

Orbit Capital plc - Covid-19 Response

21 April 2020

Recent weeks have brought unprecedented commercial and practical challenges for everyone. Our response to COVID-19 has been agile and efficient; with a focus on customer and employee safety, whilst continuing to deliver essential front-line services.

Our business continuity plans have been executed and proven to be robust. Incident management team structures were deployed early in this process on 5 March, allowing us to establish a more agile way of working within days. Most teams are now home-based and our call centre remains fully operational. We continue to complete urgent and essential repairs with customer safety remaining paramount.

A safe and controlled closure of our direct build sites was implemented on Friday 27 March. Also, although our sales offices were closed on 24 March, we have been able to continue to legally complete on some sales, progress running sales to exchange of contracts, carry out virtual viewings and take new reservations, over the last three weeks.

Our business remains resilient, supported through our strong liquidity position and will therefore be able to navigate challenges of the coming months. It is likely that the impact on sales activity will affect our trading results for financial year 2021, and that the financial pressures placed on customers may lead to increased levels of rent arrears throughout the year.

Through our land-led development strategy, we have been able to tightly control our working capital commitments across a number of sites. In addition, we have a well established money advice, employment and skills programme that will provide support to customers throughout this challenging period.

Furthermore, our social and environmental responsibility programme, and our excellent relationships with local partners, means that we have been able to support the response effort directly. We have invested almost £50k to support foodbank efforts to supply vulnerable and low-income households, alongside providing grants for local charities to improve their ICT infrastructure so that they can continue to operate.

We have delivered wellbeing calls to 10,000 customers over the age of seventy, to ensure they are linked into local services or able to access the support they need directly from Orbit through our Better Days programme.

Our attention is firmly on a phased re-mobilisation plan. We are not currently considering the furloughing of employees, and the protection of our skilled workforce is a key priority. Our focus on customer safety, protecting employees and business resilience will remain as the Government's exit strategy becomes clear.