

Dovecotes TMO Board Meeting

9th October 2019 @ 18:00

Board Room

Members in Attendance

Joan Curtis (JC-Chairperson), Sarah Harrison (Treasurer), Ann Webb (AW-Secretary), Amie Merry (Chief Officer), Christine Warrilow (CW), Liz Kerr (LK), Andrew Slater (AS), Natasha Curtis-Warner (NCW), Rebecca Dutton (RD), Bernard Curtis (BC), Ryan Pitt-Woodcock (RPW)

Councillors: Sue Roberts (SR), Louise Miles (LM), Claire Sims (CS)

Apologies: Paul Lewis (PL), Melissa Green (MG)

1. Welcome and Introductions

JC welcomes all to the meeting and introduces RPW to the board as a new elected member. AM welcomes RPW and introduces herself also board members.

2. Meeting Opening

2.1 Apologies Paul Lewis, Melissa Green

2.2 Declaration of Interests None

2.2.1 Confirmation of previous board meeting minutes - Moved by BC seconded by LK

AS states that a space is needed for minutes to be signed by the chairperson. Action 1

2.2.2 Matters arising - None

3. Correspondence

3.1 E-mail from MG concerning the Dovecote being restored –

‘I have also asked about the Dovecote building for Bernard and have been advised that we are waiting for some costings to come in from the contractor, once this is received an order will be placed. The bricks are being handmade and may take about 16 weeks from the receipt of the order, so it may be around February before the works commence’

AS states that winter is approaching and there is a hole in the roof of the Dovecote already so there are concerns there. JC mentioned a suggestion was made some time ago to try and move the Dovecote building.... but how? LK asked if was possible for the building to be covered over for now? Action 2

3.2 AM Henry Gregory visited Dovecotes TMO board along with MG about the allocations policy being implemented by CWC. The consultation period has been extended to the 25th October 2019. SR states that due to the new on-line process pensioners are not actively bidding may be thrown off the waiting list. AM confirmed that after 12 months of non-bidding applicants are removed from the waiting list. CW states that online is not for everyone who wants to apply for housing or a move as they may not be computer literate or

even be online. NCW mentions people with illnesses or disabilities can or may not be able to apply online. AM mentions the council needs to look at everyone's circumstances. Responses for the TMO board about the new allocations policy need to be handed at the office. Action 3

3.3 Letter from CWC following complaint. As a result, CWC has insisted the TMO Review the Code of Conduct (Code of practice) for TMO board members. All board members will need to read the document and offer comments. Action 4

3.4 Card of thanks from Dovecotes Primary school for the donation received from the TMO for the use of the school hall for the AGM of the TMO.

4. Chief Officer Report

Voids and lettings – Currently 7 voids and 3 sign ups. SR asked if checks are made for eligibility? AM says yes, if the applicant is a tenant then we carry out checks on the rent account and other data. We also carry out right to rent checks and other eligibility criteria. Asbestos checks are been carried out on voids, Warren (Repairs Inspector) does the checks for bathrooms and kitchens. AM says that Warren and herself will meet with MG for changes to be made as this is having a negative effect on void turnaround figures. SR asks if it classed as a standard void? AM explains the voids can be classed as out of management when the property requires a full refurbishment, unfortunately an asbestos check does not constitute as a 'major void'. LM says that during the recent cabinet meeting in September 2019 Dovecotes TMO was discussed and commended for performance and delivery of service. JC mentions that the staff work well. LM replied it is a positive response.

ASB and Tenancy Breaches – The new ASB protocol is working well says and some long-standing cases have been closed off. The housing officers are working well and identifying issues out on the estate. There has been an increase in cases but this is expected when during the summer more garden issues are identified than in winter. AS asked about why there are 2 case numbers allocated to the same ten ref? AM says it has two codes to reflect the ASB issue and the property conditions issues. Recording on REACT also instigates 2 case numbers.

Fly-Tipping – We use Orbis once a month, but they were not used in August 2019. Orbis are expensive but when a cost benefit analysis was carried out they proved to be slightly cheaper than Wolverhampton Homes.

Repairs -Spend as expected no issues with spend or performance, in fact our performance in this area is brilliant. Warren (repairs inspector) has raised the orders for program works. BC asks about quoting for external? AM questioned if this was the external office works? BC states no, painting of the houses need doing on the fronts under the bedroom windows, ie Catisfield Crescent, where the paint is coming off and in need of doing. AM says it is retained for Wolverhampton City Council, the TMO do carry out some retained repairs as part of our surplus investment spends but an entire external program would be costly and difficult to manage.

Board – Total budget for board is £16,000 year, this was increased slightly to reflect the commitment to training and governance capacity of the TMO. Some recoding has been done. AM states that the changes to the way we code and allocate spend would always create some human error. There has been a slight overspend for the AGM of £120, LM & JC says it was a good AGM.

The autumn newsletter is almost complete. BC asked if the local policing teams' photos could be added to the next newsletter, so everyone knows who they are.

Estate Maps – the program to improve the Estate maps and signage is now underway with a new map on order for the top end of the estate.

Arrears - AM Unfortunately there has been little improvement in performance regarding rent arrears. Housing Officers are doing their part to collect arrears, but this is having little impact. The total arrears figures are not reflective of rent owed as this includes monthly payers. The last figure has also been affected by an issue with online and cash payments not being posted to accounts.

Staff - AM states that she has now paired the two Housing Officers with Assistant Housing Officers so they can be developed and provide a better service. Megan has shown flare with I.T whilst Bridgeen has very good interpersonal skills. JC says Assistant Housing Officers could slip into the role of the Housing Officer if they are on leave. AM agreed that this helps us provide professional and reliable service. SR suggested 121's for both Housing Officers and Senior Housing Officers? AM states that this is already in place, she predicted that change is difficult for staff to embrace. It is hoped that the Assistant Housing Officers will gain a better sense of job satisfaction from the changes and have increased responsibilities. The increase in the level of estate management carried out will ensure Dovecotes is visible on the estate. SR asks AM to send a nice Thankyou to the staff from the board, all board members agreed along with SR.

5. Matters for Discussion

5.1 Management Agreement Review: AM asks for a few board members to volunteer to attend the review, RPW, LK, NCW SR volunteered themselves for the review which will be for Wednesday of half term of October 2019. Action 5

5.2 Fatal Fire Glenfield: AM Attended the Serious Case View Friday with Warren (Repair Inspector). The Board need also to review the incident and discuss if there are any lessons to be learnt and changes implemented. AS suggests putting in a newsletter a general warning and checks for fire retardants. SR asks do we promote Fire Safety checks enough. Action 6

5.3 Complaints & Compliments – No complaints or compliments this month. AS says that

[REDACTED]

5.4 Visiting All Tenants Proposal – AM presented the Visiting All Tenant Proposal. AM arranged a sub-committee to discuss VAT's but this was referred to full board. Process - A letter will be sent to the tenant no later than 5 days prior to the visit. The Housing Officer

will complete the visit with an assistant. We have a duty of care to respond to issues identified. AM This is an opportunity to let tenants know exactly what the TMO does during the visit. BC suggests that sub-letting could be happening on the estate, AM said that if continual cancellations happen then "Alarm bells will be ringing for staff" AM goes on to say it also makes sure that tenants are on the right kind of benefits. JC suggests that tenants will feel we are being intrusive, BC asked if it will be compulsory? AM replies with a "YES" Board are responsible for their roles as Directors of the company and tenancy audits. Housing Officers to do the audit, AM will not ask staff to do something that she would not do herself. SH asks about hoarders and how they will be dealt with? AM intends hoarders to be worked with and not just to move their items as it could be traumatic for the hoarder, sit and chat with them see how they need help.

VOTE TAKEN.....Unanimous

Proposed: Joan Curtis (JC)

Seconded: Andrew Slater (AS)

5.5 Handyman: The organisation needs a Van. AM requires the board to agree on age and cost. RPW says if a van is an asset for the organisation it shouldn't be older than 6 months. AS says a brand-new van needs kitting with racks for tools. BC suggests to the board instead of paying fly tipping collection, use the van to collect the fly tipping and rubbish off the estate so maybe a sprinter van and get a permit for the cost of £150 to use the tip. The Dovecote TMO logo will go on the van. An amount of £20,000 for a van was:

VOTE TAKEN.....Unanimous

Proposed: Bernard Curtis (BC)

Seconded: Councillor Sue Roberts. (SR)

5.7 Santa Event: Tickets are available for ALL Dovecote tenants from 11/11/2019 at office counter. A meeting is needed for finance sub-committee to discuss price for gifts for children at the santa event. RD suggests colouring books for the children's gifts also suggests having real reindeers present for santa event. JC states reindeers are not allowed on hard surfaces. NCW says previously in the board room they had a tunnel for children. AM says to get Halloween's events out the way and then concentrate on the santa event.

5.8 Staff Recognition: AM suggests a bottle of something and a certificate to staff. JC says all staff should have the gift as they have all done well. NCW suggested another way of recognition. JC suggests a Christmas box of a £75.00 voucher for staff and the pressure that they have all been under. LM states this Christmas is a special one because of the skills the staff have used. NCW suggests have an Employer of the Month. JC suggests looking at this idea in the New Year.

VOTE TAKEN.....Unanimous

Proposed: Joan Curtis (JC)

Seconded: Liz Kerr (LK)

6. Board Calendar

29th October 2-4pm Halloween Crafts

31st October 2-4pm Pumpkin Carving

1st November Black Country Museum Trip

6th November 6pm Board Meeting

12th November Estate Forum Dovecotes Primary School - AM asks the councillors to attend forum to speak to tenants, LM agrees to attend.

26-28th November Homes UK Exhibition London

4th December 2019 Board Meeting – Christmas Curry Night

12th December Santa Event

19th December Christmas Meal

7. A.O.B

Christmas closedown – AM stated that all other TMO's in the city are closed throughout the Christmas period and a decision on opening hours needs to be made by the board. AS stated, last year the TMO closed 23rd December and opened 2nd January. AS proposed the TMO close 23rd December 2019 and re-open 2nd January 2019. Staff will not be required to book leave this will be classed as company days for 27/30/31 December.

VOTE TAKENUnanimous

Proposed: Andrew Slater (AS)

Seconded: Bernard Curtis (BC)

LK mentioned the passing of an ex TMO board member Samantha Johnson, a donation of £100 to be sent to a charity of the family's choice. Action 7

VOTE TAKEN.....Unanimous

Proposed: LIZ KERR (LK)

Seconded: Christine Warrilow (CW)

AM suggests a skills audit with herself and JC, appointments will be sent to the board room for members to attend.

LM attended the new 6th form centre at Aldersley and it was fantastic to see new and different subjects on offer.

LM will be on the estate delivering leaflets. LM states that surgeries tend not to go well and they struggle to get people to attend. Councillors can look to hold surgeries with the police at Dovecotes TMO for public to attend. LM email TMO with date to attend, BC asks about time

as Police are once a month, SR replied she cannot commit due to personal reasons. JC says New Year to start something to use the surgeries.

Next meeting 13th November 18:00.

JC & AM Close the meeting.

MINUTES TO BE SIGNED BY THE CHAIRPERSON

.....DATE.....

JOAN CURTIS

Actions Required - Board Meeting Oct 2019

Action No	Action Required	Responsible Person	Target Date
1	Signature line needed on minutes for October	Secretary - Ann Webb	Oct 19
2	Report hole in Dovecotes roof to MG	Chief Officer – Amie Merry	Oct 19
3	Comments from board concerning new allocations policy to be forwarded to Henry	Chief Officer – Amie Merry	25 th October 2019
4	Review of Code of Conduct for Board members	Chief Officer – Amie Merry	1 st November 2019
5	Circulate date for MMA Document Review	Chief Officer – Amie Merry	18 th October 2019
6	Health and Safety Subcommittee Meeting to discuss fatal fire	Chief Officer – Amie Merry	1 st November 2019
7	Arrange cheque for donation in memory of former board member	Chief Officer – Amie Merry	18 th October 2019