

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 11 October 2010 at 18:00.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 6 September 2010 (attached).
- 3 Public Question Time.
- 4 Declaration of Interests
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct (attached)
- 5 Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) Update on internal transformation - Report of the Strategic Director and DLO Transformation Project Manager
Reporting Officers: Brendan Cleere
Chris Hall
- 6 Housing Property Services Review Update - Report of the Community Services Manager
Reporting Officer: James Barrah
- 7 Guest rooms in Sheltered Housing (attached) - Report of the Supported Housing Manager
Reporting Officer: Christine Thompson
- 8 Update on Annual Report to Tenants and Tenant Services Authority - report of the Acting Tenant Empowerment Manager
Reporting Officer: Martin Price
- 9 Update on Tenant Profile Questionnaire - report of the Housing Services Lead
Reporting Officer: Stephen Boland

Legal and Democratic Services Manager

13 October 2010

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

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

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

If a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chairman will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors 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.

Full Council, Executive, Committees and Task and Finish Review agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.tauntondeane.gov.uk



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 Democratic Services on 01823 356382 or email d.durham@tauntondeane.gov.uk

If you would like an agenda, a report or the minutes of a meeting translated into another language or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please telephone us on 01823 356356 or email: enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Tenant Services Management Board Members:-

Councillor R Bowrah, BEM

Councillor S Brooks

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 6 September at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road.

Present: Mr Etherington (Chairman)
Mr Edwards (Vice- Chairman)
Councillor Bowrah, Councillor Brooks, Mrs Drage, Mrs Hegarty, Mr Hellier, Mrs Marshall and Mr Watkin.

Officers: James Barrah (Community Services Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Brendan Cleere (Strategic Director), Chris Hall (Highways and Cleansing Manager), Martin Price (Acting Tenant Empowerment Manager), Tracey Vernon (Tenant Services Development Officer) and Natasha Williams (Administrative Officer).

Others: Councillor Prior-Sankey.

(The meeting commenced at 6pm)

41. Apologies

Mr Galpin
Mr Pearson

42. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 5 August 2010 were taken as read and were signed.

43. Declaration of Interests

The following members declared a personal interest as a Council house tenant:

- Mrs Drage
- Mr Edwards
- Mr Etherington
- Mrs Hegarty
- Mr Hellier
- Mrs Marshall
- Mr Watkin
- Councillor Brooks

Councillor Brooks also declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset County Council.

44. Direct Labour Organisation Current Service Level Specification.

Brendan Cleere outlined the aims of the Core Council Review to members of the board. With regard to the Direct labour Organisation (DLO), a twin-track approach was currently being investigated, with the view of adopting

either the out-sourcing or internal transformation route, once the review had been completed.

Chris Hall outlined the report and the statutory and non-statutory services. The key principals behind the review were to improve services and generate possible savings. No defined cuts were planned at present with regard to kitchen and bathroom replacements.

Board members queried whether job losses would occur at the DLO. They were advised that if the outsourcing route was chosen, there was no guarantee that job losses would not occur. However, if the outsourcing route was successful, one criterion for companies to be shortlisted would be to include a good reputation for looking after its staff.

Board members agreed that the Tenant Management Services Board should be included under the Stakeholders heading on page 11 of the report.

Brendan Cleere requested that the DLO Current Service Level Specification be included on future Tenant Services Management Board agendas, in order for board members to be updated.

45. Direct Labour Organisation General Updates for Internal transformation and Outsource.

Chris Hall updated board members with regard to the current position of the internal transformation. Members were reassured that the DLO staff were kept informed and had received letters which detailed the current position.

Pre-qualification questionnaires had initially been sent out and 13 bids had been returned. 6 bids would be shortlisted and each of the bidders would need to produce 3 case studies, in order to be evaluated.

The DLO would bid as part of the internal transformation path. Members were advised that the DLO was good at delivering services, yet lacked the experience of dealing with bids. A business case would be made for the internal transformation route.

Board members were informed that they would be consulted with regard to the final bids; however Councillors would have the final decision on whether to follow the outsourcing or internal transformation route. If the outsourcing route was successful, Councillors would also choose the preferred bidder. A client team would also be set up to monitor the outsourcing route. The decision would be made after the Election due to held in May 2011.

46. Update on Annual Report to Tenants and Tenant Services Authority.

Martin Price advised board members that a working group of board and Tenants Forum members met on 26 August, with the content of the report and local offers the two main discussion points.

Tenants were to be involved in the process and 'mystery shoppers' would be appointed. A number of scenarios would be 'played out' which would help to establish how long Housing Services take to respond to certain situations.

Martin Price also outlined a number of other ideas, which included;

- Suggestion cards;
- Financial incentives;
- Involving all age groups – Family fun days, speaking at schools;
- Implementing a Tenant Champion; and
- Administering closer working with Somerset County Council Highways.

Mr Edwards advised the board, that he would be happy to be a Tenant Champion.

Councillor Brooks raised the issue that tenants were unable to speak to Estate Officers on weekends.

47. Tenant Participation Advisory Service Membership

Martin Price outlined the figures with regard to Tenant Participation Advisory Service Membership. Landlord membership would cost £1,550 per year whilst the Tenant membership fee is £125. Board members were informed that the Tenants Forum had already renewed its membership and this covers all tenant groups in Taunton Deane.

The Tenant Services Management Board asked that the Tenants Forum be approached to ask if it may be possible to attain membership under the existing Tenants' membership and in return reimburse them half of what they had already paid.

It was confirmed that the use of the website would be included in the membership.

48. Housing Property Services Review

James Barraah advised board members that it was the aim of the review to achieve separation between the DLO and Housing Services. The service required modernisation and more resource back into the service. The structural proposals as well as the Housing Property Services Responsibilities were outlined to board members. James Barraah would return to the next meeting to note any comments that they had.

Board members asked whether visual aids could be used at the next meeting to demonstrate how the new structure could improve service, by using specific examples.

Steve Boland confirmed that board members would receive name badges.

(The meeting ended at 8:29pm)

Declaration of Interests

Tenant Services Management Board

Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants – Councillor Brooks,
Mrs Drage, Mr Edwards, Mr Etherington, Mr Galpin, Mrs Hegarty, Mr Hellier,
Mrs Marshall and Mr Watkin

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board

11th October 2010

Guest Rooms at Sheltered Housing Schemes

Report of the Supported Housing Manager

1. Executive Summary

This report has been produced to outline steps taken to review the use of specific rooms, known as Guest rooms located at Sheltered Housing Schemes owned by Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services.

It outlines the difficulties and concerns regarding access, facilities and value for money. It provides details of the specific costs of providing this service, together with details of the income.

The impact on tenants will be explained and a timetable for implementation will be given which includes how we intend to inform tenants of proposed changes.

2. Purpose of the Report

To provide the Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) with information as to possible use of the facility known as guest rooms located on Sheltered Schemes.

3. Background to this report

Supported Housing Services are responsible for the management of twelve guest rooms, located in Sheltered Housing and Extra Care Housing Schemes at various locations within Taunton Deane. This includes the booking of the rooms, cleaning, ensuring Health & Safety standards are met and distribution of keys. As guest rooms can currently be booked at short notice it is essential that the rooms are ready at any time which means regular cleaning and maintenance of

temperature. Guest rooms are general attached or near to the original properties provided for the Scheme Manager (Warden).

A number of concerns have been raised by tenants about the standard of the rooms, in particular the lack of disabled access and en-suite facilities.

- Guests rooms at, Heathfield Drive, Moorland Place and Robin Close there is only access to the communal toilets and no shower or bath.
- Guests rooms at Middleway, Parmin Close, and Newton Road, have en-suite w.c's but no access to shower or bath.
- Guest rooms at Bulford and Taunfield Close, Darby Way have en-suite facilities but can only be accessed by a flight of stairs and there is no lift.
- The guest room at Hope Corner Lane has access to en-suite facilities and have level access.
- Rooms are being booked less often.
- The cost of providing this amenity has risen

For the purposes of this report the rooms located at the Extra Care schemes have been excluded but will be reviewed at a later date.

Tenants at the addresses where the guest rooms are located have been consulted to seek their views regarding the future use of this facility. They were given five options:

- Residents to take on responsibility for upkeep, cleaning and booking of rooms,
- To review costs and charge a more realistic amount to cover the cost of providing this service
- To review the current use of the space and set up offices for the Sheltered Housing Team who have access to limited facilities for making calls, writing up their notes etc.,
- Anything else tenants like us to investigate i.e. setting up of laundry rooms.

The following are details of the outcomes.

Addresses / Options	Keep as guest rooms, residents to look after	Increase charges to cover cost of service	Use as a base for staff	Use for something else	Recommendations
Bulford	13	14	11	1	
Churchill Way	12	6	4	7	
Darby Wayx2	7	11	14	3	
Heathfield Drive	10	6	12	1	
Hope Corner Lane	10	11	1		
Moorland Place	7	3	6	1	
Newton Road	6	6	8	3	
Parmin Close	6	8	5	3	
Robin Close	5	5	11	10	
Tauntfield Close	10	9	8	8	

There are a range of views recorded from residents at each of the schemes, some being equally divided such as Bulford, where 13 residents wanted to take on responsibility, 14 agreeing with charges being increased and 11 wanting it used for staff.

Sheltered Housing Forum Comments

This was brought to the attention of the Sheltered Housing Forum meeting in October 2009 when feedback was sought. The general view was to agree with the proposals. Prior to referring this report to the Board, an update was presented to the Sheltered Housing Forum on the 29th July 2010 and they have asked for details of what the likely revised charges would be. It was agreed that these details would be presented to the next meeting in October 2010.

4. Finance Comments

Income from use of hall the guest rooms
 2006/07 - £1,578.13
 2007/08 - £1,023
 2008/09 - £1,863.15
 2009/10 - to be confirmed

5. Legal Comments

6. Links to Corporate Aims (Please refer to the current edition of the Corporate Strategy)

7. Environmental and Community Safety Implications (if appropriate, such as Climate Change or measures to combat anti-social behaviour)

8. Equalities Impact (An Equalities Impact Assessment should be carried out in respect of:-

- New initiatives/projects with an impact on staff, service or non-service users;
- New services/changes to the way services are delivered;
- New or refreshed Strategies;
- Events – Consultation/Training; and
- Financial/budget decisions.

A summary of the results should be entered here with the assessment attached to the report as an appendix)

9. Risk Management

10. Partnership Implications (if any)

11. Recommendations

It is recommended to the Board that the overall views of the tenants be considered at each location and investigated further with a view to adopting the following:

- The letting and general upkeep of the rooms to become the responsibility of the local residents, with a Health and Safety audit to be undertaken annually by a member of the Sheltered Housing Team
- Increase the charges at Bulford, Hope Corner Lane, Parmin Close to cover the running costs of providing this facility.
- Investigate further uses for the guest rooms at Darby Way, Heathfield Drive, Newton Road, and Robin Close.

Contact: Officer Name) Christine Thompson
Direct Dial No) 01823 339145
[e-mail](mailto:c.thompson@tauntondeane.gov.uk) address) c.thompson@tauntondeane.gov.uk

*SUPPORTED HOUSING
Community Services*

**PROJECT
GUEST ROOMS
IN SHELTERED HOUSING**

Supported Housing Operations

- Addresses of Guest Rooms
 - Bulford
 - Darby Way
 - Heathfield Drive
 - Hope Corner Lane
 - Kilkenny Court (Extra Care)
 - Lodge Close, Wellington (Extra Care)
 - Middleway
 - Moorland Place
 - Newton Road
 - Parmin Close
 - Robin Close
 - Tauntfield

Supported Housing Operations

- **Difficulties**

- 3 are upstairs without a lift
- Upkeep is expensive – heating and cleaning
- Income generated does not meet the cost of providing this service
- limited facilities, only a few have on-suite bathroom facilities
- Furniture and fittings are up to twenty years old and need updating - has cost implications.

Supported Housing Operations

- **Recommendations:**
 - Consider alternative uses
 - Consult with residents about their preferences for use in the future
 - Prepare details of practicalities of any changes, including costs.
 - Feedback outcome to Sheltered Housing Forum

Letter to residents (this is an example)

- Re: Future use of Guest Rooms

I have attached a copy of a report presented to members of the Sheltered Housing Forum at their meeting on 22nd January 2009. (information given as on previous slides)

They agreed that I should write to all residents to find out what your views are regarding the future use of the guest rooms.

It would help us to decide the best use of this facility in the future, if you could complete and return to us in the envelope provided, the blue form included with this letter within ten days of receipt.

If you need any help completing this form please contact a member of the Sheltered Housing Team on 01823 339145.

Questionnaire

This is an example of the questionnaire which was sent to all residents who live in the areas where there are quest rooms, excluding the two Extra Care Schemes at Kilkenny and Lodge Close.

Your Address: _____

(Please tick one 1st choice and one 2nd choice ONLY)

Options 1st Choice (Please Tick) 2nd Choice (Please Tick)

- 1. Keep as a Guest Room – but with the tenants managing the facility. (Booking, cleaning & changing bedding)
- 2. Increase the Hire Charges to cover actual costs.
- 3. To use as an office for the Sheltered Housing staff to be based at.
- 4. To be converted to something else – Please state ideas?
- 5. Other – Please state ideas?

- Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Outcome of survey

Both Choices	Keep, residents to look after	Increase charges to cover cost of service	Use as a base for staff	Use for something else	Recommendations
Bulford	13	14	11	1	Increase charges
Churchill Way	12	6	4	7	Residents to look after
Darby Way	7	11	14	3	Use as a base for staff
Heathfield Drive	10	6	12	1	Use as a base for staff
Hope Corner Lane	10	11	1		Increase charges
Moorland Place	7	3	6	1	Residents to look after
Newton Road	6	6	8	3	Use as a base for staff
Parmin Close	6	8	5	3	Increase charges
Robin Close	5	5	11	10	Use as a base for staff
Tauntfield Close	10	9	8	8	Residents to look after

Procedure for change

- All tenants surveyed 2009
- Reported to Sheltered Housing Forum
- October 2009/29th July 2010
- Report to Tenant Services Management Board
— 11th October 2010

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 11 October 2010 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road.

Present: Mr Etherington (Chairman)
Mr Edwards (Vice- Chairman)
Councillor Bowrah, Councillor Brooks, Mrs Drage, Mr Galpin,
Mrs Hegarty, Mr Hellier and Mr Watkin

Officers: James Barrah (Community Services Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Brendan Cleere (Strategic Director), Donna Durham (Democratic Support Manager), Chris Hall (Highways and Cleansing Manager), Martin Price (Acting Tenant Empowerment Manager), Christine Thompson (Supported Housing Manager) and Tracey Vernon (Tenant Services Development Officer)

Others: Councillors Morrell and Stuart-Thorn

(The meeting commenced at 6pm)

49. Apology

Mrs Marshall

50. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 6 September 2010 were taken as read and were signed

51. Public Question Time

Councillor Morrell was concerned that he had asked questions at a previous meeting, which had not been replied to. In addition, he asked if there was an inventory for all Council owned property.

Stephen Boland responded that he would reply to Councillor Morrell's questions directly.

52. Declaration of Interests

The following members declared a personal interest as a Council house tenant:

- Mrs Drage;
- Mr Edwards;
- Mr Etherington;
- Mr Galpin;
- Mrs Hegarty;

- Mr Hellier;
- Mrs Marshall;
- Mr Watkin.

Councillor Brooks declared personal interests as a Council house tenant and a Member of Somerset County Council. Councillor Morrell declared a personal interest as an owner of an ex-Local Authority property.

53. Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) Update on Internal Transformation

Reference Minute No. 45/2010, Chris Hall, DLO Transformation Manager updated the Board on the current position of the internal transformation.

The Outsourcing option had been put on hold until the summer of 2011, when the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review were known.

Priorities for the Internal Transformation option were reported as follows:

- Provide a lean, efficient and resilient service – the DLO were responsive and it was important that this continued, as the current service level needed to be retained;
- Thriving business focussed on success – commerciality was not just about being financially successful, but also about how the DLO operated. Sales and marketing plans would need to be produced;
- Excellence in performance management – performance indicators would be used and a profit target put in place;
- Excellence in customer service and priority – there was a need to maintain and improve customer satisfaction; and
- Committed and empowered workforce – staff attended regular staff meetings and staff were encouraged to make suggestions. It was recognised that the workforce had the ability to drive the programme forward.

Members of the board asked about how the staff felt about the internal transformation and it was reported that they had been actively involved and were keen to see this option work.

Stock was discussed and it was acknowledged that there was sometimes too much stock held at the depot, but with more mobile working being considered, there would need to be reliance on the depot.

The structure of the internal transformation project was not known, as the project was in an interim situation, until a decision had been made at Full Council.

Staff training was discussed. A skills audit would be carried out to develop a multi-skilled workforce. This was key to the success of the project, but would take time.

The Board suggested that customer feedback forms be given to tenants on the arrival of staff from the DLO to carry out work. This would encourage staff to carry out a good quality job.

Bonuses for staff were questioned, but it was felt that the jobs had been through the Job Evaluation process and staff were employed to do a good job.

The DLO needed to have more competitive rates, as it was often less expensive to employ someone else. It would be important that any private work the DLO did was profitable and that their main focus were Council tenants.

54. Housing Property Services Review Update

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the review of the Housing Property Services.

Following the independent review that was carried out by consultants, Turner and Townsend and advice from the Audit Commission, the Council decided to accept the recommended approach to provide better separation between the Housing Property Services function and the DLO workforce.

Housing Property Services managed the Council's housing stock of 6078 dwellings, as well as garages, meeting halls, shops, land and sewer works. The team also managed the repair, maintenance and improvement of 75 leasehold properties and the external repair and redecoration of 350 leasehold properties.

The funding for this work was from Improvement Works and the Government's Decent Homes' programme.

In addition, tasks performed by the team included Health and Safety issues, Asset Management database, Right to Buy and the sale of land. The current responsibilities were detailed. Additional functions would be required in the new service and these were submitted.

Historical budgets and staffing costs led to a closer working relationship between the Housing Property Services function and the DLO workforce. Whilst this derived some benefits, the consultants suggested that the Asset Management function should be managed within the client role. The Audit Commission expressed concern about the need to demonstrate clear value for money and improving performance.

The review had been run in parallel with the DLO review and emerging issues had been discussed with the Housing Manager (Property Services) and the Strategic Director. Proposals primarily focussed on a new staffing structure for the service, but other issues that needed to be addressed or

required further investigation. Operational and service delivery issues would be included in an Action Plan.

The proposals were as follows:

- The Housing Property Service was included in the Community Services Theme, which would allow it to work alongside the rest of the Housing Service and achieve separation from the DLO;
- Service Management – The Community Services Business Lead would assume responsibility for the support and office based staff in the current structure and the technical side of the structure would be managed by the Housing Manager (Property) and the Property Manager. Their roles would remain largely unchanged and would be subject to further review;
- The current structure included specific posts and roles. The new structure outlined a new surveying team which incorporated the Clerk of Works posts and a Senior Assistant Quantity Surveyor and four new posts of Building Surveyor;
- Void property inspections would be undertaken by the Property Services Team;
- Right to Buy would be the responsibility of the Rents Recovery and Voids Team;
- The Technical Administrative Assistant post would be renamed the Gas Safety Officer; and
- The Community Services Business Support Lead would assume responsibility for the support and office based staff in the current structure. The team would be increased to provide call centre cover and support for staff with the creation of a Housing Property Services Support Supervisor. A new post of Finance and Performance Officer would be created to monitor and process financial transactions for the team.

The proposals were intended to meet the objectives of the review and a list of benefits to tenants was reported.

The Board were keen to see how re-let times could be reduced, as void properties were a large cost to the Council. It was agreed that Mr Galpin would view some void properties, check the turn-around time and quality of work, and report back to the Board.

55. Guest Rooms in Sheltered Housing

Reference Minute No. 35/2010, considered report previously circulated, concerning the possible use of guest rooms at Sheltered Housing Schemes.

Supported Housing Services were responsible for the management of twelve rooms located in Sheltered Housing and Extra Care Housing Schemes at locations in Taunton Deane. This included booking the rooms, cleaning, ensuring health and safety standards were met and the distribution of keys.

Concerns about the standard of rooms had been raised by tenants about the lack of disabled access and en-suite facilities.

Tenants were consulted about the future use of the facilities. The outcomes were reported as follows:

Addresses / Options	Keep as guest rooms, residents to look after	Increase charges to cover cost of service	Use as a base for staff	Use for something else
Bulford	13	14	11	1
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Moorland Place	7	3	6	1
Newton Road	6	6	8	3
Parmin Close	6	8	5	3
Robin Close	5	5	11	10
Taunfield Close	10	9	8	8

The view of the Sheltered Housing Forum was to agree with the proposals, but requested details of what the revised charges would be.

The income that had been generated by the Guest Rooms was submitted.

Charges were low and some of the Guest Rooms were used infrequently. It was suggested that advertising could increase their use, therefore lowering the costs to the Council.

The Board felt that the Guest Rooms needed to be considered on an individual basis, as it was clear that some were rarely used. This would be discussed with the Sheltered Housing Forum and brought back to the Board at a later date.

56. Update on Annual Report to Tenants and Tenant Services Authority

Reference Minute No. 46/2010, Martin Price advised Board members that the Annual Report had been completed and would be sent to the Tenant Services Authority and put on the Council's website on 15 October 2010.

Copies of the full report would be sent to members of the Board, Tenants' Forum and Councillors.

The Chairman thanked the Tenant Empowerment Team for their hard work to complete the Annual Report.

57. Update on Tenant Profile Questionnaire

The questionnaire had been posted to tenants and would help to inform service provision. The data would be input so that reports could be produced that would inform decision making.

(The meeting ended at 7.45pm)