

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board to be held in The Long Room, Somerset County Cricket Club, Taunton on 18 April 2011 at 17:00.

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## **Agenda**

- 1 Introduction - Chairman, Dustyn Etherington
- 2 Tenant Services Management Board 2010/2011 - Dustyn Etherington, Chairman
- 3 The year ahead for the Tenant Services Management Board - verbal report of the Tenant Empowerment Manager  
Reporting Officer: Martin Price
- 4 Election of Chairman
- 5 Election of Vice-Chairman
- 6 Apologies.
- 7 Public Question Time.
- 8 Declaration of Interests  
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- 9 Budget Strategy Project - joint report of the Community Services Manager and Strategy Manager (attached)  
Reporting Officers: James Barrah  
Simon Lewis

Tonya Meers  
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

07 June 2011

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Full Council, Executive, Committees and Task and Finish Review agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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 e-mail us at: [enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

**Tenant Services Management Board Members:-**

Councillor R Bowrah, BEM

Councillor S Brooks

## **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

Member of Somerset County Council – Councillor S Brooks

Dear members of the Tenant Services Management Board,

I thought I would drop you a quick note to try to explain the implications of the current Budget Review Project on Housing Staff and to expand on the information provided at the recent staff briefings. As you will be aware there is significant pressure over coming years on the Council's General fund (GF) such that the Budget Review Project is seeking to create savings options equivalent to a 40% reduction over the four years from 2012-13 onwards. This is clearly hugely significant in terms of what the Council does and looks like in future.

However the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) also faces huge challenges in coming years. These are different to the GF but nevertheless equally significant. This means that the same savings requirements as described above for the GF are also required for the HRA as part of the Budget Review Project.

The most significant of these factors is the review of the Housing Subsidy system by the implementation of self financing but there are many other significant factors that will influence the future of the HRA and therefore the Housing Service. I will briefly outline these issues below.

### **Self Financing**

This will go live in April 2012, rather than TDBC paying around £7million a year in negative subsidy, we will be allocated our proportion of the national housing debt. We then have to service the interest on this debt and eventually pay it off. Our proportion of the debt is at £87millions, current projections are that we will pay this off after 22 years and we will then be self sufficient and free of debt. As you can imagine with the size of this figure much work is underway to implement this issue and fully understand the implications for us. There are many variables to consider and overall this appears at the moment to be a good deal for us. However we need to prepare a range of options in our management and asset expenditure that will allow us to respond to this and the other challenges facing the HRA.

### **30 year Business Plan**

We don't have an up to date one, but we are in the process of commissioning one. This will pull together all the current challenges and projections for the service.

### **Asset Management Plan**

Again we don't have an up to date one, we are midway through creating a new one with support from Housing Quality Network. This will influence and direct our spend on our property over coming years.

**Benefits Review**

This review and the associated changes will have a huge impact in the community and also on the Housing Service. For example when Housing Benefits payments are no longer undertaken by local councils there will no longer be any direct payments to the rent account of Housing Benefits. This has the potential to increase our arrears levels so we need to make sure we are prepared for this in terms of how we are organised.

**Rent Policy**

We need a clear rent policy so that we can clearly project our income in coming years, without this we cannot develop a clear business plan.

**Halcon**

This project has the potential to have a significant impact on the HRA so we need to be ready to respond to whatever members decide to do to address deprivation in this area.

**Tenant Empowerment and Co-regulation**

I am really pleased with the progress of our Tenant Services Management Board. As this board and other methods of tenant involvement continue to mature, they will have an increasing influence on what we do and how we do it. We need to be flexible and agile enough to respond to these issues.

**Supporting People**

Funding from SP is projected to continue to decrease. We need to fully assess the impact of this on our services and respond accordingly.

**Current Projects**

We have a number of projects or reviews underway that will have an influence on future operations. These include completing the Housing Property Services review, Voids review, Debt review and changes to how we manage our leasehold properties.

So as you will see there is lots going on and all of this is directly relevant to the Budget Review project. I hope this has given you a bit more information in relation to current issues. If any ideas or thoughts occur to you about this information or about the budget review project as a whole please raise them with the Tenant Empowerment Manager or me directly.

Along with the Housing Management team I will endeavour to keep you updated on progress with these issues at the appropriate time. However if you wish to discuss anything in this note please do not hesitate to contact me.

James Barra  
Community Services Manager  
Taunton Deane Borough Council

**Minutes of the AGM meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 18 April 2011 at 5pm in The Long Room, Somerset County Cricket Club, Taunton.**

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

**Officers:** James Barrah (Community Services Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Nora Day (Housing Estate Manager), Simon Lewis (Strategy and Corporate Manager), Rosie Reed (Tenant Services Development Officer), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Phil Webb (Housing Manager – Property Services) and Natasha Williams (Administrative Officer).

**Others:** Councillor Morrell and Councillor Stuart-Thorn.

(The meeting commenced at 5pm).

**1. Introduction**

The Chairman welcomed all board members and tenants who attended the meeting and gave a brief history of the formation of the Tenant Services Management Board.

**2. Tenant Services Management Board 2010/2011**

The following issues raised at previous Tenant Services Management Board meetings were highlighted:-

- Service Standards;
- Housing Revenue Account Reform;
- Guest rooms in Sheltered Housing;
- Property Services Review;
- Annual Report to Tenants and Tenant Services Authority;
- Direct Labour Organisation Transformation Project;
- Energy Efficiency;
- Halcon North – Regeneration;
- Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget and
- Council House Voids

A 'welcome pack' had been produced for new tenants. The Audit Commission had commented that the 'welcome pack' included useful information for new tenants.

The Chairman thanked all board members for their time.

Councillor Bowrah thanked Dustyn Etherington for being Chairman of the Tenant Services Management Board. Councillor Brooks concurred.

### **3. The year ahead for the Tenant Services Management Board**

Mr Boland (Housing Services Lead) welcomed all at the meeting and advised that the Tenants Open Day had been a success.

The next 12 months were important as a new era for council houses was emerging. Mr Boland explained the need for self-financing and advised that this was the preferable route for Taunton Deane Borough Council to follow.

The Halcon North regeneration project was briefly outlined and tenants were advised that the Ward would be consulted throughout the project.

The recent status survey identified that 90% of tenants were satisfied with the Landlord service provided. This was an increase on last year and was deemed a positive insight and very good result. In 2008, the best landlords in the country received approximately a 90% satisfaction result, so Taunton Deane Borough Council had done well.

A new business plan was to be in place shortly. Strategic objectives would be included and shaping delivery of services for tenants.

### **4. Election of Chairman**

Dustyn Etherington was appointed as Chairman of the Tenant Services Management Board.

### **5. Election of Vice-Chairman**

Mark Edwards was appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Tenant Services Management Board.

### **6. Public Question Time**

Councillor Morrell raised three issues with board members. It was requested that a review occur with regard to the general fund and the cost of director charges.

It was also requested that the Tenant Services Management Board review the current level of vandalism to properties and consider where savings could be made. An increase in inspections could make savings in the long run.

Councillor Morrell also suggested that the board consider the disposal of land to registered social landlords.

Mr Barrah advised that Councillor Morrell's questions regarding the budget had already been received at a previous meeting and were currently being looked into.

Councillor Brooks advised that a breakdown of the cost of directors would be useful.



## **7. 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.

## **8. Budget Strategy Project**

Mr Lewis explained the significant pressure over the coming years on the Councils General Fund. The Budget Review project was seeking to create savings options equivalent to a 40% reduction over the four years from 2012/13 to 2015/16.

Taunton Deane Borough Council would look into current assets, procurement as well as technology. Current terms and conditions of staff would be reviewed as well as contracts with partnerships.

Mr Barraah advised board members that unprecedented change was going to occur to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Mr Barraah outlined the issue of self financing and that this would go live from April 2012. However, a range of options in the management and asset expenditure that would allow the Council to respond to other challenges facing the HRA.

It was requested that self-financing be put on the forward plan for the next meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board.

The board members were thanked for their time and commitment.

The next meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board would be held on 17 May 2011.

(The meeting ended at 6:10pm).