and expressed that it was interesting to visit Penrith to see the impressive properties. The Board provided feedback on individual properties. It was agreed that there were some challenges for the development team in delivering new properties.
- 498.2 There were no further matters arising.
- 499 Divisional Directors Report
- 499.1 D Butterworth took the Board through the report and highlighted current issues of interest including Think Forward, Board Appraisal, Board Away Day and a Media Update.
- 499.2 Board members were advised that a major part of the Board Away Day will focus on the outcomes of the Board appraisals with a full Board discussion regarding issues relating to Board performance.
- 499.3 The Board discussed options two other topics for the Board Away Day. It was agreed that Divisional Risk Management and Value for Money would be priorities to be the focus of the day.
- 499.4 It was agreed that leasehold issues would be picked up briefly under the risk management heading with limited time for the discussion at the away day. A detailed report relating to the leasehold issues and challenges will be presented to the September Board meeting. K Doran / M Irving
- 499.5 It was noted that the communication provided to Rory Stewart MP was to keep him up to date on issues within his constituency. Regular briefings will be sent and the Division will develop its own communication strategy.
- 499.6 Board members were advised that SMART have asked to withdraw from the TMO and have asked our Division to consider community cash back as an alternative. It was noted that a report will be presented to the September Board providing all necessary information and asking the Board to consider whether to introduce community cash back. Board members voiced concerns over the D Butterworth

management of the press in relation to this situation. It was suggested that Riverside write to Rory Stewart and Mark Lambert at Carlisle City Council to fully apprise them of the developments.

499.7 The Board noted the content of the report.

500 Development Programme

500.1 Rebecca Kenvyn presented the report to the Board and highlighted that the full development programme shown in Table 1 was now on site and on target to deliver 131 units. She added that some completions have started to come through including some impressive properties at Borland Avenue.

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

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

Rebecca Kenvyn left the meeting.

501 2013/14 Year End Review:-

501.1 Customer Feedback

501.1.1 S Taylor-Gage presented the report to the Board and highlighted that following the introduction of a new complaints system in August 2014 the Board will notice a higher level of complaints as staff will be required to record all service failures as complaints.

501.1.2 Board members asked whether a bond could be introduced to pay in advance for any damage to properties rather than having to pursue rechargeable repairs. The Board were advised that rechargeable repairs is a major issue across the Group with the costs being weighed up of pursuing debts in relation to the money which comes in. It was felt that the introduction of a bond may make properties less desirable as there are already issues with a week's rent in advance.

501.1.3 Board members asked why the Division had taken on a cleaning contract which had had a major negative impact on customer satisfaction. Board members were advised that the contract had been taken up as part of Group wide procurement with Pinnacle, they have no presence in Carlisle and made no provision for sick cover or providing sufficient cleaning products. As a result of these issues it has taken 12 months for Pinnacle to admit they cannot

provide the required cleaning service for our Division. Steps are currently being looked at to bring the cleaning service in house and feedback will be given to Group regarding the issues.

501.1.4 The Board noted the content of the report.

E Mallinson left the meeting.

501.2 Corporate Plan

501.2.1 S Taylor-Gage presented the report to the Board.

501.2.2 The Board noted the report.

501.3 Financial Review And Performance Information

501.3.1 A revised version of the five year trend information was circulated to the Board members.

501.3.2 S Kellock presented the report to the Board and highlighted that the Division is on track to deliver the expected operating margin target.

501.3.3 The Board noted the content of the report.

502 2014/15 KPI's

502.1 S Taylor-Gage presented the report to the Board and highlighted that the targets will be challenging for the Division.

502.2 It was noted that the arrears target relates to general needs properties only as leasehold debt has been taken out the figure which will be monitored going forward.

502.3 Board members were advised that CRM is a major focus for Riverside there is a project in place to improve performance in this area; an increase in compliance is expected next month.

502.4 D Butterworth advised that his challenge for the Division was to meet 9/10 KPI objectives by March 2015. It is expected that the target for relet times for voids will be missed however a major reduction will be made.

502.5 The Board complimented the voids team for the improvements in performance that they had made. In addition the Board thanked all staff for their contribution to achieving 8/10 performance targets last year.

- 502.6 The Board noted the targets set for the 2014/15 Top 10 KPI's and May 2014 performance.
- 503 2014/15 Corporate Plan
- 503.1 The Board received a presentation from D Butterworth focusing on how the Cumbria Division will contribute to delivering the One Riverside Corporate Plan.
- 503.2 Board members were informed of the Divisional Vision;
- To place Riverside Cumbria at the heart of One Riverside.
 - To aspire to and work towards Riverside Cumbria being the best performing Division in TRG.
 - To work towards improving the customer experience for all customers in Cumbria and to increase levels of customer satisfaction.
 - To work with all staff in Cumbria to improve staff engagement opportunities and to increase levels of satisfaction levels following the publication of the 2013 Best Companies Survey results.
- 503.3 The Board received a flavour of the content of the Divisional Plan through a series of bullet points. It was noted that the Divisional Plan will be presented to the September Board meeting. D Butterworth
- 503.4 Board members asked for an update on the formation of a tenant's forum. D Butterworth advised that the plan was to ask tenants how they would like to improve their engagement with Riverside.
- 503.5 Board members asked whether there was an adaptation on Cumbria Choice which would make the system more useful for the Division. The Board were advised that concerns have been voiced regarding the suitability of Cumbria Choice which have been relayed through the Chief Executives Group. There is no adaption which can be applied to make the system work more effectively so in the meantime the Cumbria Choice system is being used alongside direct advertising such as Zoopla.
- 504 Stock Investment & Cyclical Maintenance Review 2013/14
- 504.1 M Irving took the Board through the report.
- 504.2 Board members noted the content of the report.

505 Disposals Strategy And Criteria

505.1 M Irving took the Board through the report and highlighted that there were two parts. The first focusing on the disposals strategy and how properties are identified and solutions found. The second part is requesting Board member approval however some properties are currently occupied so Riverside would wait until the property becomes vacant.

505.2 The Board noted that content of the report.

505.3 The Board approved the approach for remedy for properties as listed in the below table:

	Address	Reasons/ comments
Properties for disposal	[REDACTED]	Disposal owing to public transport deterioration leading to low demand. Flats
	[REDACTED]	Disposal. Maintenance difficult and costly owing to construction type.
	[REDACTED]	Maintenance and subsidence area. Low demand - auction
	[REDACTED]	Disposal
	[REDACTED]	Disposal of whole junction: hard to let 1 bed flats.
	[REDACTED]	Look at development opportunities and dispose if none.
	[REDACTED]	Properties have low demand owing to being small with difficult old fashioned layouts and high rents. Look at options to negate this before disposal.
	[REDACTED]	It was suggested that
	[REDACTED]	

		properties on Partridge Place be offered to City Council as it is adjacent to several other CC properties. This property is to be reviewed next year.
Properties for review 13/14	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>Properties are popular however they are small and have large gardens</p> <p>Review Review Review Review</p> <p>To be reviewed especially before rendering/ insulation improvements takes place.</p> <p>Known low demand area but not appearing constant red- review.</p> <p>Review</p>
Properties for remodelling	[REDACTED]	Vertical conversion of two flats. Large demand for houses in area. Appraise once properties start to become void again.

506 Evictions

506.1 P Taylor took the Board through the report and highlighted that analysis of none dependants had taken place following a query raised by A Bishop. P Taylor advised that there were no issues on this list with adult non dependants i.e. adults who could contribute to the rent. The format of the report has been changed to incorporate family composition and to highlight any issues of this type which may occur.

506.2 It was noted that the report was incorrectly headed as being February 2014 whereas the data covers the period until end May 2014. In addition it was noted that there was an error on line 26 of the report, the current arrears is not over £16,000 as reported.

506.3 Board members were advised the differences between a suspended order and an outright order. With a suspended order a tenant must pay an agreed sum otherwise the process could progress to eviction, tenants are able to appeal. With an outright order a tenant must pay an agreed sum or they are evicted with no opportunity for appeal.

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

507 Right To Buy Update

507.1 M Irving took the Board through the report and highlighted that the reinvigorated RTB launched by the government had fortunately for the Division not had the effect which was expected. The number of RTBs has risen to 21 during 2013/14 which is a long way from the peak experienced in 2003/4 of 459 properties.

507.2 It was noted that since transfer RTB's had created an income of £28M which coincidentally is the same amount which the Division has spent of new build properties during the same period. As this has been on a ratio of 1:4 this has not been a great result for Riverside. It was noted that more money has gone to Carlisle City Council than has been retained by the organisation as per the RTB repayment agreement.

507.3 The Board raised concern at the number of bungalows being sold when these properties are needed to home an aging population. It was noted that Riverside is not able to stop the process however an application has been rejected on this basis; a response has not yet been received.

507.4 Board members noted the content of the report.

508 Cash Collection Dashboard

508.1 The Cash Collection Dashboard report was circulated to the Board members.

508.2 P Taylor took the Board through the arrears section of the report and highlighted that the percentage of current arrears for Cumbria was relatively low compared to the Group performance.

508.3 Board members noted that there had been a jump in the number of evictions for rent arrears at the end of last year due to the effect of the under-occupation penalty.

508.4 P Birks took the Board through the lettings and voids section of the report and highlighted the differences in performance between current performance in week 8 of 2014/15 and in 2012/13 when relet time was reduced to 27 days. The Board noted that there was a positive trend in the performance information with the number of void properties consistently being reduced. P Birks added that the 2014/15 targets were expected to be particularly challenging for her team. This is based on analysis of previous achievements and the ongoing effect of mutual exchanges and notices being served for tenants to move due to the under-occupation penalty.

508.5 Board members were encouraged to see a decreasing number of tenants not paying anything towards the under-occupation penalty.

508.6 It was noted that although current arrears performance is much better than was expected with the effect of the under-occupation penalty this must be seen with the caveat of the impact of Universal Credit.

508.7 The Board noted the content of the Cash Collection Dashboard for June 2014.

509 Staff Lettings Report

509.1 The Board noted the staff lettings detailed in the report.

510 Items for Information

510.1 Board Members noted the following items:

- a Group Board Headlines 22.04.14.
- b Management Team briefings of April, May and June 2014.
- c Housing Services Committee Minutes of 27.03.14.

511 Any Other Business

511.1 The Chair advised that at the recent joint meeting with the Cumbria Divisional Scrutiny Panel it was agreed that a report would be produced focusing on their project of scrutinising Riverside's customer satisfaction. The Scrutiny Panel will bring the report to the September Board meeting.

D
Butterworth

512 Date and Time of Next Meeting

512.1 The next meeting was set for 4:00pm on Thursday 18 September 2014.