



# Doncaster Council

23 January 2018

To the Chair and Members of Cabinet

## PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE REPORT – St Leger Homes

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Glyn Jones	All	No

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. As part of the Council's approach to monitoring and evaluating its relationship with external organisations and partnerships this report provides details on activities undertaken by the following organisations: St Leger Homes

## EXEMPT REPORT

2. This is not an exempt report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3 To note the feedback and comments in respect of the Council's partnership arrangements with St Leger Homes.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Reviewing the activities of partnerships where the Council or Executive appoints representatives helps to ensure alignment with Borough wide priorities, improved stewardship of public funds and public confidence that effective controls are in place to manage any relevant risks. Effective governance also ensures partnerships' working contributes to the effective and efficient provision of services to the Public and the achievement of value for money.

## BACKGROUND

5. At its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017, the Council agreed that where it made appointments to external partnerships, a mechanism should be put in place to report back to the Council on the activities of that body in a consistent manner. As

the Council increasingly works with partners to achieve common objectives and/or ensure effective stewardship of public funds this process will demonstrate greater transparency and accountability within partnership working.

6. Attached at Appendix A is a Partnership Governance Template relating to St Leger Homes this provides Members with an overview of key activities undertaken, any significant future activities and any significant governance or other issues.

## OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7. Without consistent and effective information on their activities, it is more difficult for the Council to understand and register the effects of decisions made by partnerships and take action where appropriate on any decisions made / proposed. The option to do nothing, therefore, misses the opportunity / requirement to respond to the ever-growing incidence of partnerships working and strengthen the Council's control framework and its management of risks.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

8. To regularly report back on the activities of partnerships provides an opportunity to strengthen governance arrangements, monitor the effectiveness of those arrangements and raise awareness of wider partnership activities.

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

9. Good partnerships governance has the following impacts on Council priorities

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i></li> <li><i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i></li> <li><i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i></li> </ul>	<p>St Leger are instrumental in shaping the reforms contained within the Doncaster Growing Together Programme; at the heart of these St Leger are leading on Housing related reforms, to supporting residents into employment through the world of work contract. St leger provides vital services to our residents including leading and supporting on the welfare reforms.</p>
	<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i></li> <li><i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i></li> </ul>	<p>St Leger homes in its investment of capital housing stock; ie energy efficiencies to decent homes reforms continue to ensure that the cost of living for its residents is kept to a minimum.</p>
	<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i></li> <li><i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding</i></li> </ul>	<p>Investment within the Housing stock is self-evident, and is already delivering cashable savings for our residents; investment in St Leger capital programme will continue to ensure we achieve the best outcomes for our residents.</p>

	<i>our Communities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i></li> </ul>	
	All families thrive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i></li> </ul>	St Leger homes provides a vital service to its residents and will continue to maintain this standard.
	Council services are modern and value for money.	The ethos of Value for Money runs through the very heart of St Leger Homes core values and will continue to do so.
	Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.	As a key member of Team Doncaster and a plethora of partnership, St Leger will continue to work in partnership.

## RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

10. Failure to review partnerships' and key internal groups' activities exposes the Council to risks that can impact on a number of levels as follows:
- Failing to ensure an effective Strategic Fit
  - Failing to identify and address the gaps and shortfalls in Relationships
  - Failing to fully assess and plan for the Organisational Impact the changes will have
  - Failing to robustly develop and test the Economic Case for partnership working
  - Reputational damage to the Council due to flawed partnerships
  - Conflicts of interest not being managed
  - Damaged relationships with partners.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. S 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a general power of competence which allows local authorities to do anything an individual can do, unless prohibited by law (and subject to public law principles). This power allows for the general oversight of the external organisation on which Council members and officers sit. It is important that where the Authority nominates officers or members to sit on external partnerships we have an on-going oversight of the governance standards of the partnerships. As a minimum, the partnerships should be aware and have policies reflecting the ethical standards of behaviour expected of public office holders.
12. It is essential that those the Council appoints to sit on outside bodies understand their duties and responsibilities in relation to their position on those bodies and the limit of any delegations they may enjoy. Further specific advice should be sought if they are in any doubt as to these matters.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

13. There are no specific implications within this report. A further report on the financial implications arising from St Leger Homes will be presented to the Executive in due course.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

14. There are no specific human resource implications within this report.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

15. There are no specific technology implications within this report

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

16. There are no equality implications associates with this report

## **CONSULTATION**

17. There are no implications associated with this report, however key to engagement with St Leger homes is the satisfaction rate which is currently at 90%; demonstrating a high quartile performance.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

18. Not Applicable

## **REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS**

Christian Foster  
Head of Strategy & Performance

**Peter Dale**  
**Director of Regeneration and Environment**

## PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE – REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY TEMPLATE AND GUIDANCE NOTES

### 1. NAME OF PARTNER ORGANISATION:

St Leger Homes

### 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANISATION;

St Leger Homes is an Arm's Length Management Organisation, or 'ALMO', created by Doncaster Council in 2005. With the support of Central and Local Government, St Leger Homes provides housing related services across Doncaster for both the social and private sectors.

Since achieving a [3 star rating](#) from the Audit Commission in 2010 St. Leger Homes has gone from strength to strength being recognised with a range of awards and accreditations from independent bodies. These have included receiving the British Safety Council's highest accolade for health and safety management, the Sword of Honor, each year from 2011 to 2016 as well as been awarded an 'Excellent' rating by the Social Housing Equality Framework and the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation each year from 2011 to 2017. St Leger Homes produced its first set of social accounts in 2015, followed up with social accounts in 2016 and 2017, demonstrating the positive impact they are having on our residents lives. In addition they have also won some prestigious awards, including the Business in the Community's (BITC), Responsible Business Award for Championing an Ageing Workforce, and the 'Making a Difference in Communities' at the 2016 National Federation of ALMO's (NFA) conference for their inspirational World of Work (WOW) academy.

In short St Leger Homes is an income led organisation, receiving management fees to manage and maintain around 20,200 homes including leaseholders, 100 shops, 2,800 garages and sites and some HRA land, and a number of other housing services St. Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited is a company controlled by Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales. Registration No. 05564649.

### 3. NAME OF THE COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE(S) APPOINTED TO THE ORGANISATION AND THE CAPACITY IN WHICH THEY SERVE:

Cabinet Member for Housing – Cllr Glyn Jones  
St Leger Board Members - Cllr Jane Nightingale, Cllr Joe Blackham and Cllr Allan Jones  
Officers on the St Leger Challenge Board - Peter Dale, Steve Mawson, Scott Cardwell, Adam Goldsmith, Christian Foster

### 4. NAME OF COUNCIL'S LEAD OFFICER:

## 5. KEY ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PERIOD 2016/17

St Leger Homes 2016/17 Annual Review outlines what has been a positive year for for our ALMO. Below we have attempted to capture some of those highlights – what is important to indicate for the purpose of this report is the video from residents demonstrating the impact the organisation and its service had had.

<https://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/about/annual-review-for-2016-17/>

- Two national award wins
- Two local award wins
- Overall customer satisfaction scores at 91% – amongst the best in the country, compared to other housing companies
- Rent arrears reduced by nearly £107,000 – lowest figure since 2012/13
- Empty property rent loss for voids down to 1% – lowest figure since 2013/14
- 98.2% of repairs completed ‘right first time’ – best ever result
- 100% of gas appliances being serviced
- 28 people being supported to find paid employment, through the World of Work scheme – a rise of four on last year.

The list is not exhaustive and provides a flavour of the work undertaken by St Leger Homes; the additional complementary of work supporting Team Doncaster is self evident and is contained within the narrative below.

### - KEY ACTIVITIES EXPECTED TO BE UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PERIOD 2017/18 and beyond

- Added Value -St Leger homes are a key member of Team Doncaster and are at the heart of driving the delivery of DGT reforms within Doncaster over the next 4 years. The benefits to residents are highly significant, including better housing options, and tackling difficult housing related agendas, what is clear is that St Leger are instrumental in delivering these reforms and have taken up the challenge by already delivering on the target to achieve local procurement spend. However St Leger importance at a strategic level does not stop there, supporting the successful implementation of Government Welfare reforms (ie Universal Credit), in addition to the work undertaken on the complex Lives agenda; Adult safeguarding, Accountable care partnership, Anti Poverty Group, World of Work Programme to name but a few demonstrate the unique added value St Leger Homes provides to the Local Authority and its partners.
- In addition St Leger also supported a significant number of community initiatives, either in partnership with other organisations to meet social objectives, including: World of Work programme: helping unemployed customers back into work and training; Training within communities (budgeting, healthy eating, stress management, IT skills); Food banks;

Healthy Wealthy and Wise (Physical activity groups, personal budget awareness); Anti-social behaviour diversionary activities; Homes for veterans to name but a few.

### **Plans for 2018 and beyond**

During 2017 and beyond there has been considerable number of internal reforms that aim to provide a better service to our residents; including restructuring of the workforce to ensure more resources are deployed at the front line; investment in technologies to provide a faster responsive service, a significant investment into the capital housing stock to ensure a reduction in repairs; a transformation programme is underway and central to this is a new Integrated Housing Management Solution (IHMS) which will change the way the whole company works. Processing mapping in all service areas is underway and over the next two years St Leger will move to one integrated housing solution which will speed up response times to customers and free up capacity to deliver more and better services.

During 2018, St Leger Homes intends to consult on a new 5 year Corporate Plan re-focussing its strategic objectives of delivering the priorities contained within the Doncaster Growing Together Programme.

It is also clear that the benchmarked position needs to continue to improve, St Leger has already commenced a series of reviews to improve performance including a comprehensive review of voids processes to improve all aspects of this service area. This has already resulted in significant improvements in void relet times, with a projected reduction of £250k in void rent loss in the current year, Aligned to this is the impressive customer satisfaction rate which at 91% St Leger Homes intends to ensure the residents are at the heart of any delivery model.

Whilst there will always be the required focus on delivering core services, growth and diversification opportunities will also be considered if they can evidence value for money and are in the best interests of our residents. St Leger will continue to maximise these; whether through the opportunities of additional Government Grants to exploring and working in partnership with Doncaster Council to deliver the next generation of housing related functions and services.

## **6. GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

There are no Governance issues currently relating to the partnership agreement with St Leger Homes; quarterly monitoring of their performance against local and national bench marking is undertaken rigoursly between St Leger Homes; Regeneration and Environment and Finance and Corporate Services.

**7. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

During 2018; a report will be presented to Cabinet detailing St Leger benchmarked performance at both local and national level; coupled with a recommendation as to whether the contract between Doncaster Council and St Leger Homes for Housing related services will be extended beyond 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 for a further 5 years.

**8. PLEASE STATE NAME OF RELEVANT DIRECTOR OR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Peter Dale – Director of Regeneration & Environment

**9. DATE: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018****11 DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED REPORT**

Cabinet 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018