

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 1 June 2015 at 18:00.

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## **Agenda**

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 20 April 2015 (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 Photovoltaic Installations and External Wall Insulation  
Reporting Officers: Caroline White  
Jo Humble
- 6 Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund Home Ownership Cash Incentive Scheme  
Reporting Officer: Jo Humble
- 7 Deane House Relocation Project (verbal update)  
Reporting Officer: James Barrah
- 8 Presentation to Dustyn Etherington (Verbal Update)  
Reporting Officer: James Barrah

Bruce Lang  
Assistant Chief Executive

18 June 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](mailto: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 Annual General Meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 20 April 2015 at 6pm in JMR, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.**

**Present:** Mr D Etherington (Chairman)  
Mrs J Hegarty, Mr R Balman, Mrs J Bunn, Ms M Davis, Mr D Galpin, Mr I Hussey, Mr R Middleton, Councillor Bowrah.

**Officers:** James Barrah (Director Housing & Communities), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Lucy Clothier (Housing Accountant), Phil Webb (Housing Manager – Property Services), Tim Haynes (Property Manager – Contracts), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Chris Hall (Assistant Director – Operational Delivery), Paul Grant (Building Services Manager),

**Others:** Councillor Warmington

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

**1. Apologies**

Mr M Edwards, Mr K Hellier and Councillor Miss Smith

**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 Tenants.

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

**4. Responsive Repairs Performance**

Considered the report previously circulated concerning the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) management system and the methods being employed to resolve any outstanding issues.

The DLO Building Services section and TDBC Property Services team are jointly working to deliver a comprehensive responsive repairs service for the benefit of TDBC tenants. Externally this would include repairs to or replacement of leaking roofs, windows, doors and frames, fencing and walls, drainage, and paving in dangerous condition. Internally it would include items such as repairs to or replacement of kitchen and bathroom sanitary fixtures and fittings, doors, frames, and ironmongery, light fittings and socket outlets, floor, wall or ceiling finishes, and leaks on internal water supply. In addition to this, other external contractors would deliver

repairs to metal windows and doors, built-up felt roofing, gas servicing and maintenance, and communal aerial systems.

In order for the DLO to achieve their part in this, it was essential to review the existing data management system being used to handle the tenant repair/contractor information and in doing so, it was established that a new software platform was required. Following an extensive procurement exercise and evaluation on sites using the system, it was decided to adopt Open Contractor as a management system. This was installed and went live on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2014. The original software platform, "Cosy", was no longer fit-for-purpose, was out-dated and future enhancements and support were no longer available.

The Building Services Manager explained that the original IT systems did not produce accurate data and were disjointed. The report highlighted the system and organisational based challenges and solutions.

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

- The performance figures for February 2015 are very encouraging.
- Abbreviations in the report need explaining, e.g. PDA, OC, VPN
- When is it anticipated that the system will work correctly?  
*Another 6 months, with the system evolving after this*
- There are references to DLO staff being unsettled throughout the report
- Tenants comment that DLO staff seem to take long breaks when out on jobs  
*Job times in the new system are aimed at reducing travel times, more efficient than driving back to Depot and then travelling out again to next job. The system can analyse how long jobs take.*
- Can tradesmen do other different jobs while at the property?  
*The workforce is not multi skilled in total, but is encouraged to try and complete jobs. They have spare kit and disposable overalls with them.*
- The report states that TDBC is paying staff a lower wage than they can get elsewhere. Are we paying the staff enough?  
*It is difficult to retain staff, especially with more building work taking place and Hinkley Point to start. This will also have an impact on the performance indicators.*
- The organisational solutions do not have any timescales attached to them. The board would like to see timescales to make sure everything is on track.
- Are Councillors aware of these issues and solutions? Under the Regulatory Standards Councillors are responsible for where the standards are not being met. The Chair quoted the Home Standard.
- 100% of emergency repairs are not being met – is this a health and safety issue?  
*No, some jobs are raised against the wrong category and are therefore not an emergency.*
- The board has seen that the repairs response time's targets have not been met for a long time and now have reached target – is this better monitoring or better systems?  
*A combination of both*

**Resolved** that the Board supported the recommendation:

That the Tenant Services Management Board continues to support the Building Services team in continuing to evolve, making the necessary changes within Open Contractor and associated systems to improve resilience and develop a fully integrated system suitable for ongoing future service delivery.

The board also recommended that:

- Timescales are added against actions
- Councillors are made aware of the solutions and actions

## 5. Capital Works Contracts

Considered the report previously circulated identifying the works carried out within the HRA Capital programme detailing both the physical volume and related financial spend in each quarter of the financial year 2014-2015, together with a projected out-turn summary.

The Property Manager – Contracts explained that:

- Appendix B Quarter 4 – last column should read Annual Budget
- Heating – there has been a time lag in posting expenditure. Expenditure is now allocated to the correct code and postings are completed more regularly.
- Some work is paid on valuation and there can be a delay on agreeing final figures with contractors.
- There is a 3 year contract in place (with option to extend) in relation to door entry systems
- Replacement windows – 99.9% are pvc double glazed. The plan is to replace windows sooner than originally planned. The current plan concentrates on replacing communal windows.

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

- There has been slippage in the budget again. Was too much budget allocated?  
Are there enough contractors/officers?  
*HRA self financing has allowed TDBC to enter into longer term contracts and this has led to a transition period to adapt to this. Internal resources have been an issue but this will be resolved in the next year. TDBC has changed the contractor for doors and the service has improved.*
- Are there penalty clauses in contracts?  
*Generally contractors will not be paid until we are satisfied with work and on occasions we retain some payment. Ultimately if there is a substantial problem we can cancel the contract.*
- Looking at the quarterly information in the appendices the programme seems stop/start, especially in relation to kitchens and bathrooms.
- When replacing doors is the whole street completed or just part?  
*When possible attempt to complete the whole street*
- Are fascias being replaced?

*A new contract is being assessed that will replace timber fascias with pvc. Many have been done already, especially when work on the roof is being undertaken.*

- There seems to have been complaints about guttering, especially issues with moss and grass blocking guttering.  
*Guttering is being flushed through on a regular basis with high pressure wash – Suggested that this is done just before winter.*
- If contracts cannot be completed during the year can the money be spent elsewhere – paying off loan, building properties, one off items such as car parking and extensions  
*The asset database states where the work should be done based on need. If the work is not done there will be problems with large backlogs.*
- The report states that 8 out of 33 tenants (24%) declined a new kitchen. Why is this? What is being done to rectify this?  
*Some elderly tenants do not want the disruption, some tenants change their mind. Contractors are explaining the improvements to tenants*
- Would it be a good idea to have tenant champions to explain the work to fellow tenants?  
*Yes, this has been used for air source heat pumps*
- Have some tenants upgraded their own kitchens?  
*Yes, and if the kitchen is sub standard TDBC has to replace it.*
- When a property becomes void would it not be better to ask DLO to do the work instead of contractor?  
*It is more efficient to use one contractor*
- The Home Standard of the Regulatory standards was highlighted, especially that work should be done in a planned way  
*If the board requires the format of reports to be changed they should make requests to the Property Manager – Contracts.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the contents of the report and that similar suitable and relevant information will be provided with future quarterly score card information. The board expressed the view that slippage of budgets should be monitored closely.

## **6. Tenant Services Management Board 2014/15**

The Chair of the board reflected on the work of the board in 2014/15. Items highlighted included:

- The building of new council properties
- Energy efficient projects including pv panels and external wall insulation
- The election of a new board
- Halcon One Team
- Welfare reform
- Housing Revenue Account 2012-2042
- Complaints process

- Tenancy policy
- Tenant groups working together

## **7. The Year Ahead for Housing and Communities**

Considered verbal update and presentation from the Director of Housing & Communities in relation to the year ahead for Housing and Communities.

Items highlighted included:

- Economic pressures on the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund
- Demographic pressures
- Local and national elections
- Partnership working – sharing resources across the public sector
- Health and social care – an ageing population
- Transforming how TDBC delivers services to meet General Fund budget gap
- Location of TDBC – Deane House and the Depot
- Better use of IT to meet customers' expectations
- SouthWest One – plan for contract ending in 2017
- Review of HRA Business Plan 2012-2042
- Property and Development
- Housing Management

The Director of Housing & Communities thanked the board for their hard work.

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

- More tenant involvement is to be welcomed, tenants need to help shape where the money is spent
- Need to look at apprentices in IT

## **8. Election of Tenant Services Management Board Chairperson for 2015/16**

Richard Balman was elected Chairperson for 2015/16

## **9. Election of Tenant Services Management Board Vice Chairperson for 2015/16**

Marion Davis was elected Vice Chairperson for 2015/16

(The meeting ended at 8:20pm)



## 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

## **Update for Tenant Services Management Board on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015**

Caroline White – Housing Development Project Lead – Sustainable Energy

### **Photovoltaic installation to approx. 350 existing council homes**

An investment of £1.5m will see the installation of 350 photovoltaic (PV) systems to TDBC housing stock. A desktop study was carried out in 2012 to find suitable properties. Roofs were chosen based on their age, construction and orientation. This resulted in 724 properties that might be suitable to install PV to.

This list was given to Western Power Distribution (WPD) so they may choose the best properties to connect. WPD tell us which houses can be connected to the National Grid without the need for strengthening the infrastructure of the grid. Therefore tenants are finding some houses near them are installed whilst some are not, this is to prevent an overloading of the grid.

Some houses fall slightly outside the optimum orientation, even though their neighbours appear to be the same. This has meant some disappointed tenants as they are not having PV.

I have had numerous telephone calls and emails requesting occupiers have PV, so have had to explain the involvement of WPD and the fact we are choosing homes with a 45 degree or less orientation from South.

There have also been a considerable number of phone calls from tenants asking various questions and wanting to discuss the system. I inform them as much as I can and confirm that the installation surveyor will answer any further questions about the installation specific to their home.

Many roofs were originally deemed suitable for PV but upon survey it was been found the roofs cannot accommodate the target amount of 8-10 panels. If we fit less it will generate less electricity, which will result in a lesser income from the Feed In Tariff, which means the panels will take longer to pay for themselves, if at all. Therefore it is imperative TDBC target the optimum properties first if we are to pay off the panels and create a positive cash flow for the HRA.

We have two separate firms fitting PV; Glevum and Prolectric. For one firm we have had to remind them of customer service standards and provided a written procedure for informing tenants of their surveys.

The most common complaints I have received for the one firm are that scaffolding has been up 3 days too long, tv channel reception has been disturbed while scaffolding has been in place (this is unavoidable), surveyors not immediately informing tenants their home isn't suitable for PV and a general lack of immediate response to questions over installation dates. These are all issues that have been addressed and will continue to be monitored.

The firms are each fitting approximately 7-10 houses a week. We aim to have the majority of the systems installed by early August.

## **External Wall Insulation to 41 Cornish type houses and flats**

Works are due to start in June on 41 Cornish non-traditional properties to remove old cladding and replace it with solid wall insulation. This will save the tenants money on their heating bills and reduce carbon emissions.

The Low Carbon Exchange have been appointed to supply and fit the external wall insulation (EWI). Each property will take approximately 2 weeks to install.

Cladding will be removed, a specialist surveyor will check the structural integrity of the concrete and if all is well the new EWI is fitted. Tenants will not need to move house, no works will be carried out inside the home and the “easi deck” scaffolding system will be used, this is a smaller and easier way of using scaffolding.

Asbestos surveys need to be carried out to a number of properties that don't already have asbestos reports. The installers will start work on properties where data is available while the external asbestos firm will survey the properties and provide their findings.

Tenants will be advised they are not to drill into the EWI as it will lessen the thermal insulation properties.

Tenants have been advised to move plants that are close to the property elevations as they may be damaged by the easi deck and the EWI will be thicker than the original cladding.

As the installation takes 2 weeks per house this scheme may continue until the early August.

# **Tenant Services Management Board – 1 June 2015**

## **Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund Home Ownership Cash Incentive Scheme**

### **Report of Jo Humble – Housing Enabling and Development Manager**

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Beale)

### **Executive Summary**

This report is a summary of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund and the grant funding secured by Taunton Deane Borough Council. A verbal update was provided to Tenant Services Management Board on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015 with an undertaking to provide more detail should the bid be successful.

£300,000 has been secured through the bid and the administrative process and proposed methods of promotion to undertake a 'Homeownership Cash Incentive' scheme are being developed.

### **1. Purpose of the report**

To provide the Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) with a summary of the Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund and draft proposals to promote the 'Homeownership Cash Incentive' scheme to TDBC tenants with a Right to Buy Eligibility.

### **2. Background information**

In February 2015 the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) offered the opportunity for any Stock Owning Local Authority to lead a bid for a Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund.

Partnership bids were encouraged to extend the scheme to tenants with a Preserved Right to Buy. Taunton Deane Borough Council led a successful bid in partnership with Magna West Somerset and West Somerset District Council.

The purpose of the Fund is to enable local authorities to provide a scheme for their eligible Right to Buy tenants to access a cash payment in the place of their Right to Buy discount on their current social property.

The cash payment must be used to help towards the purchase of a property on the open market. Local authorities will benefit by freeing up properties that can be allocated to new tenants.

The scheme can be offered to all social tenants that are eligible for the Right to Buy discount, but the fund is specifically aimed at

- older tenants may wish to move to a different area to be closer to family or into more suitable accommodation;
- working age tenants may want to move closer to employment opportunities;
- tenants who pass the Right to Buy affordability test but are unable to raise a mortgage because of issues with the property in which they live

The bid submission gave the opportunity to include priority categories which will meet local needs; for example, by freeing up the type of properties where there is a local shortage. There is a recognised shortage of 1 bed accommodation within Taunton Deane therefore a prioritisation for those vacating 1 bed properties were included.

The funding must be spent by 31 March 2016.

### **3. The Proposal**

On 26 March 2015 DCLG announced the bid submitted by Taunton Deane Borough Council in partnership with Magna West Somerset and West Somerset District Council had been successful. The bid was for £300,000 which equates to a grant of £20,000 to a potential fifteen applicants.

A restriction within the bid was the cash payment available to individual tenants must not exceed £20,000 for councils outside London or £30,000 for London boroughs. Money from the Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund is only available to fund cash incentives. It is not available to fund the administration of the bidding authority's scheme.

The timescales to initiate this 'Homeownership Cash Incentive Scheme' are very tight as the applicants must have exchanged and in the process of completing their open market property by 31 March 2015.

A 'grant determination' letter is to be issued from DCLG to provide details of the draw down requirements for the funding. Once this detail is known, further work is required to ensure the appropriate Governance arrangements and financial approvals are in place for the scheme to proceed.

The bid required a breakdown of potential tenants priority categories, although the scheme is open to all those with an eligibility of Right to Buy or Right to Acquire. It is currently unknown what the demand will be for this fund. A similar cash incentive scheme was run by TDBC in 2006 / 2007 and all funding allocated with a positive take up by residents.

The following chart shows the proposed numbers of applicants to cover the prioritised categories. These numbers were determined through research of statistical data held within the Council and Magna West Somerset. This is a guide and it is understood it will not prevent others with an eligibility for Right to Buy to apply to be successful applicants. It is anticipated that the grant determination letter should not alter this.

|  | 2015-16 |    |    |    |
|--|---------|----|----|----|
|  | Q1      | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| Older tenants                                    |         |    | 2  | 3  |
| Tenants moving to access working opportunities   |         |    | 1  | 1  |
| Tenants unable to mortgage their social property |         |    | 1  | 3  |
| Tenants releasing 1 bedroom properties           |         |    | 2  | 2  |

A scheme procedure is being worked upon by the Right to Buy Officer who will administer the scheme for Taunton Deane tenants. Magna West Somerset will replicate this process for their Right to Acquire tenants in West Somerset.

It is anticipated the procedure will involve an initial expression of interest form to enable a high level assessment of meeting the eligibility criteria, followed by a more detailed application form to take the applicant through the scheme.

#### **4. 'Homeownership Cash Incentive' scheme promotion**

The project team working on establishing this scheme have discussed various methods to promote the scheme to tenants.

These include :-

- Writing to all tenants to make them aware of this initiative
- Articles in Tenants Talk, Deane Housing News, Weekly Bulletin
- Information to be available at the Leaseholder and Tenants Day
- Advertisement within the Deane House reception area, including TV screens
- Promotion through Tenants Services Management Board and Tenants Forum

Other suggested methods for promotion would be welcome.

## **5. Financial implications**

All financial implications will be discussed with the Housing Revenue Accountant and agreed with the S151 officer once the 'Grant Determination' letter is received from DCLG

## **6. Legal Comments**

The legal implications will be discussed with Legal Services once the 'Grant Determination' letter is received from DCLG

## **7. Links to Corporate Aims**

This work has a positive effect on Corporate Aim 1 – Quality and sustainable growth and development and objective three within the Housing Action Plan; Investment in our housing stock, regeneration and affordable housing.

## **8. Recommendations**

The Tenant Services Management Board is asked to note the contents of this report and facilitate the promotion of this homeownership cash incentive scheme once the administrative mechanisms for this scheme have been finalised.

## **9. Contact Officer**

Jo Humble – Housing Enabling and Development Manager  
01823 356 457  
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