



Report to Salford City Council Meeting – 10 October 2018

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Council meeting with an overview of the key business issues that the Board of Salix Homes has reviewed and agreed since the last report in March 2018.

Key Issues

2. Fire Safety

The Board continue to receive regular updates on the actions taken by Salix Homes since the Grenfell Tower disaster in June 2017. In total Salix has 18 tall buildings, of which eight have been refurbished using ACM cladding material.

Following extensive work with industry experts and contractors permanent cladding replacements solutions were approved by board in May and June, 2018.

Following board approval, work is now underway, or due to commence, to all eight affected high rise buildings

- Newbank Tower
- Riverbank Tower
- Blackfriar Court
- Magnolia Court
- Mulberry Court
- Sycamore Court
- Canon Hussey Court
- Arthur Millwood Court

Hackitt Review Early Adopter and Fire Safety

Board have been informed that Salix Homes have been invited to take part in the government's Early Adopters Scheme. The purpose of the Early Adopters Scheme is to take forward actions to bring about the system and culture change needed to ensure that buildings are safe.

Organisations participating will be Early Adopters and have been identified as industry leaders committed to the culture change and system reform that has been outlined by Dame Judith Hackitt and endorsed by Government.

3. Progress Against the Offer Document

The Board are regularly updated with progress against the promises and commitments within the Offer Document. All the promises have either been delivered or are on target to be delivered prior to March 2020 and Salford City Council officers are satisfied with progress. The next Board update will be in November 2018 following the next six monthly update meeting with Council officers.

4. Governance and Rule change

As reported previously, the changes to Salix Homes' Rules, which incorporated changes required by the removal of the 'Golden Share' legislation, received Council consent and were formally approved by the Board and subsequently accepted by the Financial Conduct Authority. The changes mean that Council Board membership reduced to a maximum of two nominees from a total of ten Board members overall, all to be appointed on a skills basis.

5. New Homes

Canon Green Court

Board have received regular reports and made subsequent approvals, on the refurbishment and development of the Canon Green Court site. Following prolonged negotiations with planners, planning permission for the scheme was secured on 6th September 2018. Salix Homes is currently in the process of finalising costs and, subject to final approvals and contract signing, it is intended works will commence in November 2018.

We envisage refurbishment works to Canon Green Court completing in November 2019 and the new build block completing in March 2021.

Greater Manchester Joint Venture

The Board re-confirmed its 'in principle' approval to commit to invest £3m in a Greater Manchester Housing Joint Venture. This consortium involving ten Greater Manchester Housing Associations and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Following further detailed scrutiny of the business plan, the Board would make a final decision at the November 2018 Board.

Alexander Gardens

Board have overseen the redevelopment of Alex Gardens following the floods in 2015. The scheme will soon be launched together with Salford Royal Hospital as an NHS keyworker scheme in October 2018, providing much needed affordable housing for hospital workers, importantly helping to attract and recruit workers to vacant position.

6. High Street Update

As Council will be aware, the work by Salix to decant the properties prior to transferring the vacant site back to the Council is nearing completion.

There remains 5 households still to agree a relocation plan with and our team is in regular contact to identify suitable alternatives as soon as they become available. We are continuing to work with the council, Pendleton Together and other local housing providers to find a mutually agreeable solution for all parties as soon as possible. We are very much aware of the personal impact the uncertainty places on individuals and families.

Discussions are ongoing with the council to commence the land transfer so that we can hand over 8-10 blocks to commence demolition works and we are expecting this partial land transfer to take place by the end of October 2018.

7. Learning from Customer Feedback

In July 2018 Board received the annual update on the learning from customer feedback. Although satisfaction with services remains high, we have identified some learning points including:

- To review the complaints policy to make the process clearer including making informal complaints process clearer, adding in a de-escalation process and tightening up of timescales.
- To provide training to all employees on complaints including informal complaints.
- To review the process to ensure we keep customers updated of progress using our CRM system