

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 15 December 2014 at 18:00.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 17 November 2014 (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 Creechbarrow Road Update. Report of the Housing Development Project Lead (attached)
Reporting Officer: Rachel Searle
- 6 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2012 - 2042 Review. Verbal Update of the Director of Housing and Communities (verbal).
Reporting Officer: James Barrah
- 7 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes Update. Report of the Property Manager - Contracts (to follow).
Reporting Officer: Tim Haynes
- 8 Introduction on Tenant Scrutiny Committee. Report of the Tenant Empowerment Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Martin Price
- 9 New Shelter Housing Delivery Model. Verbal Update of the Housing Services Lead (verbal).
Reporting Officer: Stephen Boland

Assistant Chief Executive

12 January 2015

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.

Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, 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.



An induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.

For further information about the meeting, please contact the Corporate Support Unit on 01823 356414 or email r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk

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Tenant Services Management Board Members:-

Mr R Balman

Councillor R Bowrah, BEM

Mrs J Bunn

Ms M Davis

Mr M Edwards

Mr D Etherington

Mr D Galpin

Mrs J Hegarty

Mr K Hellier

Mr I Hussey

Mr R Middleton

Councillor Miss F Smith

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 17 November 2014 at 6pm in JMR, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mr D Etherington (Chairman)
Mrs J Hegarty (Vice-Chair)
Mr R Balman, Mrs J Bunn, Ms M Davis, Mr D Galpin, Mr K Hellier, Mr I Hussey, Mr R Middleton, Councillor Bowrah and Councillor Miss Smith.

Officers: Tony Knight (Estates Officer ASB), Paul Hadley (Housing Manager – Lettings & Anti-Social Behaviour), Lucy Clothier (Housing Accountant), Simon Lewis (Assistant Director of Housing & Community Development), Caroline White (Housing Development Project Lead – Sustainable Energy), Jo Humble (Housing Development & Enabling Manager), Julie-Anne Gordon (Housing Project Development Officer), Phil Webb (Housing Manager – Property Services), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), James Barrahan (Director of Housing & Communities), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

Others: Councillors Adkins and Mrs Smith

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

Mr M Edwards and Kene Ibezi

2. Public Question Time

No questions received for Public Question Time.

3. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Bowrah declared personal interest as members of his family were Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenant.

Mr R Balman, Mrs J Bunn, Ms M Davis, Mr D Etherington, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr K Hellier, Mr I Hussey, and Mr R Middleton declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

4. Verbal Update on Anti-Social Behaviour New Legislation

The Estate Officer for Anti-Social Behaviour provided an update and presented PowerPoint slides regarding the new Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act.

Below was a summary of the information covered during the presentation:

- The officers defined and outlined to the Board Members what was meant by Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).
- There had been a significant number of changes introduced with the new act i.e. Community Trigger and Positive Requirement.
- The ASB Estates Officers had received some training regarding the new legislation following its introduction.

- The Police now had powers to deal with ASB through 'protection notices'.
- Originally there were 19 powers at the Police's disposal but this had been refined and reduced to 6 powers, which included:
 - Injunction
 - Criminal Behaviour Order
 - Community Protection Notice
 - Public Spaces Protection Order
 - Closure Power
 - Dispersal Powers
- The court now had the powers to make criminals and offenders address their behaviour as part of their convictions and punishment i.e. attending AA or going to rehab.

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

- What was the Community Trigger that the Council was using and what was the threshold for the trigger?
The trigger threshold had not been established as yet. The Council would not have a different threshold to the other partner agencies as we were working together with them.
There had been pilot scheme but no threshold set as yet.
- Looking at the Toolkit slide, what was a 'Gating Order'? This was something I had never heard of.
This was part of the old list orders available to the Police. This had been replaced by Community Protection Notice (CPN), Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and Closure Power.
- What happened to those complaints that didn't become full ASB complaint cases? Were they not being dealt with or recorded?
Before the Council moved across to the new ASB complaints system, there were dozens of complaints not being dealt with? When the new system was introduced, there had to a model to filter out the complaints to the correct departments.
These complaints won't be logged on ASB system but would be dealt with as a low level harassment complaint and would be redirected to Business Support Unit/Estates Management.
The Council receives and deals with 200/250 serious ASB complaints per year.
- If these complaints aren't recorded and someone makes a complaint, it's a complaint regardless and should be recorded for the Council to deal with appropriately. Otherwise, Members weren't getting a clear or accurate picture regarding the level of complaints the Council was receiving.
Estates officer would deal with the low level nuisance cases, leaving the ASB officer to deal with the serious ASB cases.
The ASB team work together with the Estates officers to decide, where these complaints sit.
Our ASB team attended Halcon One team meetings to assist with any particular ASB cases.
Officers with Housing were required to record all and any contact/conversations on the Academy software in the relevant house record.
- Did this apply to all residents not just Housing Tenants?

The Council would have little or no powers to deal with ASB in non-council stock properties. This would be where other agencies such as the Police would lead on these cases.

- How did the team go about it if a person who bought their property through RtB scheme, alters that property affecting the adjoining Council Tenants' properties?
If the alterations affected the Council adjoining property, this wasn't necessarily an ASB case but could be referred to the Council Legal team.
- Did it help when the officers within the ASB team were former police officers?
This might provide an additional advantage due to previous knowledge and experience.
- As Portfolio Holder, I would say that it was a definite advantage for the members of the ASB team to be former Police officers. This meant that the officer had prior knowledge of the law and how it works.
- Was it usually Social Housing Tenants who caused the ASB issues?
It wasn't just Council Housing Tenants who caused the ASB issues.
- Was a Criminal Behaviour Order, a step up from an ASBO?
It wasn't a step up from ASBO, more like a re-working of it. This allowed officers to go to criminal proceeding or request it during proceedings to make them comply with requests and adjustments to their behaviour.
- Community Protection Notice, could this deal with issues regarding motors/caravans affecting tenants?
*Basically, it didn't matter what the type of issue was as long it met the criteria stated, then the order would apply to the issue.
The Portfolio Holder had already impressed on officers that she wanted officers to use the full range of tools available to them with the introduction of ASB Crime and Policing Act.*
- Legal Highs; could the Council target the shops as they were the root cause of additional issues?
*The Council needed to provide the evidence to prove this before we could use any of orders and powers at its disposal.
The Assistant Director and Community & Client Services Manager brought a report recently to Community Scrutiny Committee discussing Legal Highs. The Council was working with the police to try and deal with this and the Council was committed to doing so.*
- There would be tenants who won't complain about such issues. How could we help these Tenants to deal with ongoing issues?
*The Council and the Housing team need to just keep doing what they were doing now, which was publicising the positive feedback and good results to encourage people to use the services available.
The ASB officers were also out there, talking to Tenants and communities. First contact with the officers didn't necessarily need to be the affected person but it could be a friend or neighbour. Tenants needed to be re-assured that they could make complaints confidentially.
Board Member were ambassadors for the Council and could help us to reach those people who didn't want to come directly to us.*
- The Council's ASB complaint services needed to be promoted and published more widely, letting Tenants know how to contact you directly.
- Just a suggestions shouldn't the Council and the Housing team be promoting the members of the Board to Tenants of Taunton Deane so they know who we were. As a new member of the Board, only people who I have told know that I am on the Board.

The results of the recent elections and the new Members of the Board were promoted in Tenants Talk newsletter. This was sent to all Tenants of Taunton Deane. The results are also published on the TDBC website and TV monitors in Deane House's Reception.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

5. Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring Quarter Two 2014-15

Considering the financial figures table previously circulated, concerning the Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring for Quarter Two 2014/15 accompanied by a verbal update given by Housing Accountant. The spreadsheets detailed the breakdown of overall performance outturn of Quarter Two 2014/15 split between capital and revenue.

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

The following points were covered during the update on Housing Revenue Account Income, Expenditure and Revenue;

- HRA was showing an overall surplus of £207,860. This was a variance of 0.8%.
- Voids had a pressure and the costs were currently higher than budget. This was being monitored by Housing Management and a limit had been introduced. The Council was looking to increase the budget for the next financial year.
- Other Expenditure re: Grounds Maintenance was still being monitored closely. Work was being scaled back.
- General maintenance was forecasted to be overspent (£585k).
- The budget for the Social Housing Development Fund was still unspent but would be put into the earmarked reserves.

The following points were covered during the update on Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes;

- HRA Capital Programmes had an overall surplus of £868,221.
- £868k of the HRA Capital Programmes had not been programmed to start and so this had gone unspent.
- A review of the non-programmed capital works was underway with a view to accelerate some of not started capital programmes, bringing forward these works into this financial year.
- HRA Development projects were currently expected to complete on target. With Phase One to complete in 2014/15 and Creechbarrow Road in 2015/16.

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

- Concerned were raised regarding the slipping of some of the contracted programmes of works for this year. This money would have been set with the budgets and if these programmes slipped would the costs of these contracted works go up? Also why had they slipped?

The slippage was within the office and the Council had some legal challenges to work through.

The Council couldn't guarantee that the prices connected to the contracts wouldn't increase as this depended on the contractor and the market situation.

The works programmes were on a five year cycle. The Council were looking at combined maintenance programmes to reduce future work required on the housing stock.

The works programme budget would be earmarked.

- Looking at Void costs, the loss of rent and cost of Voids had off set each other and the Council's losses weren't of great concern.

The Council's was reviewing the way it completed its repairs and programmes of works on both Voids and non-Voids. This was to try and find the most cost effective and best maintenance of housing stock.

- Looking the planned extensions to housing stock, there continues to be no spend from that budget?

The Council had just gone through an application process for extensions to Housing Stock. We had the applications down to two particular properties and the work was planned to be started this year and the spend of the budget was due next year.

- Could the Council look at extending some of the empty properties to allow people on the waiting list to get into an appropriate sized property quicker? This would then use this budget up.

- What was meant by unadopted areas?

This related to maintenance of areas within the housing stock such as rear accesses to properties etc.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

6. Performance Indicators Quarter Two 2014-15

Considering the Performance Scorecard tables previously circulated, concerning the Housing and Communities Quarter Two performance Scorecard.

Looking at each section of the performance scorecard for Quarter Two, the figures and percentages as follows:

- Managing Finances (housing) - There were 9 measures of which 56% Green, 44% Amber, 0% Red and 0% were N/A.
- Service Delivery (Service Delivery (Satisfaction) – There were 11 measures of which 45.5% Green, 45.5% Amber and 9% were N/A.
- Service Delivery (Decent Homes) – There were measures of 2 which 50% were Red and 50% were Amber.
- Service Delivery (Manage Housing Stock) – There were measures of 18 which 39% were Green, 17% were Amber, 28% were Red and 17% were N/A.

Below was a summary of the planned actions that were off course:

- One measure for Decent Homes was off course. Average SAP (energy efficiency) rating was still below target.
- Housing Services Diversity Information. We hold 69.98% of diversity information this was an increase of 11.98% since Quarter One.

- Three Repairs and Maintenance measures were off course. The COSY system replacement went live at the beginning of September. This should enable us and the DLO to report completions more accurately.
- Local Authority Major Aids and Adaptions had received 33 applications, which had been completed against a target of 84. This service was currently an officer down.

Below was a summary of the planned actions that had uncertainty in meeting them:

- Local Authority Major Aids and Adaptions the expenditure on both major and minor aids and adaptations were unlikely to reach budget (these was demand led).
- Estate Management Team, the current tenant arrears were now £6,766 over target. This was an improvement on Q1, which was £32,876 over.
- Housing Debt – the debt level for September had increased since July but factors such as service charge bills being issued had influenced this.
- Dwelling with a valid gas safety certificate – one property was inaccessible due to the tenant being in hospital.
- Lettings Team – the percentage of vacant dwellings but unavailable for rent were slightly over target.

Below was a summary of the planned actions that were on course:

- Managing Finances had five measures on target.
- Satisfaction had five measures on target.
- Housing Stock had three measures on target with the biggest improvement being the percentage of closed ASB cases.
- Community Development had three measures on track.
- Minor Aids and Adaptations was on target with the number of completed applications.

Below were measures under development, not reported or without alerts.

- Repairs and Maintenance had three measures were under development.
- Extra Care Housing Service – the tenant satisfaction had not been completed yet.

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

- Looking at Tenant Rent Arrears, currently the arrears were only £6,766 from £32,876 and there was only one outstanding gas safety certificate. This was good to see.
- What was the progress of the new IT software at the DLO replacing the COSY system?
The new system was called 'Open Contractor' or OC. There had been some issues with getting accurate spend figures and data but we have been informed that those issues had now been resolved so only time would tell if we would more accurate spend figures.
Part of the problem with the COSY system and the inaccurate spend figures was relating to the time it took for supervisors to close jobs but with OC and the new hand held PDA's, the job would be closed when the officer/staff

leaves the property, says the job was complete and moves onto the next job ticket.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

7. Report on Photovoltaic Systems fitting to existing Housing Stock

Considering report previously circulated, concerning the proposal to design, install and commission 350 Photovoltaic systems to the retained housing stock provided the opportunity for TDBC to make a significant contribution towards our commitment to reducing Carbon emissions and alleviating Fuel Poverty by reducing tenants' electricity bills.

Photovoltaic panels (PV) harness sunlight to create electricity, therefore utilising an infinite resource, making it a renewable energy source. Whilst their orientation required a Southerly aspect it was not necessary to have bright sunshine. PV Panels continue to generate electricity in all daylight hours, even on overcast days.

By the Council installing 350 systems to our housing stock, the Council could save approximately 11,015 tonnes of Carbon over 20 years.

The scheme provided significant financial benefits to our tenants through free electricity generated by the PV Panels and was calculated based on the Government Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP Gov't) with a saving on average of £247.54 per annum per household on current electricity bills.

The Council would generate income through the feed in tariff (FIT) which was guaranteed for 20 years as detailed within the Energy Act, it was Indexed Linked and, based on Government SAP calculations, would generate a positive cash flow of £1.2m over the fixed 20 year FIT.

The initial capital investment for 350 properties would be £1,509,000 for fitted systems. The systems should be paid back within the first 13 years and the revenue stream was then additionally guaranteed for 7 years.

The Council completed a desktop study and identified roughly 700 suitable properties that had a southern orientation, the correct roof pitch and suitable construction type. The Senior Leadership Team had chosen to focus on 350 of these 700 identified properties, to allow for tenant refusal and to borrow an amount that the HRA account could feasibly permit.

Tenants would be written to explaining that their home may be suitable for PV panels and promoting the benefits to the tenants during a consultation process as well as informing the tenant a full survey to be carried out on the property. Tenants would be told they were to receive free electricity whilst the Council receive the Feed in Tariff income.

Installation of the PV panels

The installation would be completed by approved sub-contractors and they would carry out the survey, design and gain the District Network Operator's permission to access the National Grid.

The PV panels offered via the framework were Bosch and available for supply only at a cost of £1,142 per kWh, with the average semi-detached house required 3kWh systems (approx.12 panels). Resulting in an average purchase price per 3 bed property as £3,426, plus installation cost.

The Feed in Tariff would be collected by The Low Carbon Exchange (LCX), a company responsible for the maintenance and management of the systems.

The PV panels were MSC (Microgeneration Certification Scheme) accredited and had a 25 year guarantee. Installation errors would not be covered and should be addressed under the installer warranties.

Although the PV panels had a 25 year guarantee, The CSA state study showed their lifespan could be up to 40 years, with efficiencies of the panels dropping by only half a percent per annum.

This meant tenants would continue to receive free electricity long after the FIT TDBC received had ended.

Tenants who had PV panels installed were still able to purchase their property under the Right to Buy Scheme but the panels would be removed prior to a Right to Buy purchase completed.

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

- How long did these PV panel systems last?
The Bosch panel were under a 25 year guarantee with The Low Carbon Exchange (LCX) but studies had shown that had lasted up to 40 years with only a 0.5% drop per year.
- Congratulations, this was well overdue for the Council's housing stock. Brilliant.
- Would PV fitting scheme be extended beyond the stated number of properties?
This would depend on being able to increase our borrowing head room and the buyback tariff of the electricity.
- What consultation had be done by officers with Elected Members on their opinion about how many properties the Council should be aiming for?
*This was a balancing act between what the Council wanted to do and not over stretching ourselves including borrowing money.
Officers had already consulted tenants and started to gather interest of those who wished to have the panels installed, this had been difficult and slow process.
The Council needed to have further conversations about promoting the scheme and any other Council projects.
During the review of the HRA Business Plan, the Council would be reviewing our 'Borrowing Head Room'.*
- Could the Council get 350 properties completed by January?
The January deadline was for getting interested tenants signed up to the scheme by not the installation of the panels.
- Could the Council make this compulsory for tenants?

- Would the installation on panels on one property cause problems with surrounding neighbours i.e. those with and those without.
It might do but the Council were committed to supporting and helping 'hard to heat' properties and stock in turn.
- Had the Council at connecting the PV systems to the tenant's water heating systems to help ease this as well?
The diversion technology could be installed for a small additional cost to heat the water but this was only compatible with emersion heating systems.
- Could Tenants receiving the PV systems request the additional water heating system as well?
This would depend on the individual properties and whether it was appropriate for that property.
- Was the Council looking at including PV panel systems on our new builds projects?
The Council were looking existing housing stock as all the Council's new build stock was 'Code Four' and efficient enough not to require PV systems. If we were to install them to new build stock then it would be profit making from selling the electric back to the national grid and that would depend on the tariff.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

8. Regeneration of Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green.

Considering report previously circulated, concerning the proposals to demolish and redevelop the recently acquired site 'Weavers Arms' the adjacent public toilet block and ten Woolaway properties in Rockwell Green, Wellington, where it was proposed to build new council homes.

The scheme was currently being designed with an estimated delivery of 26 new homes.

Deane Housing Development seeks permission and budget approval to progress this scheme to provide additional affordable housing in Rockwell Green.

The development contributed to the Council's overall stock providing increased housing options to those in housing need.

With the purchasing the pub and the proximity of the jointly owned redundant public toilets site as well as a row of ten semi-detached Woolaway houses, together these three areas provided an opportunity to regenerate underutilised land and buildings, to provide much needed additional affordable housing.

Rockwell Green was predominantly in need of one and two bedroom properties. The Council were seeking to facilitate a sustainable community by providing a mix of properties 1,2,3 & 4 to meet the housing need for the area, with the majority being 1 bed flats and 2 bed houses, with some wheelchair suitable properties.

The indicative mix of units was as follows:-

- 1 bed flat = 10
- 2 bedroom house = 9
- 3 bedroom house = 6

- 4 bedroom house = 1

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

- If the Council were to follow the Creechbarrow Development Project and the inclusion of the community and residents, this project would be great for the community and residents of Rockwell Green.
The Project team were using the Creechbarrow Project as a template as well as approaching the tenants of Creechbarrow Project to help us work with the tenants of Rockwell Green affected through this process.
- How many properties in the Rockwell Green area were Woolaway (non-traditional) properties?
There were 28 properties but the majority of the Council's Woolaway stock was in Taunton in the Priorswood area, roughly 200 properties.
- Were all the Woolaway properties owed by the HRA?
The Council were retained all the stock at Rockwell including the new properties which would replace the Woolaways.
- Could the Council do something radical with the design of the new properties?
- Executive Portfolio Holder commented the request for radical design with the new properties at Rockwell, that the residents, tenants and communities preferred new properties to be in keeping with the existing area.
During the pre-planning meeting with the Planning department, it was indicated that the preference was to keep the new properties design in keeping with the area i.e. slate roofs and rendered properties.
- What was the orientation of the site at Rockwell Green?
The orientation of the site was northwest.
- Would the Council be looking at other Woolaways with the Taunton Deane to re-develop?
The Council would be using the Rockwell Green site as an example for future development of the Council's banks of non-traditional properties.
- Why was it costing the HRA £10,000 to purchase the land behind the Weavers Arms from the General Fund when the Council had sold land for £1?
The Leader of the Council wanted to know why the General Fund was only selling the land for £10,000. This was the price agreed with the Council for the HRA to purchase the land from the General Fund.
- What was the market value of the site?
The Council didn't look at the market value of the site and the properties.
- Would these properties have gardens and not be packed in?
The new properties had to include gardens and parking beyond the curtilage.
- Was the Council looking into putting Fibre Optic Broadband connection to the new properties or would it be possible?
This depended on what was available at the local telephone change and this was something the project team could look into.
- There were lots of things to consider, the Council needed to strike a balance between number of properties and including bells and whistles. By including additional extra on the properties, this would mean the Council would be building fewer properties on this site. Additional extras could mean difference of an additional property on the site.

Resolved that the:-

1. Transfer the Rockwell Green public convenience land from General Fund to the HRA for £10,000.
2. Approval for the demolition of ten non-traditional properties (1-10 Oaken Ground) and the Weavers Arms, including associated buildings, public toilets and site clearance to facilitate new development.
3. Approval to serve Initial and Final Demolition notices for 1-10 Oaken Ground, the Weavers Arms buildings and public toilets.
4. Approval to allocate a budget of £3,500,000 for the development
5. To approve in principle the borrowing of £2,426,000 to fund the scheme within the Housing Revenue Account.

9. Verbal Update on External Wall Insulation.

The Housing Development Project Lead for Sustainable Energy provided the board with an update regarding the Council's progress their External Wall Insulation Project for HRA Housing stock.

Below was a summary of the officers update:

- The funding sources that the Council were looking into for this project had fallen through or been cancelled.
- The Council were now looking to proceed with this project but with a reduced number of properties and fund this reduced number themselves.
- The Council would continue to look for additional funding sources to fund more properties within the housing stock.
- The current number that would be funded from the Council's budget would 40 properties.

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

- Board Members were happy with for the officers to go ahead with the planned and funded 40 properties to have External Wall Insulation.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

10. Information Report on Current Tenant Rent Arrears

Considering requested information report previously circulated, concerning an update on the Council's rent arrears performance data as at 10 November 2014.

The data showed the detail of the actual amount of current tenant rent arrears across the Council's nine rounds, as well as the target rent arrears figure for each round.

Below was a summary of the information update report on rent arrears data:

- The rent arrears overall target for 2014/15 was £360,000 with the outstanding amount as at 10 November being £350,711.68.

- The Council's overall aspirational target for rent arrears was £329,000 and only when this figure was achieved would the 'All rounds' barometer show as 'green'.
- Six out of the nine rounds were over target. The highest over target was round seven.
- The three of nine, which under their rent arrears target round eight was the highest under their target.

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

- Had the officers got any figures from other local authorities, which were now using universal credit?
*The officers had some contact with Bath & North East Somerset Council but they had six claimants but had not got any data yet.
When it's implemented locally, the Council would be able to refine their collection process for rent.
Universal Credit only effected people of working age, also this would be implemented through a phased approach, which would help the Council deal with individual cases.*
- Was the Council offering financial management advice and skills?
The Council had a package of help that included training. This was either completed by the Council or Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Did the Council have a target figure of tenants who thought or knew would default on their rent when Universal Credit was introduced?
*The Council had criteria and advice regarding vulnerable tenants and these were being monitoring and this work was ongoing.
The Council would be looking at the profiles of our tenants.
The Council were also looking into the housing element of Universal Credit paid directly to the Council preventing an increase in rent arrears.
60% of the Council's tenants claim housing benefits but would not be claiming Universal Credit.*

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

11. Verbal Update on Feedback from Community Scrutiny Committee on Tenancy Policy.

The Housing Services Lead provided the committee with an update regarding the progress of the proposed new Tenancy Policy for Taunton Deane.

Below was a summary of the officers update:

- The officers report and the proposed new policy was presented to Community Scrutiny Committee on 4 November 2014.
- Scrutiny commented on the policy and its contents but made no changes to the recommendations.
- Members commented on the new restrictions regarding tenancy succession through family members and this had to be altered and restricted but the Council needed to also be mindful of individual cases.
- The Report and Policy would not be moving forward onto Executive Committee but a formal decision would be made by the Executive Portfolio

Holder for housing. This would be signed off and published in the Weekly Bulletin as per the normal procedure.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's update.

(The meeting ended at 9.00pm)

Declaration of Interests

Tenant Services Management Board

- Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants;
 - Mr R Balman
 - Mrs J Bunn
 - Mr M Davis
 - Mr M Edwards
 - Mr D Etherington
 - Mr D Galpin
 - Mrs J Hegarty
 - Mr K Hellier
 - Mr I Hussey
 - Mr R Middleton

- Family Member(s) are Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenant;
 - Councillor Bowrah
 - Councillor Miss Smith

**Creechbarrow Road Development – December 2014
Construction Phase**

Status Of Project		Last Report	This Report	Comments
Creechbarrow Road Development – Construction Phase		G	A	
Status by Key Project Activities for Phase 1	Workstream Lead	Last Report	This Report	Comments
1. Build Programme	Galliford Try	G	A	
2. Community Liaison	Rachel Searle	G	G	
3. Training Opportunities	Rachel Searle	G	G	
4. Finance	Rachel Searle	G	G	

Key	
Red	Unsatisfactory progress – milestones & timescales not being met corrective action or re-plan required
Amber	Issues against some milestones but remedial action will keep project under control overall
Green	All milestones being met & project on target/completed
Development Definitions:	
Superstructure	The part of a building or construction entirely above its foundation or basement.
Substructure	A structure forming the foundation of a building or other construction.
Beam & block	Beam and block system is a reinforced beam laid between walls, these beams are infilled with aircrete blocks.
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
Trusses	A framework typically consisting of rafters, posts and struts, supporting a roofs often made off site.

Key Accomplishments LAST Period
<p>Build Programme -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDBC: • Plot 33 - 36 = Floor planks • Plot 37 & 38 = Trusses installed • Plot 39 - 42 = Superstructure work from plank level • Plot 43 = Superstructure work to joist level • Plot 44 & 45 = Superstructure ongoing from DPC • Plot 46 & 47 = Superstructure work to joist level • Plot 48 & 49 = Beam & block & drainage • Plot 54-68 = Block and Beam complete • Plot 83-84 = Footings • Drainage connections to highway

- Attenuation tanks
- **KHA:**
- Plot 1 = Superstructure from joist level
- Plot 2-3 = Superstructure ongoing
- Plot 4-5 = Superstructure ongoing
- Plot 31 = Beam and block complete
- Plot 6-7 = Beam and block complete
- Plot 8-10 = Superstructure from joist level
- Plot 11-13 = Trusses on
- Plot 14,15 & 32 = Superstructure ongoing
- Plot 16-30 = Superstructure to underside of plank ongoing

Community Liaison –

- Creechbarrow Road Hoarding Art project is now complete and an event held at Lavender Court to show case the artwork on the 29th October.
- Community drop in sessions held at 5 Moorland Road on the 23rd October and 20th November.
- Councillors and staff were invited to a site walkabout and tour by the site Manager, the first tour was held on the 15th October.
- Both Galliford Try and the Development Team regularly attend Halcon Multi Agency Group and Halcon One Team meetings to update on the projects progress.
- Galliford Try have set up a web link for the development so progress can be monitored via the internet, which is now live.
- Galliford Try and subcontractors continue to strive for local labour where appropriate, see current on site statistics below:
 - Less than 5 miles from home to site: 5 subcontractors (2 of which are in walking distance of the site)
 - Less than 10 miles from home to site: 5 subcontractors
 - Less than 15 miles from home to site: 9 subcontractors

Training -

- Creechbarrow Road has been nominated by Galliford Try's Partnerships South West business unit to host the 2015 UKCG Open Doors event. This is a nationwide event organised by UK Construction Group to give local people an insight in to construction at first hand, with the hope of encouraging the younger generations to consider the different career opportunities available to them.

Finance –

- Valuations continue to be paid monthly to Galliford Try.

Key Activities NEXT Period

Build Programme –

- **TDBC & KHA:**
- Moorland Road drainage
- Superstructure on plots 1-5
- Plank installation on TF07
- Roof coverings on plots 11-13
- Trusses on plots 8-10, 14 15 & 32
- Screeding
- Window installation
- Reduce digging on plots 77-79
- Superstructure on plots 33-36, 39 through to 49
- Roof on plots 37 & 38

Community Liaison –

- Community drop in session to be held at 5 Moorland Road on the 11th December.
- The second site walkabout and tour of the Creechbarrow Road development for Councilor's and staff will be held on the 17th December, the aim is to offer this opportunity every 3 months.
- Proposals for the Public Arts Strategy are being created, the proposals will include opportunity for new and existing residents of the Halcon area to be involved.
- Galliford Try have fixed the community paintings to the hoarding and will move the paintings during the course of the build to ensure they are displayed for the maximum time possible on the hoardings.
- Development Team will attend the Halcon Multi Agency Group to update on the development on the 7th January.
- An article will be published in the Deane Housing News and Halcon One Team newsletter to update tenants and residents on the progress of the development.

Issues

- Inclement weather – Downtime of cranes due to high winds and wet weather for bricklayers over the previous month of November.
- Brick laying resources – The site is experiencing ongoing issues with brick laying labour to maintain the construction programme. Ongoing monitoring of the build programme is taking place.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board– 15 December 2014

Introduction of a Tenant Scrutiny Committee

Report of the Tenant Services Development Officer- Neil Anderson

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

1. Executive Summary

This report sets out the case for the introduction of a Tenant Scrutiny Committee at Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC), together with how this will be implemented, the selection process and role of the committee.

Tenant led scrutiny is a fundamental part of the co –regulation of social housing and is enshrined in the regulatory framework for social housing.

The key element for scrutiny to be effective is that it must add value to the service and be shown to have made a positive difference to service delivery.

It should act and be independent of current tenant involvement in TDBC and make its own recommendations without interference or the influence of staff.

Every effort must be made to recruit tenants who are not currently actively involved in tenant involvement within TDBC.

This report sets out a model of how this can be achieved within Housing and Communities and make a real difference to the lives of TDBC tenants.

The Report makes recommendations to the Board on how scrutiny could operate within Taunton Deane Borough Council.

2. Background

Since April 2010, there has been a framework of co-regulation in social housing.

From 2012 new requirements for landlords meant that tenant scrutiny committees, or equivalent bodies, must be supported by landlords to allow tenants to scrutinise performance, services and complaints. Landlords were also expected to provide annual reports to tenants, and be honest in reporting and assessing their own performance.

The government expects that landlords should support tenants to develop their skills and capacity to have real influence over the services their landlords provide.

Tenants should be able to:

- Ask questions about their provider's performance.
- Identify areas for improvement.
- Influence future services.

These new powers for tenants also mean more responsibility falling directly on tenants themselves. The central regulator will have no role in either monitoring landlords' performance or promoting best practice.

Members of the first Tenant Services Management Board may recall that in October 2011 they received a presentation on scrutiny from the Tenant Empowerment Manager setting out the purpose of scrutiny and how it could work within TDBC. The board supported the proposal to convene a Scrutiny Group, with potentially up to three scrutiny group investigations each year.

This report sets out how Scrutiny within TDBC could operate and makes recommendations on its membership.

Organisations that have established Tenant Scrutiny use the term committee or panel, in this report the term scrutiny committee is used throughout this report.

3. Definition of successful tenant scrutiny

Successful tenant scrutiny is defined by The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and HouseMark as having five key principles. These are as follows:

A Real Power

Clearly defined and having real power. A scrutiny committee or committees must have a clearly defined relationship with the governance and management roles of the landlord and agreed powers set out in a Terms of Reference.

The findings and recommendations from scrutiny should influence the landlord, linking directly to management and strategy.

B Tenant-led

Independent and tenant-led. Although having links to governance and management roles, the tenant scrutiny role should be tenant-led and independent. It should be open and transparent so that tenants who are not involved can challenge the approach taken.

Scrutiny committees are not beyond the need for scrutiny themselves – they need to regularly evaluate their effectiveness and be open to others scrutinising them.

C Defined role

Having a defined role and the capacity to deliver. There should be agreement on the role of the scrutiny committee and the role and activities of its members. Committees often have Terms of Reference and should always adopt a Code of Conduct.

Recommendation 1:

This Report recommends that the committee should have a clearly defined role and adopt a Terms of Reference (as shown in appendix 3)

To be an effective scrutiny committee members must have the capacity to deliver, this usually requires support and training. It is usual for prospective scrutiny committee members to be assessed before they join. Tenants can be involved in designing and delivering this assessment.

D Performance

Embedded in performance management arrangements. Tenant scrutiny should be embedded in the organisation's performance management arrangements and form part of the formal performance management structure. It should be clear how scrutiny has led to positive outcomes for tenants, communities and the organisation.

Tenants, whether involved or not in scrutiny, need to be confident that scrutiny findings and recommendations are taken seriously. Staff, board members and councillors must also be confident about the role and legitimacy of tenant scrutiny.

E Accessible

Tenant scrutiny should encourage diversity and promote equality. All tenants need to be aware of tenant scrutiny, its role, its outcomes and how they can get involved.

There should be clear links and a flow of information between tenant scrutiny and other forms of tenant involvement.

The changes made through scrutiny should be examined to ensure they produce outcomes that are of benefit for all and don't result in some tenants losing out against others. They should be assessed for their equality and diversity impact.

4. Purpose of the Group

Tenant Scrutiny 'Now and In the Future – TPAS, House Mark & CIH briefing paper states:

Tenant scrutiny aims to give tenants more power in holding their landlords to account for their decisions, performance and conduct. Changes to regulation in

England from April 2012 will require landlords to be more proactive in self-regulation and in involving tenants in the scrutiny process. In addition, the localism agenda envisages a greater role for service users at a local level to influence and scrutinise service delivery.

To review and analyse a particular part of the Housing Service and make recommendations on how e.g. a process can be improved.

CIH Paper States “In all instances, tenant scrutiny is based on the specific principle that the priorities and views of tenants should be at the heart of a housing organisation’s framework for directing, monitoring, assessing and modifying its own activities.

Successful organisations in any sector have a common theme – they know, understand and respond to their current and future customers. They do this by engaging with and involving service users, because this is aligned to their organisational strategy and there is a business case for involvement and engagement.

Tenant scrutiny clearly goes beyond this and, where it works well, the benefits include service improvements, efficiency savings, enhanced tenant satisfaction and staff confidence, tenant input into self-assessments; and a high level of challenge as to how landlords operate.

Tenant scrutiny is intrinsically linked to the delivery of value for money services that meet local needs with transparency about how investment is made.”

A fundamental principle of scrutiny is that it acts as a critical friend for the landlord. This means that the scrutiny panel is not all about being critical of the landlord, but rather than criticising performance the role of scrutiny is to make positive and informed recommendations on how a service can be improved. Thus, getting the friend part right is the key to ensuring the success of the Scrutiny Process.

TPAS recommends Tenant Scrutiny should be independent of the overall tenant involvement structure of the organisation, in that it operates independently of any existing structure and is run by the members for the benefit of the tenants. Staff have a role, but that must be limited to providing advice and guidance only and not directing or influencing the recommendations of the committee.

The committee must make its own recommendations based on the evidence it has collected during the review.

Any recommendations the committee makes will be reported to the TSMB.

Recommendation 2:

The independence of the scrutiny committee is recognised and it is given authority to act independently of the current tenant involvement structure.

Recommendations of the scrutiny committee will be made to the TSMB.

5. Recruitment Selection Procedure

Staff will need to work hard to encourage as wide a range of tenants as possible to get involved, full use should be made of existing links with tenants groups and voluntary groups and make every effort to widen involvement through recruitment at places where our tenants are likely to go, for example Children Centres. Full use of all newsletters etc. sent out to tenants should be made to inform and encourage as many tenants as possible to come forward to join the group(s).

The recruitment process should seek to recruit people who have skills relevant to scrutiny, e.g. chairing skills, skills in minute taking, and previous involvement in being members of a committee. But the key requirement must be commitment and a willingness to learn.

Recruitment events could be held at the existing coffee mornings which are held in communal halls to which the wider community could be invited. Timing and location of these events will be crucial to in order to attract as wide a range of tenants as possible.

In order to make the group manageable, membership of the committee should be restricted to a maximum of 10 people with a minimum number of 5. Once people have come forward and expressed an interest the next stage will be for them to complete an application form.

Recommendation 3:

This report recommends that a series of recruitment events are held across TDBC.

Membership of the committee is restricted to a maximum of 10 tenants.

6. Selection Criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be considered:

Any tenant who wishes to become a member of the scrutiny committee must first complete an application form, to include the following:

- State why they wish to become a committee member.
- Outline any relevant experience.
- What they can bring to the committee.
- Commit to attend relevant committee training.

- Be available the equivalent of one day a month to attend committee meetings.

There should also be restrictions on membership, in line with the restriction to membership for the TSMB, tenants will be excluded on the following grounds:

- They are not a tenant, or partner or spouse of the tenant of at least 5 year's standing living at the same household
- They are in serious breach of their obligations as a tenant
- They are an employee of TDBC
- They are an elected member of TDBC
- They are under 18 years old
- One of their family members is a current member of the committee
- They become incapable due to a mental disorder
- They do not have a good rent payment and tenancy history

7. Risk Assessment

All committee members will be asked to complete a risk assessment form, failure to disclose any relevant information may result in their application for membership to the Committee being denied. This is to determine whether or not there any special circumstances that the Council should be aware of about a particular person, and to ensure that the person represents no risk to themselves, members of staff or other Committee members.

Recommendation 4:

The Selection criteria in sections 6 and 7 above are adopted

8. Role of the Tenants' Forum

It is proposed that members of the Tenant's Forum may apply to become members of the Scrutiny Committee, subject to the same conditions as set out above in section 6.

Any application from a member of the forum will be considered on its merits and if successful the person will be asked to resign from the Tenant's Forum before being accepted onto the committee.

This is to ensure the independence of the scrutiny committee and that the person understands that as member of the scrutiny committee they are representing the views of all tenants and are they are not on the committee to act as a representative of the Tenants' Forum.

If they later resign from the Scrutiny Committee they would then be free to apply to re-join the Tenants' Forum.

The Tenant Empowerment Manager attended the Tenants' Forum meeting on the 11th November 2014 to discuss the proposed Scrutiny Committee and to seek the forum's views on membership. The Forum stated that they were in agreement with the committee being introduced and felt that to maintain its independence tenants could not be members of both the committee and forum.

Recommendation 5:

Existing members of the Tenants' Forum may apply to join the Scrutiny Committee subject the conditions of membership.

If a Tenants' Forum member is successful in becoming a member of the Scrutiny Committee he/she will have to resign from the Tenants' Forum for the period that he/she remains a member of the Scrutiny Committee.

9. Interviews of interested person

Good practice suggests that any scrutiny committee should be made up of newly recruited tenants who have not previously been involved in the Tenant Involvement Process.

Those that had shown interest and met the criteria would then be invited to an informal interview made up of a committee including the Tenant Empowerment Manager and the Chair of the TSMB, Chair of the Tenants' Forum and the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

Following the interviews successful candidates would be invited to form the scrutiny committee.

Recommendation 6:

Persons who express an interest in being a member of the Scrutiny Committee should be interviewed before being accepted on to the committee.

10. Training

Training is a key element for scrutiny to be successful. Tenants new to tenant involvement will require training on a wide range of issues including how to run a meeting, how to behave in a meeting, minute taking, report writing together with training on the topics which the committee will scrutinise.

The Committee will require training and support on how to scope the topic to be scrutinised, together with training on all aspects of running a meeting, questioning

skills and report writing.

Before any scrutiny review is undertaken there must be a period of training provided for the members of the Committee, which all prospective members of the Committee will be expected to complete.

This training should include an overview of the Housing and Community Directorate, the boundaries of the HRA budget, and role and responsibility of the Committee. It is recommended that the new committee completes a mock review before going on to complete a proper review. This would enable the committee members to gain an understanding of the type of information and questions they will need to undertake before embarking on a proper review.

Without first providing proper training the success of any scrutiny review is likely to be low, which in turn could have a negative effect on the group.

Recommendation 7:

Proper training must be provided for scrutiny committee members prior to the commencement of any review.

That potentially in the future the scrutiny committee selects the topics for review, which are then reported to the TSMB

11. Topics for scrutiny

The first two topics for scrutiny have already been chosen by the TSMB, these are ground maintenance and repairs and maintenance. For the repairs service there must be a clear scope for the review provided before starting, since repairs and maintenance is a very wide issue and should be split down in to bite size components in order to clearly identify which part of the service it is that the TSMB wishes to be reviewed.

From research completed it appears that in other organisations which have established scrutiny committees it is these that decided upon the topics for review. For example at the Green Square Group, their Resident Scrutiny Committee, which has achieved Chartered Institute Quality Assurance, decides on the work plan for the coming year.

This may be something that the TSMB wishes to consider once the first reviews have been completed to the satisfaction of the TSMB, the Tenants' Forum and the Committee.

12. Sources of Training

Training could be provided from both internal and external resources. TPAS offer a one day training course on scrutiny, which could be provided at Deane House or another suitable location.

Use could be made of the Council's own committee services for training on how to take minutes or how to chair and run a meeting. If possible use could be made of internal staff for providing training on report writing, HR for Equalities and Diversity Training etc.

13. How long should a Scrutiny Member be on the Committee?

Alliance Homes allow people to be members of their Scrutiny Committee for a maximum of 9 years, with elections of a 1/3 of the members every 3 years.

However, there is no hard and fast rule, for example at Green Square Resident Scrutiny Committee Members can serve a maximum of 3 terms of 3 years, which means a tenant could serve a maximum of 9 years. This approach could produce some stagnation in ideas and discourage new people coming forward.

If changes to membership are made too often this is likely to result in significant loss skills all at once. Also if changes to membership occur too frequently this will also be very resource intensive for those Council Staff involved in the recruitment process and those with responsibility for providing training to new members etc.

**Recommendation 8:
That scrutiny committee members can serve a maximum of 3 terms of 3 years.**

After every 3 year period TDBC will seek to recruit new members to the committee.

14. Commitment

Based on the research carried out each potential member should be advised that they will be expected to give up the equivalent of a minimum of 1 day a month to the process. This level of commitment appears to be the norm in organisations that have established Scrutiny Committees.

How this time is actually allocated should be decided by the group. The group may decide that it wants to have a series of half days or full days to use the time.

15. Expenses

Recommend that these are provided in the same way as those received by members of the Tenant Services Management Board , i.e. that the Council provides Committee Members with out of pocket expenses and pay for cost of travel, provide taxis, child care etc.

Recommendation 9:

All members of the scrutiny panel will be entitled to receive out of pocket expenses only.

16. Role of the scrutiny committee

The Following is recommended as a statement for the purpose of the Tenant Scrutiny Committee:

Recommendation 10:

The Scrutiny Committee's role is to scrutinise the quality and value for money of TDBC Housing services in partnership with TDBC management and staff.

The committee will act as the council's critical friend in identifying areas for improvement and provide positive feedback on services.

The Committee will report to the TSMB providing detailed feedback on TDBC services and make recommendations on improvement to services.

17. Statement of the Intent for TDBC Tenant Scrutiny Committee

The Committee will work in close co-operation with existing Tenant Groups including the Tenants' Forum in determining topics to be subject of the Scrutiny Process.

1. The role of the Taunton Deane Tenant Scrutiny Committee will be to:
2. Act as an independent Committee to assess performance on all housing front line and support services
3. Work to ensure that TDBC Housing and Communities delivers high quality local services which provide value for money
4. Monitor the services they receive so they can be improved
5. Encourage efficiency and effectiveness in our services
6. Scrutinise key decisions so there is accountability on behalf of residents.
7. To Provide Value for Money Outcomes and real measureable Improvements to Council Services for the benefit of Taunton Deane Borough Council housing tenants.

8. Complete Annual Self-Appraisal of effectiveness of Scrutiny Process and to make recommendations for any necessary improvement(s).

Recommendation 11:

The statement of Intent for the scrutiny committee as set out in Section 17 is adopted.

18. Suggested Timetable for Implementation and commencement of first review.

The suggested timetable for implementation of the scrutiny committee is shown in appendix 5

Recommendation 12:

The 6 month timetable for implementation as shown in appendix 5 is adopted.

19. Finance Comments

The evaluation of services to ensure best value for all tenants, especially through tenant led scrutiny, is welcomed.

Since the addition of a Tenant Scrutiny Committee would be funded from current resources there is no additional financial pressure to the HRA Business Plan.

20. Legal Comments

The Localism Act 2011, which came into effect on 1 April 2012, provides the co-regulatory principles that underpin the regulatory approach and standards landlords must meet.

Councillors who govern providers' service delivery are responsible for meeting the standards and being transparent and accountable for their organisation's delivery of its social housing objectives. It is for providers to support tenants both to shape and scrutinise service delivery and to hold councillors to account.

21. Links to Corporate Aims

The introduction of Tenant Scrutiny will contribute to the Corporate Aim of "A

Transformed Council ", through increased partnership working with our tenants with the aim of identifying and implementing Value for Money improvements to Services.

The introduction of Tenant Scrutiny links to the HRA Business Plan strategic *objective* of "**Securing a long term future for our housing service.**" Tenant Scrutiny will result in the investment of the housing stock to ensure that it meets the needs of tenants.

Tenant Scrutiny is also directly relevant to the second strategic aim of the HRA Business Plan of "**Tackling deprivation and sustainable community development**" as Tenant Scrutiny will provide training opportunities for members of the committee and the chance to improve or learn new skills.

22. Environmental Implications

The Scrutiny Committee in its role could identify savings or improvements to a service, e.g. grounds maintenance that may result in environmental improvements for the benefit of the wider community.

23. Community Safety Implications

Scrutiny in other organisations has focused on ASB, if this topic was chosen by any future committee, then improvements to this service may be identified which will have community safety implications.

24. Equalities Impact

An equalities impact assessment has been carried out and there are no adverse effects on any priority groups. The introduction of Tenant Scrutiny should result in Value for money improvements to services to the whole of the TDBC's council tenant community.

A copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment is shown in appendix 4

25. Risk Management

Failure to implement Tenant Scrutiny successfully could result in damage to the reputation of Taunton Deane Borough Council. This could put at risk the relationships between tenants and the Council and risk not fulfilling the TDBC's co-regulation responsibilities.

26. Partnership Implications

The implementation of Tenant Scrutiny will result in greater partnership working between the staff of Housing and Community Service and tenants and also between existing Tenant groups, including the TSMB, and the new Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Committee as part of its recommendations for improvements to a service could highlight the need for greater partnership working with different organisations in order to achieve the recommendations of their report.

27. Recommendations

1. That the TSMB notes the contents of this report
2. The TSMB adopts the resolution for the implementation of Tenant Led scrutiny in Taunton Deane Borough Council.
3. That the TSMB approves the recommendations 1- 12 contained in the report

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Appendix 1 - How the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) states scrutiny might work

Appendix 2 - How it could work within TDBC

Appendix 3 - The suggested terms of reference for the Committee

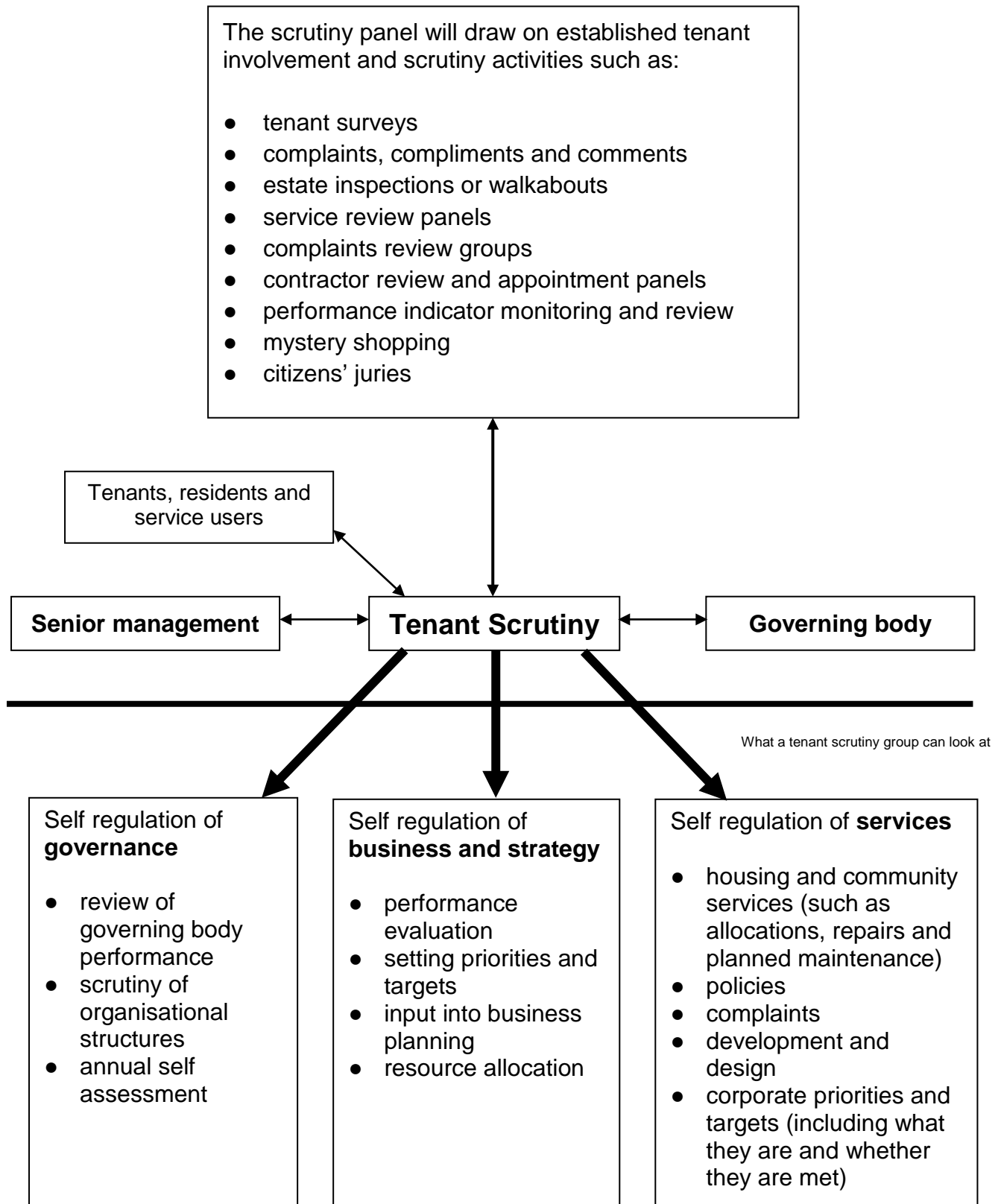
Appendix 4 - The Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 5 - The suggested timetable for implementation of the scrutiny committee

Appendix 1

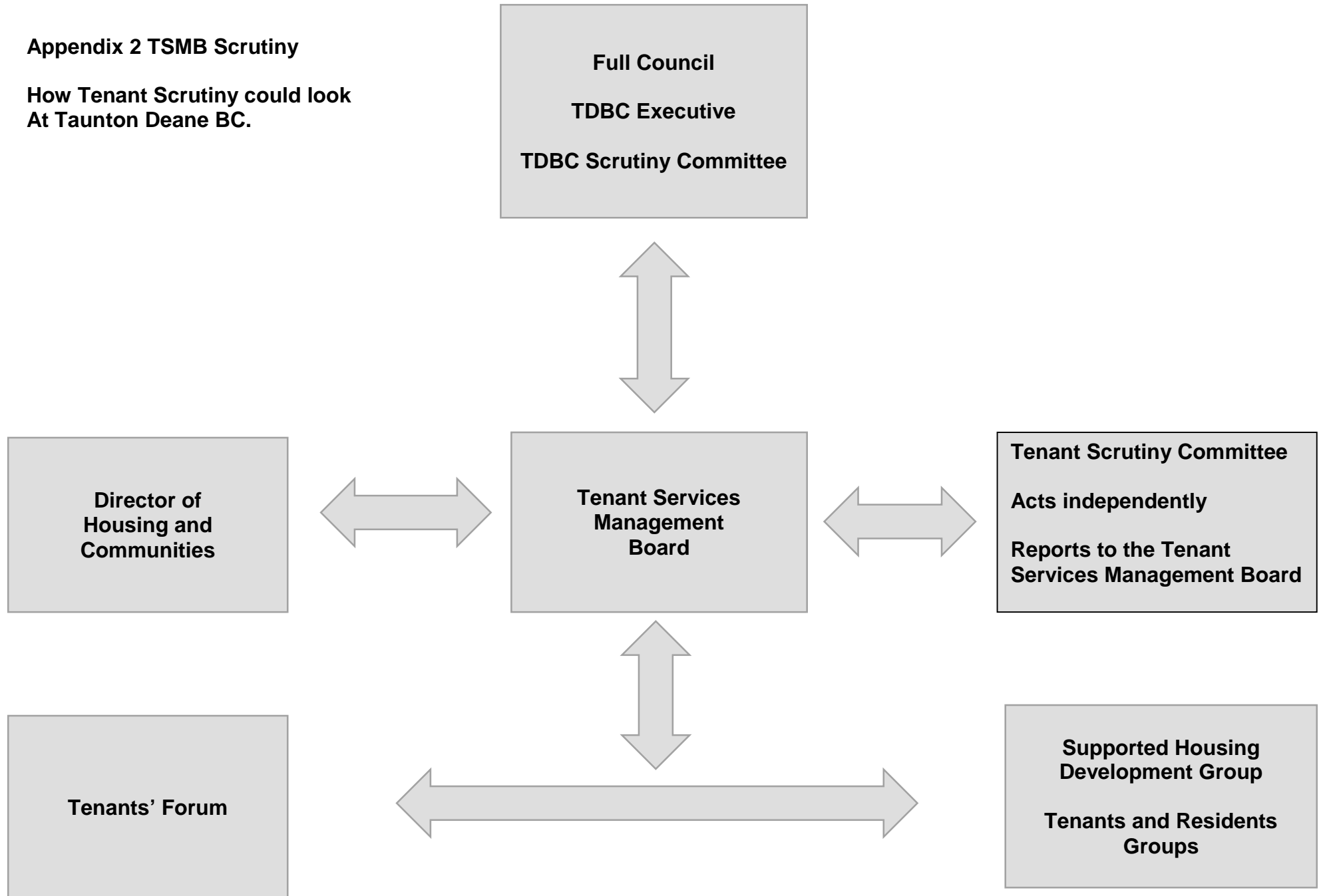
How tenant scrutiny might work

What can feed into the tenant scrutiny process:



Appendix 2 TSMB Scrutiny

**How Tenant Scrutiny could look
At Taunton Deane BC.**



Tenant Scrutiny Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Committee is charged with the responsibility for ensuring the best possible standards of housing service delivery to all council tenants. It will review service areas of the housing service of Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and make recommendations on service improvement which will be considered by both Tenants' Forum and Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB)

2. Aims and Objectives of the Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 To be carry out reviews and scrutinise chosen elements of TDBC Housing and Community and from the reviews to make recommendations on improvement to services to the TDBC TSMB.
- 2.2 The areas for review will be chosen by the TSMB.
- 2.3 To create a partnership between Taunton Deane tenants, TDBC Councillors and staff to secure effective tenant empowerment and improve communication between TDBC and its tenants. To work in partnership with TDBC to improve accountability to tenants.
- 2.4 To represent the interests of all tenants of TDBC at strategic and policy level, monitoring and reviewing strategic decisions.
- 2.5 To influence the development, formulation and monitoring of policy.
- 2.6 To review the value for money of Council Housing and Community Directorate to ensure the best use of resources.
- 2.7 To review and promote tenant participation in housing management.
- 2.8 To review, scrutinise and monitor service performance of the Housing Service in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets, identified standards and budgets and identifying any shortfalls in achievement.
- 2.9 To work with officers of the Council to agree acceptable and realistic improvements to service in the borough.
- 2.10 To make appropriate recommendations to the relevant Scrutiny Committees, Executive or Full Council on matters relating to Housing Services.

2.11 The Scrutiny Committee will be charged with investigating and making recommendations on improvements day-to-day operational matters or matters of detailed service delivery as identified by the TSMB, or Tenants Forum or Members of the Scrutiny Committee.

2.12 The Scrutiny Committee is non-party political.

3. Equal Opportunities

3.1 No member will discriminate on any grounds against any other member of the group or public. Discriminatory language will not be used in discussions.

3.2 All those who attend Scrutiny Committee meetings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their colour, race, ethnic or national origins, nationality, gender, marital status, age, sexuality, religion or any other matter.

4. Membership

4.1 The Scrutiny Committee shall consist of a maximum of ten voting members, all of whom must be tenants of TDBC.

4.2 This structure shall be reviewed every two years and will also take into account the need for all sections of the community to be represented, in order to ensure membership of the Committee is representative of tenants as a whole.

4.3 The effectiveness of the Committee will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is delivering Value for Money outcomes for the benefit of the TDBC tenants as a whole.

4.4 Members of the Committee will serve for a maximum of 3 years, roles within the Committee will change at the end of each review. The purpose of this is to ensure all members of the Committee gain the maximum benefit from the experience, in learning new skills and ensure momentum in the Committees.

4.5 No substitutes are allowed.

4.6 However, tenants are not eligible to be elected or serve as a tenant representative on the Committee if:

- They are not a tenant, or partner or spouse of the tenant of at least 5 year's standing living at the same household
- They are in serious breach of their obligations as a tenant
- They are an employee of TDBC
- They are an elected member of TDBC
- They are under 18 years old
- One of their family members is a current member of the committee

- They become incapable due to a mental disorder
 - They do not have a good rent payment and tenancy history
- 4.7 If appointed and a Committee member's circumstances subsequently change that they then fit into any of above categories they must declare this to the Chairperson of the Committee and membership will cease.
- 4.8 Membership shall also cease if he or she:
- Resigns by written notice to the Chairperson or Tenant Empowerment Manager.
 - Misses three consecutive meetings (without reasonable excuse) when they will be deemed to have resigned. The member will be contacted by the Tenant Empowerment Manager to enquire about their absences.
 - Brings the Committee into disrepute.
- 4.9 All members are volunteers. No payment will be received for any work done by them on behalf of the Committee. However when attending training or meetings of the Committee, members may claim travel, childcare or other carers expenses.
- 4.10 The names of all Committee members shall be published annually in the "Deane Housing News" or 'Tenants Talk' newsletters.
- 4.11 All members must participate in training programmes and seminars aimed at enhancing Committee members' roles.

5 Meetings

- 5.1 The rules and general working of the Committee will have regard for the Council's powers and responsibilities and its constitution.
- 5.2 The Committee will meet monthly. The dates, times and venues for the meetings will be agreed by the members of the Committee on a six monthly basis.
- 5.3 Venue for the meetings shall be the Deane House or other central location with the agreement of the appointed Chairperson.
- 5.4 The Committee will not discuss individual or estate specific complaints or issues unless they illustrate a matter of principle or concern which applies across the borough.

- 5.5 A written record (minutes) will be kept of each meeting and must include the names of all members and attendees present and agreed at the following meeting. TDBC shall provide this service.
- 5.6 Copies of the minutes shall be provided to the Committee, Chairpersons of the Tenant Services Management Board and Tenants' Forum, Executive Member for Housing, Shadow Executive Member for Housing, Housing Services Lead, Tenant Empowerment Manager and any officers present at the meeting.
- 5.7 Minutes shall be available on request to all tenants, residents, Councillors and staff.
- 5.8 Officers of the Council may attend any of the meetings in an advisory or service capacity.
- 5.9 At the end of each review the activities of the Committee will be reviewed to ascertain that the Committee has achieved its objectives
- 6.0 At the end of each review the roles on the Committee shall be rotated so that each Committee member gains experience of the different roles on the Committee.
- 6.1 Members of the Tenant Empowerment Team shall ensure that matters identified by the meeting are referred to other sections of the Council as appropriate and that requests for information are sent to the appropriate officers/ teams.
- 6.2 Members of the Committee are required to disclose the existence and nature of any personal interest which they have in any item of business to be considered at a Committee meeting, ahead of its discussion.

7. Information and Consultation

- 7.1 TDBC undertakes to provide copies of the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct to any tenant, resident, Councillor or member of staff on request.

Appendix 4 Report to TSMB Tenant Scrutiny

Equality Impact Assessment – pro-forma

Responsible person	Neil Anderson	Job Title Tenant Services Development Officer
Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)	Proposed new policy/service	New Policy
	Change to Policy/service	
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	
	Part of timetable	
What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which, service, MTFP proposal)		
Section One – Scope of the assessment		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service?	<p>Introduce Tenant Scrutiny of HRA funded Housing and Community Services to Council Tenants of TDBC</p> <p>Purpose to ensure Tenants influence and contribute to the monitoring and improvement of Service Areas within Housing and Community</p>	
Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service?	<p>Taunton Deane Borough Council's HRA 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 HRA Business Plan 2012 – 2042 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>	
<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</p>	<p>1.0 Information from HRA</p> <p>2.0 Tenant Profile information</p> <p>Engagement –</p> <p>1.0 This report will go before the Tenant Services Management Board. The Tenants' Forum will also be fully engaged in the consultation process and invited to make comments on the report.</p> <p>2.0 Once approved consultation will take place with Tenants groups through the Borough at various locations in order to attract a diverse and representative group of tenants to the process.</p>	

on....

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

The Implementation of Scrutiny Committees will be for the benefit of the Tenants of Taunton Deane as a whole and as such will not be detrimental to any of the protected groups.
Consultation will to be wide ranging and inclusive to ensure that none of the protected groups are adversely effected and that all tenants regardless of their ethnic background, sex, religion etc.

I have concluded that there is/should be:

No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	No major change, as there is no specific equality impact on the protected groups.
Adjust the policy/decision/service	
Continue with the policy/decision/service	
Stop and remove the policy/decision/service	

Reasons and documentation to support conclusions

Section four – Implementation – timescale for implementation

Implementation will take 6 months from formal approval

Section Five – Sign off

Responsible officer	Management Team
Date	Date

Section six – Publication and monitoring

Published on

Next review date	Date logged on Covalent
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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

Appendix 5 Time table for Implementation of scrutiny

Month 1

- Identify existing groups from which new scrutiny members can be recruited
- Identify locations throughout Borough for recruitment events
- Invitations sent out to tenants/ adverts placed for events.



Month 2 Recruitment Drive Commences
Series of events held
2 meetings in each of the 3 new areas
Meetings in rural areas



Month 3 Selection of Committee takes place
Skills audit of those recruited takes place
Format of committee decided
Training needs identified , trainers identified both internal & external



Month 4 Training takes place



Month 5 Committee meets for the first time to decide on topic



Month 6 Scrutiny commences on chosen topic

Target to complete within 3 months subject to complexity of topic