

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board to be held in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 18 March 2013 at 18:00.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 18 February 2013 (attached).
- 3 Public Question Time.
- 4 Declaration of Interests
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- 5 Repairs Review 2012 - 2013 Report. Report of the Health and Housing Business Support Lead (attached).
Reporting Officer: Shari Hallett
- 6 Gas and Other Heating Quarterly Monitoring Report. Report of the Property Manager - Maintenance (attached).
Reporting Officer: Steve Esau
- 7 Contracts Specifications Report. Report of the Property Services Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Phil Webb
- 8 Welfare Reform Strategy. Report of the Tenant Services Development Officer (attached).
Reporting Officer: Steven Clarke
- 9 Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day and Tenant Services Management Board Annual General Meeting. Report of the Tenant Services Development Officer (verbal update).
Reporting Officer: Steven Clarke
- 10 Creechbarrow Road Update. Report of the Health and Housing Manager (verbal update).
Reporting Officer: James Barrah

Tonya Meers
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

12 June 2013

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions.

There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions.

Speaking under “Public Question Time” is limited to 4 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chairman will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate.

If a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chairman will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors or Tenant Services Management Board Members begin to debate the item.

This is more usual at meetings of the Council’s Planning Committee and details of the “rules” which apply at these meetings can be found in the leaflet “Having Your Say on Planning Applications”. A copy can be obtained free of charge from the Planning Reception Desk at The Deane House or by contacting the telephone number or e-mail address below.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room.

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Lift access to the John Meikle Room and the other Committee Rooms on the first floor of The Deane House, is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are also available off the landing directly outside the Committee Rooms.



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Tenant Services Management Board Members:-

- Mr D Etherington (Chairman)
- Mrs J Hegarty (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor R Bowrah, BEM
- Councillor S Brooks
- Mrs J Bunn
- Mrs E Drage
- Mr M Edwards
- Mr D Galpin
- Mr I Gould
- Mr K Hellier
- Mr R Middleton
- Mrs T Urquhart

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 18 February 2013 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House Taunton.

Present: Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chairman),
Mrs J Bunn, Mrs J Hegarty, Mrs T Urquhart, Councillor Bowrah, Councillor Brooks

Officers: James Barrahan (Health and Housing Manager), Steve Esau (Property Manager; Maintenance), Phil Webb (Housing Manager; Property Services), Lucy Clothier (Accountant), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

Others: Councillors Jean Adkins and Jane Warmington.

(The meeting commenced at 6.10pm)

1. Apologies

Mrs E Drage, Mr K Hellier, Mr D Galpin, Mr M Edwards, Mr R Middleton and Mr I Gould

2. Update Report on Performance Indicators Quarter Three 2012-13.

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update accompanied by tables detailing the Health and Housing KPI Performance Report for the period covering Quarter Three of 2012-13. The tables detailed the overall KPI performance of Quarter Three and the Top Ten Quarter Three Performance Indicators selected by the Tenant Services Management Board during Quarter One performance report.

The Quarter Three overall KPI performance report included such headings as Managing Finances, Service Delivery Satisfaction, Service Delivery Decent Homes and Service Delivery Managing Housing Stock.

The Officers informed the Board Members that there was an increase in the number of green KPI to 52%, as well as an increase in the number of amber KPI to 6% and decrease in non-applicable KPI to 6% but red KPI stayed the same at 24%.

The Housing Scorecard Summary table continues to be displayed to tenants and the public through the following media outlets

- Tenants' Newsletter
- TV display in The Deane House Reception
- TDBC Website

During the discussion of this item, board members and the public made the following comments and asked questions:- (*Responses shown in italics*)

- Congratulations should be given to the Housing Officers dealing with anti-social behaviour and issuing the ASBOs (Anti-Social Behaviour Orders). Please pass this on.

- In reference to section one Managing Finance part 3 Income Team of the Housing Scorecard, being in the second quartile when compared nationally, was the council happy with this? Also relating to Asset Management under Service Delivery, what percentage was it?
We would ideally like to be in first quartile but I would take second quartile and aim higher. The percentages relating to Asset Management would be provided at later data.
- Would there be a report detailing the reference to 18 – 25' ers group lobbying for activities and facilities for their specific age group?
Councillor Williams was producing an information report to be presented at the next Full Council on 26th February 2013 around this subject.
- Concerning the number of reds on the Top Ten Housing Services Performance summary, would these improve?
This relates to the processing of job tickets at the DLO. There would be more work to be done in this area. An information report to follow at another meeting of the board.
- Why isn't The Deane House open between Christmas and New Year? This would give Tenants an opportunity to pay their rent instead of waiting until after the New Year. Can this be linked to loss of income and arrears over this quarter with Tenants not paying their rent?
*Historically, at the Deane House there had been a skeleton crew of staff on duty during this period. But after consultation between staff and councillors it was decided to close all non-essential services during this period, although essential services such as The Deane Helpline and some services provided by DLO did remain open during this period.
We cannot be sure if the closure over this period affects this. We can investigate this and get back to the board.*
- Concerned as during this period, I noticed a number of people standing outside waiting to access The Deane House. I went to investigate whether or not there was any information notices about when and where the building would be open again or if there were alternative places that rent could be paid. I know that you can pay your rent by card in the Post Office.
We can look into this.
- In reference to part 3 of service delivery concerning the Lettings Team, What was the cost and did we lose any revenue?
*These long term voids with the Halcon Area had now been refurbished and re-let. The cost per house was £30,000. The extended non re-let may have been increased but not by much.
The decision not to refurbish and re-let these was made by Executive Councillor Adkins relating to the decision the development project on the Halcon estate.*
- Concerning the reoccurring inter-face software issues, what was the progress around the replacement housing software?
The Council had the funding available for it but we currently still in the procurement process. This would be a lengthy process as SWOne IT need to be involved about linking all the systems before launching it.
- The Board Members to keep this fact in mind during future Performance Reports as this may not be a true picture of the situation. Could these be separated between bad repairs and data entry in order to get a clearer picture until software issue if fixed?
- Would this be a separate system to SAP or similar?
They would be separate software, which would inter-face with existing systems SAP and Academy.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

3. Verbal ALCHO Performance Update Report

The Property Manager for Maintenance gave a verbal update accompanied by a spreadsheet detailing the ALHCO Quarter Three KPI Performance Report for the period covering October to December for 2012. The spreadsheet detailing ALHCO performance included such headings as Servicing, Reactive Maintenance, Voids, and Requests for Service, Health and Safety and Finance.

The following points were covered during the brief update of the ALHCO representatives;

- A Full Quarter Three Performance would be presented at the next Board meeting.
- By December 2012 the number of properties without valid CP12's was 72.
- CP12's data; 50 lost during Aeromark IT System change over.
- CP12's data; 27 had been completed, leaving 23 properties. 9 had confirmed appointments & 12 have been visited with no access.
- The remaining 22 were late services have still got valid certificates.
- Void levels had been above average for Quarter Three.
- The re-activate maintenance KPI was currently below target in all areas. The only issue would be related to data transfer, although the data entered by ALCHO was done electronically, it must come back to TDBC manually for input.
- Housing Department were reviewing the Job priority system in Academy in order to improve on the KPI target results.
- There was one Health and Safety incident relating to a gas leak in a property. This had been fully reported and investigated by ALCHO. TDBC were awaiting the results of the report. ALCHO had informed that the engineer was suspended during the investigation. This engineer had been re-instated but was being closely monitored and reviewed.
- There had been a data transfer issue between the ALCHO Aeromark system and Academy. This was during the move from Scotland to Bristol. Some data had been lost. South West Audit Partnership had been asked to investigate the data loss.
- General feedback on the new Bristol call centre had been very positive. It had been proven by reduction in the number of calls chasing work.

During the discussion of this item, board members made the following comments and asked questions. Responses shown in italics:

- *The loss of data between systems during the ALCHO call centre move was frustrating. The outstanding number of CP12's would be considered small in comparison with the Council's housing stock. Data transfer issues not solely ALCHO. Department teams were looking into the problems to find permanent solutions.*
- The missing CP12's data were these completed or not? Who would be liable if the property had issues and there was no CP12?
If the council can't see a CP12 certificate through the system then the service had to be done again. Both TDBC and ALCHO would be liable if there was an issue when the property wasn't covered by CP12 certificate.

- Tenants commented that they weren't provided with a copy of the CP12. Why would this be? If there was an issue and the sticker with the reference code was destroyed, what would happen without a paper copy?
There would a unique reference number of the sticker. TDBC hold a paper copy of the certificate but as ALCHO had gone electronic end of the engineer visit, they should be offering the option to receive either a copy via email or paper sent via post.
Engineers historically hand written the certificates but since the introduction of PDAs, this hand written facility had stopped and they had no printing facilities.
- Wouldn't it be better if the engineers ask the tenants if they wished to had a copy of the CP12?
The Council can speak to ALCHO about introducing this.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

4. Financial Statement Quarter Three 2012/13.

The Accountant and Health & Housing Manager gave a verbal update accompanied by spreadsheets detailing the Housing Revenue Account Performance Scorecard Report for the period covering Quarter Three of 2012-13. The spreadsheets detailed the breakdown of overall performance of Quarter Three split between capital and revenue.

The Revenue Account Performance included such headings as Capital Programmes, Right to Buy, Income, Expenditure and HRA Revenue.

The following points were covered during the brief update of the Health and Housing Manager;

- Voids currently being processed quicker.
- Under spend in HRA under the section of Income in Supported, Sheltered & Extra Care homes.
- Under spend in HRA under the section of Expenditure in Supervision & Management as Planned Repairs & Maintenance.
- There was overspending in HRA Expenditure. This was due to several extended Voids and expensive refurbishment in the Halcon area.
- The HRA Revenue account had an under spend of £42,501.
- The HRA Capital Programmes had an under spend of £545,625.
- There was an under spend in the Disabilities Facilities Grant from the HRA Capital Programmes.

During the discussion of this item, board members made the following comments and asked questions. Responses shown in italics:

- The under spend in Cladding Capital Programme, would there be any additional costs in relation to the surveys being carried out?
This relates to particular block of flats. They were suffering with condensation problems. A feasibility study was completed prior to carrying out any work. There was additional cost here relating to external surveys.
- Explain what was meant by 'kitchen being fitted where possible'?

The work was being carried to bring some kitchen up to the Decent Homes Standards but some tenants were reluctant or don't want the work done. The council must wait in some cases until the property was empty.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

5. Report on Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day and Tenant Services Management Board Annual General Meeting.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the details of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day and the Annual General Meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board.

The Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day typically runs all day (morning to evening, times to be agreed). This gives tenants and leaseholders an opportunity to gain information and ask questions about topics that were of interest to them. The day was informal in terms of tenants and leaseholders can pop in at any time during the day; no appointments necessary.

The two Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open days had been held in April since their introduction in 2011. The venue had been the Somerset County Cricket Ground and over 100 tenants and leaseholders had attended each event, with over 20 stalls available including various departments of Taunton Deane Borough Council and representatives from external organisations who were able to answer questions on a wide variety of housing related issues and other matters.

A questionnaire was circulated in order to seek the views of those attending the event. Results from 2012 included:

- 36% of respondents rated the day as 'Excellent', 42% as 'Good'. Two respondents considered the event to be 'okay', and nobody stated it to be 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- 100% of respondents agreed that there were enough departments available on the day

The Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) was presented with a paper on feedback from the event at its meeting on the 22nd May 2012. It should be noted that at the meeting of the 17th May 2011 the TSMB resolved that the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day should be an annual event.

As the date of the TSMB AGM had been scheduled for the 22nd April 2013, the Tenant Empowerment Team had booked a function room at the Somerset County Cricket Ground for the whole day on this date.

The 2011 event ran from 11am until 7pm. Due to a significant drop off at 5pm, it was agreed that the 2012 Open Day would run from 10am to 5pm.

By looking at the organisations that attended last year and examining the feedback forms a suggested list of organisations and TDBC departments had been drawn up:

<p>Tenant and Leaseholder Organisations Tenant Services Management Board Tenants' Forum Leaseholders' Forum</p>	<p>TDBC Housing Services Estates Management Leaseholder Section Property Services Repairs Section Supported Housing Housing Options Community Development</p>
<p>Other TDBC Sections Housing Benefits DLO Deane Helpline Environmental Health Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership Housing Enabling (developing new homes)</p>	<p>Non TDBC Organisations Citizens Advice Bureau Centre for Sustainable Energy Avon and Somerset Police Age UK Job Centre SCAT Devon and Somerset Fire Service ALHCO</p>

Publicity

Analysis of feedback from attendees shows that the most popular way of hearing about the 2012 event was by Invitation letter (92%) followed by “other” (5%) and Taunton Deane Borough Council’s website (3%). No respondents indicated they heard about the event via a Housing Officer, the newspaper article or neighbours.

It was therefore the intention that each tenant and leaseholder would be sent an invitation to the event, detailing time, venue and stall holders. Even though other forms of publicity did not prove to be particularly popular it would not be time consuming or expensive to advertise the event in the Somerset County Gazette, on the TDBC website, on the TV screens in the reception of The Deane House and at satellite offices in the borough.

Tenant Services Management Board AGM

There was no set format to the AGM. However, it was customary to include agenda items such as:

- reports from the outgoing Chairperson on the board’s activities during the year
- reports on issues that face the TSMB and Housing Services in the coming year
- Consider and vote on any resolutions put forward by tenants
- Elect the TSMB’s Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Finance Comments

The cost of hiring a function room at the Somerset County Cricket Ground was free up to 5pm, with an additional charge to keep the venue open until 7pm. There would also be a cost to provide lunch for stall holders.

There would also be a cost of sending invitation letters to each tenant and leaseholder.

The main costs of the AGM would be the hire of the venue and publicity. However, if the TSMB agrees that the AGM would be held at the same venue of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day the expenditure would be included in the cost of this event. The cost of the event can be funded from existing budgets.

Resolved that the:-

1. The officer's report was noted.
2. The amended list of invited stalls to include The Link Centre Partnership was agreed.
3. The agreed running times for the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2013 should be from 10am to 5pm as well as the suggested Publicity Methods suggested by Officers. The event will be held on the 15th April 2013.
4. It was agreed that the TSMB Annual General Meeting should be held on 15th April 2013 starting 3:30pm until 5:00pm in The Long Room at Somerset County Cricket Ground.

6. Verbal Update on Welfare Reform Events.

The Tenant Empowerment Manager gave a short verbal update on the up and coming Welfare Reform Events.

The following dates were in relation to Welfare Reform events being held within the Taunton Deane area:-

- Drop in Session on 20th February at Somerset County Cricket Ground from 10:00am until 3:00pm.
- Course held by Shelter on 7th March. Courses starting at 10:00am, 12:30pm & 2:45pm.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

7. Verbal Update on Creechbarrow Road Development Project.

Councillor Brooks left the room before the discussion of this item after declaring a prejudicial interest.

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update on the Creechbarrow Road Development Project after the meeting held at Newton Road Community Centre on 4 February 2013.

The following points were covered during the brief verbal update of the Health and Housing Manager;

- There was positive feedback during the meeting on 4 February.
- The next stage would be the present of the Development Project report at Full Council on 4 March 2013.
- The Project group meet every two weeks.
- Officers were booking appointments to speak to leaseholder residents.

- Council would be doing more site assessment.
 - Further sessions with tenants and residents in regards to project decisions.
 - Officers completing preplanning activities and two consultation events in April.
- Currently, the council had seven Corporate Projects across the Taunton Deane but the Creechbarrow Road Development Project would be added to these.

The next Development Project Update Report would provide more detail towards to the sign off of the site.

During the discussion of this item, board members made the following comments and asked questions. Responses shown in italics:

- Board Members requested that a former resident of the area name be used in an aspect of the new development (Resident name: Pauline Kershaw). She was a proactive member of the Halcon community and Tenants' Forum member.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

(The meeting ended at 8.20pm)

Declaration of Interests

Tenant Services Management Board

- Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants;
 - Councillor S Brooks
 - Mrs J Bunn
 - Mrs E Drage
 - Mr M Edwards
 - Mr D Etherington
 - Mr D Galpin
 - Mrs J Hegarty
 - Mr K Hellier
 - Mr R Middleton
 - Mrs T Urquhart

- Member of Somerset County Council – Councillor Brooks

- Family member a Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenant;
 - Councillor Bowrah
 - Councillor Brooks

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 18th March 2013

Repairs Review 2012-13

Report of Health & Housing Business Support Lead – Shari Hallett

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Adkins)

1. Executive Summary

In response to repairs response rates being off target within the Health and Housing scorecard, the Health and Housing Manager requested a review of repairs. The attached is a summary of the actions taken to date.

2. Background




Repairs Review started in response to the repairs response rates being off target within the quarter 2 Health and Housing Scorecard.

3. Actions Taken to Date

- Flow chart produced to understand the repairs process.
- ALHCO separately have updated the Tenant Services Management Board on two occasions.
- Two meetings held with DLO to jointly discuss how to improve performance.
- There has been an 8% increase in DLO job tickets issued to beginning of Feb 2013 and 6% increase in overall contractor tickets which has increased pressure.
- Other actions:
 - All DLO tradesmen now telephone each job before attending (even appointments), tenant's telephone number is flagged on the tickets.
 - Outstanding job report produced for all contractors and results sent to the Property Manager (Maintenance).
 - DLO produce weekly open ticket report to analyse outstanding jobs.
 - The completed job report is created to allow monthly monitoring of the statistics.
 - IBTSU (I have been to see you) process used when a tenant is out has changed, jobs are now closed on second aborted visit where there has been no one home and answering the telephone on two occasions.
 - Discussions with DLO glazing contractor have begun and hope to be able to email tickets to them.
 - The DLO are investigating capacity issues.
 - Tickets which were complete and had remained unclosed have now been closed.

- The method of reporting statistics has been jointly reviewed and the data report was flawed. Firstly the report included all DLO services, for example ground maintenance which is not appropriate (particularly where they use the job tickets on an annual basis, exceeding completion times, as the current job ticket system is not set up for annual tickets). This has the effect of keeping tickets open and making statistics appear worse. Other refinements need to be made e.g. due to constraints between computer systems the emergency or out of hour job tickets will show as not being completed on time. To rectify the effect of this in the performance figures to date we would have to manually review all of these job tickets which is not practical. This problem will resolve itself when the “Cosy” computer software is replaced but in the meantime we will need to change the way we enter retrospective tickets to give a more accurate reflection of performance.
- A new report has been created to produce the completed jobs figures and we have reviewed all open tickets and closed those that were mistakenly left open.

The improvement in statistics is shown below: (figures are for Quarters 1 to 3 2012/13)

<p>10. Repairs & Maintenance Completion of repairs within priority target times: Emergency (within 24 hours) Target =98%</p>		<p>Was 92.01% Now 92.07% We are ranked 253 out of 272 for all providers and 36 out of 41 for all councils who own stock.</p>
<p>11. Repairs & Maintenance Completion of repairs within priority target times: Urgent (within 3 working days) Target =94%</p>		<p>Was 65.52% Now 83.92% and we are ranked 245 out of 260 for all providers and 36 out of 41 for all councils who own stock.</p>
<p>12. Repairs & Maintenance Completion of repairs within priority target times: Non Urgent (up to 28 days) Target =85%</p>		<p>Was 80.62% Now 90.02% and we are ranked 231 out of 264 for all providers and 31 out of 40 for all councils who own stock. (Changed from Red to Green)</p>

NB: The effect of not being able to demonstrate completion of retrospective tickets on time is still a factor within these figures.

4. Summary

There is still further work to do to understand and improve our repairs performance figures but work has begun and will continue.

5. Recommendations

The Tenant Services Management Board are asked to note the report and comment on its content.

Contact:

Officer Name Shari Hallett – Health and Housing Business Support Lead
Direct Dial No 01823 356440
[e-mail](mailto:s.hallett@tauntondeane.gov.uk) address s.hallett@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 18th March 2013

Gas and Other Heating Quarterly Monitoring Report

Report of Property Manager- Maintenance- Steve Esau

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jean Adkins)

1. Executive Summary

The report and annex have been produced to give members monitoring information on the performance of the servicing and repair contract with Alhco.

This report is for quarter 3 showing performance data; in addition the report highlights issues with the contract and improvements being made. Comments from members would be welcomed on how the information is being presented and any changes required for future reporting.

2. Background

TDBC has a responsibility as a landlord to ensure that all rented properties have a valid Gas Safety Certificate; an annual gas safety check has to be carried out. In order to ensure that a certificate does not become out of date we have in place a 10 month cycle, this allows for process of gaining access to properties to be carried out before the certificate becomes overdue. It is important that this process is managed effectively by both the contractor and the client team.

In addition the contractor is responsible for the servicing of solid fuel and oil appliances together with checking electric storage heaters, servicing of extract fans, smoke detectors and breakdown repairs. Whilst there is no legislative requirement to carry out checks to solid fuel and oil appliances every 12 months it is considered good practice and we follow a 10 month cycle as happens with the gas servicing programme.

The report and annex show performance data for all the service and repair areas with comments where necessary.

3. Report

A verbal report was presented at the last Tenant Services Management Board, it was agreed that we would present a written report at the next meeting.

At the end of Quarter 3 we had 72 properties without a valid Cp12 Certificate, 50 properties attributed to being lost off the Alhco's Aero mark IT System following the change over from Scotland to Bristol at the end of December. As reported at the last meeting, Alhco have said there is no excuse for this totally unacceptable occurrence. At the time of writing this report 45 properties have been revisited, the 5 remaining properties which we have not been able to gain access. These properties have been included on the March Hit list to gain access. These visits take place from 26 to 28 March. The remaining 22 are late services all of which had valid certificates at the time of the last board meeting.

Reactive Maintenance - the KPI figures are showing below target in all areas in Q3, one of the problems we have is the manual handling of data back from the contractor, the number of different appliance types a total of 144 making it difficult for the contractor to achieve a first time fix. We have looked at our reporting and have made some recent changes to enable us to carry out more detailed analysis going forward which we have not been able to do up to now. Some analysis has taken place. Initial thoughts indicate that part of the reason was the work handled by Alhco's Scottish Call Centre. We anticipate an improving situation after the first years servicing visits and information collation; we are also seeing a marked change now that all work is handled through the Bristol Call Centre.

The void levels have been above average for Q3. The work Alhco have to do has been carried out on time, this has also included a number of installs where systems have not passed the gas safety inspection.

As explained at the last board meeting a serious health and safety incident occurred. The incident was fully investigated, both by Alhco and Taunton Deane Borough Council. This incident was reportable to the Health and Safety Executive. We are still waiting to hear from them.

We employ an organisation called Q Gas to carry a 3rd Party independent audit of Alhco's work. They carried out audits in the last quarter, whilst there were no serious issues, there were issues with the way engineers fill in the Safety Certificates, and this has been fed back to Alhco who are making changes to their systems.

We have included financial information; this includes the cost of servicing and maintenance together with rechargeable works, these being works outside of the contract and includes works to voids.

We recognise there are still a number of issues and problems that we are working together to resolve. Some of these can be resolved in the short term others will take longer particularly around data transfer, which cannot fully be resolved until we have automated links between academy and aero mark. Below are a number of actions and improvements that are being carried out:

- Weekly Operational meetings.
- Weekly monitoring information and data from Aero mark.
- Gas Officer attending Bristol Call Centre monthly to discuss and resolve issues with the Call Centre Manager.

- South West Audit Partnership is carrying out an audit of Gas Servicing and Maintenance Management. We hope to have the results in April. Any actions or recommendations will then be put into an action plan.
- Working with Alhco, Taunton Deane Borough Council's Finance and Information Technology to explore interfacing between the two systems.

4. Finance Comments

There are no financial issues arising from this report.

5. Legal Comments

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

6. Links to Corporate Aims

To ensure we meet our legislative responsibilities.

7. Environmental Implications

Heating systems that are serviced regularly work more efficiently therefore reducing CO2 emissions and the environmental impact.

8. Community Safety Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

9. Equalities Impact

This is not applicable.

10. Risk Management

There are significant risks associated with this area of the housing service. It is essential it is managed in a robust way where there are changes to legislation or working practices revised risk assessments and mapping are carried out.

11. Partnership Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

12. Recommendations

The Tenant Services Management Board are asked to note the report comments would be welcomed on how the information is being presented and any changes required for future reporting.

Contact:

Officer Name	Steve Esau- Property Manager – Maintenance
Direct Dial No	01823 356593
e-mail address	s.esau@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Servicing	Target	Q1	Q2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Cumulative for year	Comments
Nr of gas services (CP12) that are planned for this calendar month.		1185	1171	468	547	384	3755	
Nr of services for solid fuel that are planned for this month.		45	1	2	3	4	55	
Nr of services for oil that are planned for this month.		3	5	6	7	8	29	
Nr of services for electric that are planned for this month.		288	165	166	167	168	954	
total number of services for month (all fuel types)		1521	1342	642	724	564	4793	
Number of properties not covered by a current CP12		7	17	24	63	72	183	
% of Properties Overdue (No valid Certificate)	0	0.59	1.45	5.13	11.52	18.75	7	
% of gas Services completed on 1st visit attempt	100%	65	64	56	69	71	65	
% of gas Services completed on 2nd visit attempt		23	19	24	14	16	19	
% of gas Services completed on 3rd visit attempt		6	8.5	14	13	10	10	
% of gas Services completed on TDBC arranged visit		4	7	5	3	2	4	
% of gas Services completed on TDBC arranged forced entry		2%	1.5%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1%	
Number of appointments cancelled by ALHCO	0	0	0	1	2	3	4	
Nr of certificates sent to TDBC within 5 days of service date.	5 days							
Nr of tenant satisfactions received relating to servicing								
% of tenants satisfied								
Reactive Maintenance								
Nr of reactive jobs received		1082	994	509	660	429	3674	
Priority 1 - emergency % (attend within 2 hours and repair within 24 Hours)	100%	98	94	89	92	91	93	
Priority 2 - Urgent % (Complete within 3 working days)	100%	96.66	87.5	89	92	91	91	
Priority 3 - Routine % (Complete within 7 working days)	100%	97.33	97.06	74	66	84	84	
% completed 1st visit	100%	96	85.66	86.66	87.66	88.66	89	
Nr of hot water systems out of action overnight	0 per month	0	0	1	2	3	6	
Nr of hot water systems out of action for longer than 24 hours	0 per month	0	0	1	2	3	6	
Nr of reactive maintenance appointments made		1082	994	509	660	429	3674	
Nr of reactive maintenance appointments kept by ALHCO		1065	965				2030	
Nr of Jobs cancelled due to no tenant contact.		17	30	10	11	10	78	
Nr of Out of Hours calls		57	94	30	35	30	246	
Nr of Tenant satisfactions received relating to breakdowns								
% of tenants satisfied								
Voids								
Nr of Voids this month		144	123	34	29	47	377	
% of voids completed within time (14 days)	100%	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Request for Service								
		1	0	0	0	0		
Health and Safety								
Major reportable accidents		0	0	0	1	0		
Minor Accidents		0	0	0	0	0		
Instances of where Asbestos found		0	0	0	0	0		
Audits completed (internal and external)								External Audit Carried out in Q3
Finance								
Invoice for Servicing		£80,174.06	£59,097.38	£59,098.38	£59,099.38	£59,100.38	£316,569.58	
Invoice for Maintenance		£87,247.62	£87,247.62	£87,248.62	£87,249.62	£87,250.62	£436,244.10	
Invoice for Chargeable works		£22,344.52	£36,172.34	£36,173.34	£36,174.34	£36,175.34	£167,039.88	
Scrap money raised.								

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 18th March 2013

Report on Contract Specifications

Report of Housing Property Services Manager- Phil Webb

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jean Atkins)

1. Executive Summary

Housing Property Services are about to start new contracts for the replacement of timber fascias and soffits with uPVC, and new heating installations using air source heat pumps. It was agreed previously that the content of new contracts would be presented before the Board for information and for any concerns to be aired.

This report sets out the relevant information and seeks the Board's approval for the planned contracts.

2. Background

It was requested by the Board, and agreed, earlier in the year that Housing Property Services would present future plans of contracted work for the year ahead, and inform Members of more detailed specifications when that information was available.

Members were previously briefed of the planned Capital workload for 2013/14 and budgets have now been confirmed; the Housing Capital budget being in the sum of £7.7 Million.

3. Report

Fascias and Soffits

In order to be able to properly deliver the works necessary within the HRA 30 year Business Plan it is essential Housing Property Services prepare a number of contracts within the next six months. This will ensure that arrangements are in place to cover all the eventualities for planned and responsive work to be covered.

The first in this line of contracts is for the replacement of existing fascias and soffits to roofs with uPVC cladding. This work would have originally been part of our planned external repairs and redecoration works but it has not been part of it for the last five years. Access to high level within those contracts was inordinately expensive for the volume of work that was to be done and as savings were needed at the time to afford Decent Homes work it was decided to postpone this work until such time as a full

programme could be devised. In the meantime, if roofing work has been carried out then we would have replaced fascias and soffits as part of that work. We are now in a position where fascias and soffits can be programmed as a stand-alone contract.

This year's contract is a trial project on one type of gutter system (concealed) and is being part funded by budget slipping from 2012/13 into the new year. We shall take what we learn from this one type of guttering and expand it into a longer term contract later in 2013/14.

The specification for the components is detailed below.

SCOPE OF THE WORKS

Description of scope of works

'Renew gutter' shall mean removal of existing Marley clipped eaves system comprising gutter, fascia and soffite, including all components and replacing with new white plastic deep flow gutter on brackets as described herein.

'Renew fascia' shall mean removal of existing timber fascia including making good brickwork and replacing with new white plastic 16 x 150mm, White plastic fascia board, fixed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the installation of white plastic eaves ventilators fitted between timber rafters.

'Roofing felt repair' shall mean the cutting back of the existing roofing felt and installing a 750mm approx wide strip of new breathable (blue) membrane, nailed to rafters and dressed into new gutter, including pushing back or temporary removal of Stonewold and Regent 49 tiles and replacement.

'Downpipe' shall mean the removal of the existing downpipe and replacement with new white plastic downpipe including junction to gutter outlet and drain connector to stoneware drain and hacking out any cement joint or flaunching. Fix downpipe on concealed bracket, plugged and screwed to faced brickwork re-using existing holes where possible and making good old holes where visible.

Quantities

Houses

The houses have been described in location and by type. Each house is a complete installation with components described for each roof slope or elevation. The "Total" figure is the number of that type of house in that location. Downpipes are replaced in the existing positions

Flats

The blocks of flats have been described as a single installation to be replaced in totality, with downpipes replaced in the same position as existing.

White plastic rainwater installation

Deepflow gutters and pipework shall comply with British Standard Kitemark BS EN 607:2004/BS EN 12200-1:2000 /BS EN 1462:2004 and the manufacture to hold ISO Quality Management System accreditation.

Air Source Heat Pumps

We generally consider the work we have already been doing in this area a success story with any problems usually being attributed to individual set-up or usage, and as such we are not aiming to change much at all. The appliances used are those that have been selected by our Procurement Club, Advantage South West, so we shall take advantage of the work they have done on our behalf and continue with their selection.

The specification for this is detailed below.

Extract from preliminaries and general conditions

Design and installation

The works comprise the design and installation of air source heat pump central heating and hot water installation in occupied council dwellings including removal of existing heating and hot water installation and builders work in connection with the removal and installation.

The works described in this document are phase one of the council's programme to install heat pump systems in 400 dwellings throughout the portfolio. The programme will be spread over four years with the option to negotiate a fifth year. The dwellings described herein are the first 100 dwellings.

The systems are to be designed and installed in the following types of dwellings:-

One bedroom flats: ground and first floor

One bedroom bungalows: end and mid-terrace

Three bedroom, two-storey houses: end and mid-terrace

The Contractor will be provided with a list of addresses at the pre-contract meeting. Any variations to the works as a result of the list being provided at that stage will be agreed at the pre-contract meeting.

Supply of Equipment – Advantage South West

Air source Heat Pumps and Cylinders

Daikin Air conditioning UK Ltd is the current supplier of ASHP equipment under the Advantage South-West (ASW) supply arrangement. The ASHP will be supplied under a

contract to the Contractor direct from Daikin to the Contractor at the rates and prices agreed between Daikin and ASW. The rates and prices referred to herein will be supplied to the Contractor on appointment.

Therefore this tender is to be priced on the basis of Design of the installation using Daikin Equipment, installation, builders work in connection (BWIC) with removal of the existing heating and hot water system in each dwelling and BWIC with the installation of the new system.

Do not include the cost of the ASW supply in this tender, the advised cost will be communicated to the successful tenderer at the pre-contract meeting.

The Daikin contract is due for re-negotiation, should a different supplier be appointed, the installing Contractor will be required to continue this contract with the new supplier at no additional cost. Any variation in the supply price will be notified to the Contractor.

Radiators and Valves

The radiators are Stelrad and will be supplied under the ASW procedure.

The lockshield and TRVs are also supplied under the ASW procedure. The type / make is to be advised.

Tender to be priced as complete works

This tender is to be priced as taking supply of ASW goods, paying for them at the notified rates during the Contract, installing the systems and executing the whole of the works.

Maintenance, defects liability and servicing

The air source heat pump equipment is supplied through the Advantage South-West procurement arrangement with a direct supply contract between the contractor and Daikin. The Daikin equipment is provided with a five year manufacturer's warranty.

The Contractor will accept a 12 months defects liability period under the minor works contract with Taunton Deane Borough Council

The Contractor will enter into a servicing Contract with Taunton Deane Borough Council as described herein for both previous installations and the works currently being tendered for.

Taunton Deane Borough Council Tenants

The Contractor will be required to liaise with the tenant in terms of the design and installation of the Daikin system and prior to the handover, instruct the tenant in the use of the equipment and provide the tenant with the operating hand book.

It is intended that the void properties will be added into this contract and the Contractor will be required to return to the property to instruct the new tenant in the use of the equipment as described above at no additional cost.

Design Criteria

General

The appointed Contractor will be an accredited Daikin design engineer with full access to Daikin design information

Daikin are the approved supplier of air source heat pumps under the Advantage South-West scheme (ASW) and only equipment offered under that scheme is to be used in the design.

If a situation arises where equipment not available under the ASW scheme is required by the optimum design, then instructions are to be sought by the Design Contractor from the Contract Administrator.

The individual property design is to be achieved with discussion with the resident and due regard to the resident's possessions and furniture layout. Each individual property design is to be approved by the Supervising Officer before implementation.

Individual Properties Design Criteria

The following design criteria are to be adopted in respect of each individual property. Where a property is presented when these design criteria are not met, the property is to be drawn to the attention of the Supervising Officer.

1. External walls to be insulated cavity walls with facing brick external skin and blockwork inner skin.
2. Windows to be UPVC double glazed
3. Roofs to be insulated to a minimum thickness of 200mm

Radiator position and pipe run

The radiators are to be positioned in the most optimum heat efficiency position but still with due regard to the layout of the room.

Pipe drops are to be positioned in the most optimum position and cased with clip on casings.

External Units

External units, either split units or Monoblock, are to be positioned in the most heat efficient position with regard to the visual and environmental impact of the Unit.

External units are to be positioned with regard to the vehicular or ambulant circulation around the building and positioning proposals are to be discussed with the resident and the Supervising Officer before implementation.

Consideration is to be given to the resident's particular usage of the property.

Where necessary, consideration is to be given to the layout of the garden and access to the building, including both front and rear doors, and where re-design of the pathways to accommodate both the unit and its drip tray arrangements is required, this is to be implemented with the submitted design.

We have a current contract with Otter Heating Services who are continuing to install until such time as the new contract is in place; this is likely to be late Spring time.

A consistent problem we seem to have is that not all tenants that we offer it to actually welcome it and although we may have a list of prospective addresses for installation, we do meet with a fair amount of resistance. We are visiting tenants comfortably in advance of the works now in an attempt to convince them of the benefits available. We are using technical input, facts and figures, DVD presentations and records of personal recommendation. This is improving the situation but we still have a way to go. We are also referring to other authorities and ASW members for their input and advice.

4. Finance Comments

This work is necessary to be able to deliver the Medium-Term Capital Programme and the HRA 30 year Business Plan.

5. Legal Comments

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

6. Links to Corporate Aims

This work will feed into "Quality Sustainable Growth and Development" and in addition will help to deliver the HRA 30 year Business Plan.

7. Environmental Implications

Heating systems that are powered by air source heat pumps use less energy, work more efficiently, and therefore reduce CO₂ emissions and the environmental impact.

8. Community Safety Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

9. Equalities Impact

This is not applicable.

10. Risk Management

The financial risk of not managing the Capital budget correctly may lead to pinch points with peaks and troughs of spend. An even, planned regular spend would be a far better approach with more accurate forecasting awareness.

11. Partnership Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

12. Recommendations

The Tenant Services Management Board is asked to note the specifications of the contracts mentioned in the report. Comments would be welcomed on the information, and any concerns, or technical preferences that Members may have.

Contact:	Officer Name	Phil Webb – Housing Property Services Manager
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	e-mail address	p.webb@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board 11th March 2013

Housing Services Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan

Report of Steven Clarke - Tenant Services Development Officer (This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jean Adkins)

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides members of the Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) with details of a new Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan that aims to help with mitigating the impact of welfare reform on Taunton Deane Borough Council's housing service and its tenants.

The action plan has been developed alongside the strategy and pulls together into one plan objectives and activities on benefits and money advice, financial inclusion and affordable warmth.

The TSMB is requested to consider this report and indicate whether they support the proposed new strategy and action plan.

2.0 Introduction and background information

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 will be enacted on the 1st April 2013. The four major changes that are taking place are:

- Under Occupation (bedroom tax)

This will affect our tenants aged between 16 and 61 years who are receiving housing benefit and they are under occupying their home by one or more bedrooms;

- Benefit Cap

The amount people on benefits will receive will be capped at £500 per week for a family including single parents and £350 for a single person;

- Non Dependant Deductions

If you live with people who are 18 years, not in education while working or claiming benefit, deductions will be taken from your housing benefit. The weekly amount of deduction is dependant on earnings; and

- Universal Credits

Universal Credit is to be introduced in October 2013. Rent will not automatically be paid direct to a tenant's landlord, instead it will be paid direct to tenants and they will have to budget for their rent, bills and spending every month.

3.0 Housing Services Welfare Reform Strategy

Full details of the strategy can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.

Key parts of the strategy are:

- The strategic vision;
- The strategic objectives; and
- The priorities for action.

4.0 Housing Services welfare Reform Strategy Action Plan

Full details of the strategic action plan can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.

5.0 Equalities Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has been carried out.

Feedback has been obtained from tenants and members of the Tenants' Forum.

A completed equality impact assessment can be found at Appendix 2.

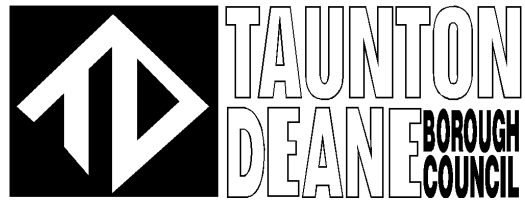
6.0 Recommendation

TSMB are asked to:

- Consider and comment on the new Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan; and
- Support a recommendation for approval of the new Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan to Cllr Jean Adkins Housing Portfolio Holder at Taunton Deane Borough Council.

Contact: Steven Clarke Tenant Services Development Officer
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Stephen Boland Housing Services Lead
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WELFARE REFORM STRATEGY

March 2013

Strategy Title:	Welfare Reform
Lead Officers:	Stephen Boland Housing Services Lead
Strategy drafted by:	Lisa West - Income Manager
Date Equality Impact Assessment completed:	Tenants' Forum 12 th March 2013
Date Agreed by Board:	
Date agreed by Housing Portfolio Holder:	
Next Review Date:	

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5	Regional & Local Context	
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7	Priorities for Action	

1. Foreword

This Welfare Reform Strategy sets out our strategic objectives over the next three years to respond to the changes contained in the Government's Welfare Reform programme.

In developing this strategy, we have acknowledged the impact our approach can have not only on individuals, but also on the wider communities in which we work. As a result, and particularly in the uncertain current financial climate, we are seeking to adopt a responsible approach which balances the needs of the service with those of our tenants and prospective tenants.

2. Brief Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to help mitigate the impact of the Welfare Reform on Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services and its tenants.

An action plan has been developed alongside this strategy which pulls together into one plan our objectives and activities in relation to benefit and money advice, financial inclusion and affordable warmth.

3. Vision

Our vision for the Welfare Reform Strategy is that it will provide a clear focus for our interventions and initiatives, which will be aimed at maximising our tenant's income and to help them to deal with the cuts to welfare benefit payments that some of them will face.

4. Strategic Objectives

The strategy will realise this vision through its focus on the achievement of the following objectives:

- To improve the information that we hold about our tenants to enable us to provide them with appropriate advice and support;
- To ensure tenants are claiming all of the benefits they are entitled to;
- To improve the money management skills of tenants;
- To help tenants resolve any debt problems they may have;
- To enhance tenant access to the internet;
- To enhance tenant access to bank accounts which allow payment of bills by direct debit;
- To enhance tenant access to low cost credit and opportunities for saving;
- To help achieve affordable warmth for tenants;
- To help assist tenants in moving to more affordable accommodation which better meets their household needs; and
- Invest in community development to improve opportunities for employment and skills for tenants.

5. Regional Context

According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010, fourteen areas in Somerset are among the most deprived. Three of these areas are within Taunton Deane, two in the Halcon Ward and one in the Taunton Lyngford Ward. Two of Somerset's areas are also within the most deprived 5% nationally; one of these areas is within Taunton Deane (Halcon Ward) which is home to around 3,300 people.³

Table 1 Top 10 most deprived Wards, calculated from IMD 2010

Rank	Ward	District	Score
1	Bridgwater Sydenham	Sedgemoor	37.18
2	Taunton Halcon	Taunton Deane	34.54
3	Bridgwater Hamp	Sedgemoor	31.42
4	Highbridge	Sedgemoor	31.16
5	Bridgwater Victoria	Sedgemoor	30.98
6	Williton	West Somerset	30.29
7	Watchet	West Somerset	29.73
8	Carhampton and Withycombe	West Somerset	29.36
9	Taunton Lyngford	Taunton Deane	28.70
10	Bridgwater Eastover	Sedgemoor	27.43

Tenants in social housing are disproportionately affected by financial exclusion and it is estimated that they make up around 60% of financially excluded people.

According to the National Housing Federation 2007 figures nearly one in six social-rented tenants have no bank account, twice as high a proportion as the rest of the population. 81% have no savings and 91% have no insurance cover.

The rural nature of Taunton Deane and Somerset makes the situation worse for those on lower incomes. The Commission for Rural Communities (2010) have shown that people living in rural areas need to spend on average 10-20% more to reach a minimum acceptable living standard. Many workers fall well short of being able to afford their essential needs.

³ Information and table taken from Somerset Financial Inclusion Strategy 2011-2013, playing your part www.moneymatterssomerset.org.uk

5.1 Local Context

A survey of Taunton Deane Borough Council tenants carried out in April 2011 found: ¹

- Older tenants are found in nearly half of general needs properties (46%), including 30% single older tenants. Adult households (single tenants of couples under 60 years old with no children) make up 23% of the households. A fifth of households are family households (20%). As would be expected, the vast majority of sheltered tenants are in households that include someone over 60 years old (83%) with the majority single tenants (72%).
- Just over half general needs tenants (53%) and two thirds of sheltered tenants (68%) have a member of the household who has a long term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities. 9% of general needs tenants and 11% of sheltered tenants said that they have someone living in their household with a wheelchair.
- The majority of Taunton Deane Borough Council's tenants are White British households (93-95%).
- In terms of economic status, a third of general needs principal tenants (33%) and more partners (43%) are in employment. Unemployment is running at 4% for principal tenants and partners. Over a third of principal tenants are retired (36%), as are many partners (25%). A quarter of principal tenants are outside employment (17% permanently sick or disabled and 9% at home looking after family). The majority of sheltered tenants (75%) and their partners (56%) are retired – while one in ten principal sheltered tenants are working.
- Just over half of general needs households receive housing benefit (55%), lower than for sheltered tenants (71%). The majority of Taunton Deane

Borough Councils general needs households are income under £300 per week (82%) and few have incomes over £500 per week (2%). 93% of sheltered tenants are on incomes below £300 per week.

- The majority of general needs tenants and sheltered tenants classed their sexual orientation as heterosexual (72-77%), although some preferred not to say (16%-23%).
- Three quarters of sheltered tenants (73%) are Christian, a higher percentage than for general needs tenants (65%). Only a small percentage of tenants have other religions (3%-4%) while many tenants said that they have no religion (18%-25%).

¹ Information taken from Taunton Deane Borough Council 2011 Customer Satisfaction Survey - April 2011

6. Welfare Reform Changes

6.1 National context

In October 2010, the Government announced plans to radically overhaul the welfare benefit system. Following a period of consultation, the Welfare Reform Bill was introduced to Parliament on 16th February 2011 and received Royal Assent on 8th March 2012. The reforms contained in the Welfare Reform Act will have a profound effect on both benefit and claimants, Local Authorities and Registered Providers. Detailed below are some of the main changes presented by the Act.

6.2 Under-Occupation

The first reform will have a significant impact; it is the intention to reduce housing benefit for social tenants of working age who are deemed to be 'under-occupying' their home by one bedroom or more from April 2013. The aim is to encourage people with bigger homes to move to somewhere smaller, so that we can provide accommodation to families needing larger homes.

At the moment there is no link between the amount of housing benefit received and the number of rooms occupied in a property. However from April 2013, the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) size criteria will be used to determine how many rooms are needed by tenants. Social tenants will be classed as under occupying if they have more bedrooms than they need.

The government says that **ONE BEDROOM** is allowed for:

- Each adult couple aged 16 or over;
- Each person aged 16 or over;
- 2 boys aged under 16;
- 2 girls aged under 16;
- 2 children (whether they are the same sex or not) aged under 10; and
- Any other child, a carer (who does not normally live with you) if you or your partner need overnight care.

If social tenants are classed as under occupying the amount of housing benefit they will receive will be reduced.

There are two rates for the reduction:

- a) If a social tenant has one extra bedroom their housing benefit will be reduced by 14%

(In Taunton Deane Borough, for a 3 bedroom house the reduction would be between £9.91 and £17.69 per week)

b) If a social tenant has two or more extra bedrooms their housing benefit will be reduced by 25%

(In Taunton Deane Borough, for a 3 bedroom house the reduction would be between £14.33 and £25.58 per week)⁵

⁵ Information taken from Welfare Reform & Housing Benefit Changes presentation, 20th August 2012, Paul Harding, Corporate and Client Services Lead, Taunton Deane Borough Council.

6.3 Universal Credit and Direct Payments

The second Government reform involves a restructuring of the benefit system to create one income-replacement benefit for all working-age adults. This will be done through the introduction of a new 'Universal Credit' in October 2013 which will replace the current system of means-tested out-of-work benefits, tax credits and support for housing.⁶ Initially it will only be for new claims but gradually people with existing benefit claims will be transferred over to Universal Credit sometime between 2013 and 2017. The government has decided to roll-out the introduction of Universal Credit across the country.

Claims will be made by households, rather than by individuals and the amount awarded will depend on the income and circumstances of all the household members. There will be a basic allowance for single people and couples, but lower rates for younger people. There will also be additional amounts for disability, caring responsibilities, housing costs and children.

For people who rent, the amount for housing costs will be worked out in a similar way to the support provided by housing benefit under the current system. However, the intention is that the payment will be made to the claimant as part of Universal Credit rather than direct to the landlord. Payments will no longer be weekly or fortnightly, but will be paid to the claimant one month in arrears via a bank account.

The Government hope this will improve work incentives by:

- Allowing claimants to keep more of their income as they move into work by introducing a smoother and more transparent reduction of benefits as they increase their earnings;
- Having a system that is simpler for claimants to understand and easier for them to use; and
- Ensuring that people will always be better off in work than on benefit.

6.4 Other benefit changes

In addition to the above reforms, the Government are proposing a whole range of changes from 2013 including:

Benefit Cap – No household will be able to claim more on benefits than what the average household earns in work. Currently, that figure is around £26,000 per annum or £500 per week for a couple or a single person with children and £350 for a single person. The cap will initially be administered through local authority housing benefit departments.⁷

Council Tax Benefit – Local authorities will play a greater role in deciding how they help people on low incomes pay their council tax. This will be accompanied by a 10% reduction in council tax expenditure.

Social Fund – Local authorities will be given responsibility for the discretionary payments made from the Social Fund, such as Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans. Budgeting Loans will be replaced by a new nationally-administered advance of benefit facility.

⁶ Universal credit will replace- Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits.

⁷ The cap will exclude those on Working Tax Credits, DLA/Carers Allowance, war widow/widowers.

Pension Credit – From October 2014, Housing Benefit will become part of a claimant's Pension Credit award. However, unlike Universal Credit, the claimant will retain the choice over whether the Housing Credit should be made direct to them or their landlord.

7. Priorities for Action

Taunton Deane Borough Council's Housing Service aim is to mitigate the impact the Welfare Reform Act will have on its tenants. The action plan of activities will pull together, into one, the plans and initiatives relating to; benefit, money advice, financial inclusion and affordable warmth.

Action	Activity/ Resources required	Time Line	Lead Officer	Measure of success
<p>To improve the information that we hold about our tenants to enable us to provide them with appropriate advice and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing of profiling information for council tenants held on the Housing Academy data system. • Programme of contacts/home visits to help increase the tenant diversity information held in the Housing Academy data system. 	<p>April 2013 ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Services Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase proportion of tenant information held in the Housing academy data system to help inform service reviews. • Easily accessible robust information is readily available to inform proposals for service delivery and improvement.
<p>To ensure tenants are claiming all of the benefits they are entitled to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote awareness of welfare benefits available through events, surgeries and publications. • Publish to tenants the role of the Housing Services Debt and Benefit Advisor. • Enable access to specialised advise services (Shelter, Citizens Advice Bureau). • Advise tenants about the Money Advise Service. 	<p>Dec 2012 and ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Manager Lettings / Housing Manager Income/ Housing Manager Estates/ Supported Housing Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help is available for tenants to avoid problems of housing affordability and increased debt.

Welfare Reform Strategy Action Plan
Appendix 2

AGENDA ITEM 8

<p>To improve the money management skills of tenants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable access to specialised advise services (Shelter, Citizens Advice Bureau, Credit Unions) • Advise tenants about the Money Advise Service. • Provide training for tenants in money management. • Work with partners to maximise the opportunities for improvement to tenants money management skills. 	<p>April 2013 ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Manager Lettings/ Housing Manager Income Housing Manager Estates/ Supported Housing Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help is available for tenants to avoid problems of housing affordability and increased debt.
<p>To help tenants resolve any debt problems they may have.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote awareness of welfare benefits available through events, surgeries and publications. • Publish to tenants the role of the Housing Services Debt and Benefit Advisor. • Enable access to specialised advise services (Shelter, Citizens Advice Bureau, Credit Unions) • Advise tenants about the Money Advise Service. 	<p>April 2013 ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Manager Lettings/ Housing Manager Income/ Housing Manager Estates/ Supported Housing Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help is available for tenants to avoid problems of housing affordability and increased debt.

Welfare Reform Strategy Action Plan
Appendix 2

AGENDA ITEM 8

<p>To enhance tenant access to the internet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of current IT arrangements and identify for improvement and resources 	<p>April 2013 ongoing</p>	<p>Business Support Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved use of new technology to enhance delivery of services.
<p>To enhance tenant access to bank accounts which allow payment of bills by direct debit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact local banks to ascertain what services they can supply for our tenants. Enable tenant access to Credit Unions. Promote take up of direct debit as a key method of payment. 	<p>April 2013 ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Manager Lettings/ Housing Manager Income/Housing Manager Estates/ Supported Housing Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase direct debit as a method of payment (rent).
<p>To enhance tenant access to low cost credit and opportunities for saving.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable tenant access to Credit Unions. 	<p>April 2013 ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Manager Lettings/ Housing Manager Estates/ Housing Manager Income/ Supported Housing Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in availability for tenants to access Credit Unions locally.

Welfare Reform Strategy Action Plan
Appendix 2

AGENDA ITEM 8

<p>To help achieve affordable warmth for tenants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £6.6m sustainable energy fund established to provide affordable warmth and improve the energy efficiency of council homes 	<p>April 2013 ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Property Service Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce fuel costs for tenants. Improve SAP ratings.
<p>To help assist tenants in moving to more affordable accommodation which better meets their household needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Transfer Removal Grant Process (TRG). Increase TRG resources. Consider alternatives to money as an incentive to get tenants to downsize. Offer support and assistance to tenants to downsize. Encourage tenants to mutual exchange 	<p>April 2013 ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Manager Lettings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of tenants downsizing. Decrease in the number of tenants overcrowded. Full utilization of TRG resources.
<p>Invest in community development to improve opportunities for employment and skills for tenants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review funding for corporate community development activity to at least maintain current levels and consider case to increase funding to provide services beyond priority areas to the benefit of council tenants. Consider provisions in contracts for contribution to tenant employment and supporting community development. Increase partnership working to leverage in additional resources and provide a wide range of services. 	<p>April 2013 ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Services Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in key indicators including health, education and employment (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) for TDBC tenants Increase in resources for community development – either from business plan, or from external sources Increase in activity delivered and/or funded by partners

Equality Impact Assessment – pro-forma

Responsible person	Stephen Boland	Job title: Housing Services Lead
Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)	Proposed new policy/service	√
	Change to Policy/service	
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	
	Part of timetable	
What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which, service, MTFP proposal)	Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) - Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan	
Section One – Scope of the assessment		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service?	<p><i>The objectives of the Welfare Reform Strategy are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the information that we hold about our tenants to enable us to provide them with appropriate advice and support; • To ensure tenants are claiming all of the benefits they are entitled to; • To improve the money management skills of tenants; • To help tenants resolve any debt problems they may have; • To enhance tenant access to the internet; • To enhance tenant access to bank accounts which allow payment of bills by direct debit; • To enhance tenant access to low cost credit and opportunities for saving; • To help achieve affordable warmth for tenants; • To help assist tenants in moving to more affordable accommodation which better meets their household needs; and 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in community development to improve opportunities for employment and skills for tenants. 								
Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service?	Taunton Deane Borough Council's housing stock comprises of approximately 6,000 rented homes, with a further 372 leasehold properties. In addition, the Council also manages two private leasehold schemes for the elderly. Housing services are designed to ensure they meet the needs of wide ranging customer base. As such the new Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan is targeted at all the protected groups including: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation; Marriage and civil partnerships.								
<p>What evidence has been used in the assessment - data, engagement undertaken – please list each source that has been used</p> <p>The information can be found on....</p>	<p>Data:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Major changes in national welfare reform in how benefits are paid. Welfare Reform Act 2012 Major changes in how council tax benefits are paid, Welfare Reform Act 2012 Housing benefit assessments that identify which of our tenants are affected by the changes to the benefits system. <p>Engagement:</p> <p>Consultation with residents and stakeholders which included regular meetings with the Tenant Services Management Board and wider consultation with Tenants' Forum, staff, members and other stakeholders - 2013</p>								
Section two – Conclusion drawn about the impact of service/policy/function/change on different groups highlighting negative impact, unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality									
Following consultation with tenants on the Housing Services' strategic response to welfare reform the conclusion was that we do not believe that any specific equalities impacts will arise.									
<p>I have concluded that there is/should be:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="208 1094 1910 1342"> <tr> <td data-bbox="208 1094 878 1177">No major change - no adverse equality impact identified</td> <td data-bbox="878 1094 1910 1177">No major change to the strategy</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="208 1177 878 1225">Adjust the policy/decision/service</td> <td data-bbox="878 1177 1910 1225"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="208 1225 878 1273">Continue with the policy/decision/service</td> <td data-bbox="878 1225 1910 1273"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="208 1273 878 1342">Stop and remove the policy/decision/service</td> <td data-bbox="878 1273 1910 1342"></td> </tr> </table>		No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	No major change to the strategy	Adjust the policy/decision/service		Continue with the policy/decision/service		Stop and remove the policy/decision/service	
No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	No major change to the strategy								
Adjust the policy/decision/service									
Continue with the policy/decision/service									
Stop and remove the policy/decision/service									

Reasons and documentation to support conclusions
The engagement activity shows that there will be no adverse impacts.

Section four – Implementation – timescale for implementation

Welfare Reform Strategy will be effective from March 2013 involving monitoring and updating as necessary.

Section Five – Sign off

Responsible officer: Stephen Boland
Date: March 2013

Management Team: Housing Services
Date: March 2013

Section six – Publication and monitoring

Published on:

Next review date:

Date logged on Covalent

Action Planning

The table should be completed with all actions identified to mitigate the effects concluded.

Actions table						
Service area				Date		
Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed	Who is responsible?	By when?	How will this be monitored?	Expected outcomes from carrying out actions	