

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 23 July 2015 at 18:00.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 23 June 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 Creechbarrow Road Development Update
Reporting Officer: Rachel Searle
- 6 Briefing On July 2015 Budget Statement
Reporting Officer: Stephen Boland
- 7 Feedback from TPAS Conference 2015 (Verbal Update)
- 8 Feedback from Deane House Relocation Project - Review Design on 22 July 2015 (Verbal Update)

The following items are likely to be considered after the exclusion of the press and public because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to the Clause set out below of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 9 Future Development Proposal
Reporting Officer: Rosie Reed

17 September 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.

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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 Tuesday, 23 June 2015 at 6pm in the JMR, the Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mr R Balman (Chairman)
Ms M Davis (Vice-Chairman)
Mr A Akhigbemen, Mrs J Bunn, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr I Hussey, Cllr Bowrah.

Officers: James Barrah (Director of Housing & Communities), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Steve Clarke (Tenant Services Development Officer), Lucy Clothier (Housing Accountant), Paul Hadley (Housing Manager – Lettings and Anti social behaviour), Shari Hallett (Business Support Manager), Michaela Mullen (Welfare Reform Project Officer), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Phil Webb (Property Services Manager) Michelle Brooks (Democratic Services Officer),

Others: Cllr C Appleby, Cllr Mrs J Warmington.

(The Meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

Mr D Galpin, Mr K Hellier, Mr R Middleton, Mr M Edwards.

2. Minutes of TSMB 1 June 2015

All agreed.

3. Public Question Time

No questions received for Public Question Time.

4. Declarations of Interests

As previous.

5. Welfare Reform 2014/15 End of Year Report.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012, became law as from 1 April 2013. The Welfare Reform Project Officer continues to provide support and assistance to tenants affected by the changes. To prepare for the introduction and use of Universal Credit (UC), there has been promotion of the use of bank accounts. UC generously matches benefits, especially for workers on zero hours contracts or agency work. UC differs from the current benefit system, as it is not specifically an 'in work' or 'out of work' benefit - it is one benefit for people whatever their employment status, and therefore no need for multiple applications.

Following a survey of tenants in 2013 results indicated that 56% of tenants did not have access to the Internet. To support and assist tenants with digital inclusion, kiosks have been installed to enable internet access to a limited number of useful websites.

Housing Services continues to support tenants through change and will monitor and review throughout the year.

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

- Refer to section 2.1 of the Report, what has the take up been on UC?
Not a great deal of take up, as of April 2015 only 7 tenants of TDBC had taken up UC. It is expected there will be a gradual increase, with tenants continually advised and supported. Completely tenants' choice as to whether they choose to pay rent by direct debit.
- Refer to Chart 5, Kiosk 178 (high usage) – where is it?
Derby Way, Bishops Lydeard. Other often used kiosks – Middleway, Wellington, PRC, Priorswood and Deane House.
- Comment from Cllr Warmington:
Cllr Warmington commented on the positive value of the work undertaken by Michaela Mullen and Steve Clarke. The breadth of work is important and beneficial, great to have them both doing this.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

6. Financial Outturn 2014/15.

The Housing Revenue account (HRA) is a 'Self Financing' account for the Council's Housing Landlord function, which is budgeted to 'break even'. A short synopsis of the financial performance report, with the references made to the below items:

- The HRA outturn for 2014/15 has a net underspend of £1.269m (4.8 % gross income). Section 6 of this explains the factors leading to this position, including staff cost reductions due to the restructure. Responsive maintenance considerably lower than forecast and planned maintenance being re-profiled.
- The HRA Reserve balance as at 31 March 2015 stands at £3.484m, which is above the minimum level (£1.8m) set within the Business Plan.
- The HRA Earmarked Reserves balance as at 31 March 2015 stands at £2.222m, this includes £112k related to the Social Housing Development Fund.

HRA Underspend - James Barrah made a recommendation that funds from the 2014/15 underspend be allocated to:

Table 3: Summary of Recommendations for use of the HRA Underspend

Description	£000
HRA Business Plan review	150
Pre-void and Tenant Property Inspections	160
Lettings Contingency Budget	100
Sheltered Housing Review Project Manager	60
Mental Health Support	41
Employment Support Three Year Programme	138
TOTAL requested for approval	649

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

- Refer to Table 1 – explanation required -51% of TAA.
Procurement savings to repay the loan for Southwest transformation, not as many savings with contracts pushed back.

- With regard to the bad debt – how is projection affected?
Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) support services to claimants, expectation would involve more people from DWP. Relations are good, 3 -4 a month up till March 16. The Business Plan assumes 0.5, 2 or 3 year short term provision.
- Wrecked properties, will tenants let you in?
There is no legal power to gain entry, informal contact only. If Council demand to enter the home, this could be considered harassment. Visible signs can be judged walking around the area, obvious signs outside if the house is not looked after. If there is a Health and Safety risk repair, right of entry is 24 hour notice. There can be influence to support tenants i.e. gas servicing, can indicate if not looked after. The main thing is to be mindful to what is observed, help the tenants to manage themselves.
- Would there be a cross over with the budget in regard to pre-void/mental health issues or would it be in isolation?
Valid point, definitely interaction, it is one partnership interaction, with the ability to sign post to other services.
- Will there be an employment support programme, or at least links to employers. People are ready to work, but there is a possibility of no jobs to go to.
Valid point, the Economic Development team will work on this. This will enable access to employment services. Intention is grow own and hopefully employ internally, as well as provide skills for external employment.

Resolved that the Board Members support the recommendations for the use of the HRA 2104/15 underspend.

7. Housing and Communities Performance Indicators Quarter 4 / Outturn performance.

Considered the report and an overview and summary of managing finances and service delivery detailed. The following points acknowledged:

- Income – rental costs on track and collection good. The current debt lower than last year.
- Star survey is now two years old, with a new survey being undertaken now. Up-to-date information will be available in August 2015, and comparison can then be made.
- Anti-social behaviour ratings up above target.
- Lettings – performance mixed. Properties rent quickly once the property is ready. Offerings good, i.e. first time acceptance, process allocation good. Start to end process is above target.

- Measures adaptations – wet rooms / stair lifts etc. Work to improve performance and spend against budget.
- Stock issues – SD2 no resources to manage, improving energy efficiency in stock, get to a point to measure.
- Failure to achieve 100% required for gas certificates, one of these 2 properties is a safe house which is secure, no access.
- Repairs, maintenance and contactor systems performance is being measured. Re-iteration that property and housing work together with contractor.

Resolved that Board Members note the report.

8. Rent Arrears by Area.

This item covered information previously requested by the Tenant Services Management Board. Detailed items:

- £24m rental income, with a target rate of £360,000 arrears to achieve. As of 30 March 2015, the amount was £356,000.
- Estates Officers have good relations with tenants.
- Administration (claims and benefits) can affect the outstanding amounts.

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

- Are the same people consistently in rent arrears? Do you charge interest for late payments?
Approximately 1300 people in rent arrears, not necessarily the same families, as circumstances change for families. Interest not charged as the process is to reduce the debt, therefore payment schemes in place to continue to pay the debt off.
- Is the debt related to benefits and the time taken to assess claims?
Re-payments due to revenues and benefits is a hit on a weekly basis. 63-65% of tenants on housing benefits. UC could bring change as payment is continual, although there is a risk of tenants not paying. Look at requesting direct payment or direct debits.
- Is there a fluctuation in time i.e. Christmas / summer?
Definitely, this is known through the tracking counter and is around these times. Incentives in place for staff to keep on top, and clear the rent arrear debt.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

9. Responsive Repairs Performance.

This report identifies the responsive repairs performance data of Property Services contractors, including the DLO, that deliver responsive maintenance work for the HRA. This report was requested by the Board, 20 April 2015, and addresses concerns including:

- DLO and Property services previously both used different reporting methodologies. From now into the future there is to be one reporting methodology, which will provide more accurate reporting. Differences in DLO and Housing figures will now be rectified and we can be confident in the figures reported.
- The targets for priorities are being made, but more work is needed with the majority of contractors to find ways to improve.

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

- Could there be an Alhco problem, company not reporting the problems?
Aware of problems, and parameters have been set. Important to keep in touch with contractors. To be followed up by Phil Webb.
- Environmental issue, dog bin sited by the children's park Monmouth Rd, request to resite or replace.
There is a fund, to be followed up by Stephen Boland.

Resolved that:

1. The Board noted the Officer's report.
2. Agreed that Phil Webb will investigate reporting procedures with Alcho.
3. Agreed that Stephen Boland investigate the environmental issue.

10. Additional items

- County Hall, how will people get there safely – traffic problems etc.
This item is currently flagged with the County Council. Aware of the situation, especially around the Crescent and greater reassurance of traffic measures is ongoing dialogue. Things being considered – traffic diversion / landscaping.
- Plastic Facia boards causing a problem for nesting House Martins
Phil Webb to seek answers and report back.

(Meeting ended 7.45pm)

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 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 – July 2015
Construction Phase**

Status Of Project		Last Report	This Report	Comments
Creechbarrow Road Development – Construction Phase		A	A	
Status by Key Project Activities for Phase 1	Workstream Lead	Last Report		Comments
1. Build Programme	Galliford Try	A	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.
Roof Carcassed	The roofing framework before the decking, membrane, shingles etc. have been applied.
Joists	A length of timber or steel supporting part of the structure of a building, typically arranged in parallel series to support a floor or ceiling.

Key Accomplishments LAST Period
<p>Build Programme –</p> <p>KHA:</p> <p>Plot 1 – Externals being completed & decorating snagging Plot 2-3 – 2nd fix ongoing plus tiling & decorations Plot 4-5 – 2nd fix ongoing plus tiling & decorations Plot 31 – Roofing on going with solar panels Plot 6-7 – Roofing on going with solar panels Plot 8 – Snagged by client</p>

Plot 9 & 10 – Ready for handover
Plot 11-13 – Ready for handover
Plot 14, 15 & 32 – 2nd fix ongoing
Plot 16-30 – Superstructure top plate level

TDBC:

Plot 33-36 – Roof on, internal works commenced
Plot 37 & 38 – 2nd fixed
Plot 39-42 – Roof tiled
Plot 43 – Roof carcassed
Plot 44 & 45 – Roof trusses in place
Plot 46 & 47 – Roofing ongoing
Plot 48 & 49 – Joists on
Plot 50 & 51 – Joist on
Plot 52 – Ground floor constructed
Plot 54-68 – Superstructure to 1st floor
Plot 77-79 – Awaiting bricklayers now drains are complete
Plot 83 & 84 – Superstructure to joist level

Training –

Trainees and apprentices working on the site:

2 ground workers, 5 bricklayers, 1 electrician, 3 roofers, 1 fencer, 1 painter and 1 plumber.

Community Liaison –

Community drop in session held at 5 Moorland Road on the 28th May.

A site tour of the development was held for staff on the 23rd June.

Three tenants from the original Creechbarrow Road flats were taken on site to see the progress of the plots they will be returning to when they are complete.

Galliford Try Partnership (GTP) have had three site inspections to date for Considerate Constructors, receiving the following scores 40/50, 42/50 and 39/50.

Finance –

Valuations continue to be paid monthly to GTP.

Key Activities NEXT Period

Build Programme –

TDBC & KHA:

Handover plots 1, 8-13
Road completion following water board delay
Emphasis on plots 2-5 and FT05
Services connections to 6, 7 & 31
PVs to ongoing plots
External finishes
Plots 43-68 superstructure
Retaining/Boundary Walls, works on going rear of plots 2-5 against rear of 17 Roman Road

Community Liaison –

Community drop in session to be held at 5 Moorland Road on the 30th June and 30th July.

Further site tours will be arranged and invitations sent to the following groups: Councillors, Staff, Returning Decants, Tenant Services Management Board, Tenants Forum and the Halcon One Team.

Development to provide an update on the development at the Halcon Multi Agency Group on the 14th July.

Promotion of the properties available at Creechbarrow Road with a reminder for people to register on Homefinder Somerset and monitor for when the properties are advertised over the coming months.

Training –

Trainees and apprentices working on site will continue to be monitored.

Issues

Build Programme Timings –

A number of factors have slowed progress on site and as a consequence had a negative impact on the build programme. This includes: a national shortage of construction labour, additional asbestos found on site, unexpected gas main found on site and retaining wall issues on the eastern boundary of the site.

GTP have requested extensions of time to complete both the TDBC & KHA sections of the site.

The build programme will therefore be reviewed and monitored on a weekly basis going forward, with additional resources brought to site by GTP.

The build continues to progress with an emphasis on the quality of the properties as well as maintaining good momentum on site.

Tenant Services Management Board - 23 July 2015

Briefing Paper on the Budget July 2015 and effect on Social Housing.

Below are listed the main headline changes announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne in the budget statement delivered on the 8th July 2015:

- Social housing rents to fall by 1% per year for the next four years
- Benefit cap lowered to £20,000 (£23,000 in London)
- No automatic entitlement to Housing benefit for under-21s
- High-earning social housing tenants to pay more rent

Taunton Deane Borough Council is analysing the details of these changes to see how they impact tenants and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. The Tenant Services Management Board will receive further briefings once this analysis is completed.

The following provides more detail of the changes.

1. Rent setting Reduction of rents in social housing by 1% per year for the next four years

Previously, social housing rents could increase by 1% more than inflation – a formula set by the chancellor in 2013 and intended to last for 10 years. However, this was changed in the budget announcement.

The Government will reduce rents in social housing in England by 1% a year for four years from April 2016. This will be taken forward via the Welfare Reform and Work Bill.

The rent reduction does not apply to shared ownership. The Welfare Reform and Work Bill also states that other exceptions will be considered by the Secretary of State.

The Welfare Reform and Work Bill specifies that this change will not apply to housing associations where the Regulator determines that compliance would jeopardise financial viability.

2. Pay to Stay for higher earning tenants in social housing

The Government will require high income social tenants to be charged a market or near market rent. The threshold will be a household income of £40,000 in London and £30,000 elsewhere in the country.

The policy proposes that Housing Associations will be able to retain the additional income generated from these rents, whereas councils will be obliged to direct these monies to the Treasury

Government will consult on the detail of this policy before it is implemented.

3. Changes to Welfare Benefits

3.1 Household benefit cap Government announcement

The household benefit cap will be reduced to £23,000 per year in London and £20,000 in all other parts of the country.

There will be a lower cap for single person households of £15,400 in London and £13,400 in other areas.

The cap has been in operation since April 2013, and affects households of working age who are not in employment and are not disabled. Claimants who are affected have their housing benefit reduced to bring their income under the cap. If a claimant gets at least 16 hours work the cap is removed.

It is likely that the lower cap will be phased in during 2016-17, details of when and where it will be introduced will be set out in regulations.

Housing benefit can only be backdated for 4 weeks from April 2016

7 waiting days to be introduced for Universal Credit from August 2015 (ie no benefit payable for first 7 days of claim)

3.2 Benefit changes for 18-21 year olds

From April 2017, young people aged 18-21 making a new claim to Universal Credit will no longer be automatically entitled to the housing element.

This policy will not apply to parents whose children live with them, certain vulnerable groups and those who may not be able to return home to live with their parents.

Young people who have been living independently and have worked continuously for the previous six months will be able to receive housing support for six months whilst they look for work.

18-21 year olds on Universal Credit will also participate in an intensive regime of support from the first day of their benefit claim via a new Youth Obligation from April 2017.

After 6 months they will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship or gain skills via alternative routes.

3.3 Discretionary housing payments (DHPs)

The Government has set out the level of funding for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) over the next five years.

2016-17: £150m

2017-18: £185m

2018-19: £170m

2019-20: £155m

2020-21: £140m

3.4 Benefit and tax credit uprating freeze

The rates of most working-age benefits will be frozen for four years from April 2016. The freeze will apply to Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit (excluding disability elements), applicable amounts for Housing Benefit, and Local Housing Allowance rates, with provision for high rent areas.

The freeze does not apply to Maternity Allowance, Statutory Sick Pay, Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay, Statutory Shared Parental Pay, and Statutory Adoption Pay, disability, carers and pensioners' premium in the frozen benefits, the Employment Support Allowance Support Group component, and other disability, carer and pensioner benefits. These will continue to be uprated in relation to prices or earnings as applicable.

Aside from applicable amounts, the freeze does not apply to Housing Benefit in the social sector as different arrangements were announced with rents decreasing by 1% each year for the next four years.

4. Tenancies - Review of lifetime tenancies in social housing

The Government will review the use of lifetime tenancies in social housing with a view to limiting their use and “ensure that households are offered tenancies that match their needs and make best use of the social housing stock”.

5. Additional housing announcements

5.1 Right to Buy

Although not included in the Budget itself, during his Budget speech the Chancellor did reference the Government's plans to extend Right to Buy to housing association tenants. This policy will be brought forward as part of the Housing Bill expected in the autumn.

5.2 Help to Buy ISA

People saving to buy their first home will be able to save up to £12,000 in a Help to Buy ISA, and government will match this with 25% up to £3000. Savers can pay in £1000 up front and then £200 a month

5.3 Energy Allowable Solutions

The Government does not intend to proceed with the zero carbon Allowable Solutions carbon offsetting scheme.

This could restrict plans for renewable energy and those aimed at reducing social housing tenants' energy bills.

5.4 Planning Brownfield land

A commitment to speeding up delivery of development on brownfield land through the introduction of a new zonal system.

5.5 Support for victims of domestic abuse

The Government will set up a £3m fund to encourage innovative approaches to help people suffering from domestic abuse, this includes refuge provision.

The fund will be open to proposals from local partnerships that demonstrate how people's needs could be met in innovative ways, working through collaboration.