

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board to be held in The Parmin Close Meeting Hall, Parmin Close, Taunton on 23 July 2012 at 18:00.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 19 June 2012 (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 Gas and Other Heating Quarterly Monitoring Report. Report of the Property Manager Maintenance and ALHCO (attached).
Reporting Officer: Steve Esau
- 6 Development and Social Housing Development Fund. Report of the Housing and Health Manager (verbal update).
Reporting Officer: James Barrah
- 7 Updating of HRA Business Plan 2012 - 2042. Report of the Housing and Health Manager (verbal update).
Reporting Officer: James Barrah
- 8 Halcon North Project Questionnaire Update. Report of the Tenant Services Management Board Sub-Group (verbal update).
- 9 Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Annual Conference Feedback. Report of the Tenant Services Management Board Attendees (verbal update).
- 10 Annual Report to Tenants 2011/2012. Report of the Tenant Empowerment Manager (verbal update).
Reporting Officer: Martin Price

27 September 2012

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.

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Lift access to the John Meikle Room and the other Committee Rooms on the first floor of The Deane House, is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are also available off the landing directly outside the Committee Rooms.



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

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

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Tenant Services Management Board Members:-

Mr D Etherington (Chairman)
Mr M Edwards (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor R Bowrah, BEM
Councillor S Brooks
Mrs J Bunn
Mrs E Drage
Mr D Galpin
Mr I Gould
Mrs J Hegarty
Mr K Hellier
Mr R Middleton

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Tuesday 19 June 2012 at 6pm in the Meeting Room, Kilkenny Court Extra Care Housing Scheme, Station Approach, Taunton.

Present: Mr Etherington (Chairman), Mr Edwards (Vice-Chairman) Councillor Bowrah, Mrs Bunn, Mrs Drage, Mr Gaplin, Mr Gould, Mrs Hegarty, Mr Hellier and Mr Middleton.

Officers: Chris Hall (DLO Manager), Cyril Rowe (Open Spaces Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Phil Webb (Housing Property Services Manager), James Barra (Housing and Health Manager), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Steven Clarke (Tenant Services Development Officer), Tony Knight (Estates Officer ASB) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer)

Others:

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

Councillor S Brooks

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2012 were taken as read and signed subject to the following amendments being included

- Change of Date in item two.
- Removal of Mr Etherington name from item three.
- Addition for Councillor Bowrah to item four.

3. Public Question Time

Representatives of the Halcon North Tenants and Residents Association expressed their Thanks and Gratitude to Taunton Deane Borough Council for filling the void and empty properties on their Street.

4. Declaration of Interests

The following members declared personal interests as a Council house tenants:-

- Mrs Bunn
- Mrs Drage
- Mr Etherington
- Mr Edwards
- Mr Galpin
- Mr Gould
- Mrs Hegarty
- Mr Hellier
- Mr Middleton

5. Grounds Maintenance and Grass Cutting Update

The Community and Commercial Manager gave an update on Taunton Deane's current Grounds Maintenance and Grass Cutting regime. The breakdown of Taunton Deane's current responsibilities for Ground Maintenance and Grass Cutting.

- Parks and Open Spaces
- Highway Grass Verges
- Council Homes Grass (cut 15 – 18 times per year)
- Cut and Collect for Shelter Housing

Unfortunately due to consistent bad weather since the start of the grass cutting schedule are behind schedule so in order to get back on target Taunton Deane has increased Flexi-Time for staff.

There are currently two different services that the Council operates for Grass Cutting regimes, they are;

- Cut and Collect
- Cut and Leave

The Grass Cutting service is 'Get what you pay for', there is NO profit made on the charges. As standard, the grass is cut 15 – 18 times per year at a cost of £203,000 but the additional services of collection of the cutting has an extra cost of £10,000 per cut. In addition to the grass cutting service for both sheltered and ordinary housing is provided a small grounds maintenance service.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and statements and asked questions which included: - (Responses are shown in italics)

- Who is now responsible for Somerset County Council Grass Cutting regime?
We currently have the SCC contract for Grass Cutting.
- Who is responsible for and pay for when grass cuttings blocks drains?
SCC is responsible for blocked drains as Highways and Transport Agency.
- It was mentioned that Taunton Deane has a limited budget for Grounds Maintenance and Grass Cutting. The majority of the budget goes to Grass Cutting.
- It was asked if the Grounds Maintenance teams could be allocated certain estates or wards to promote familiarity of staff in Communities.
Taunton is currently split in area based working but it is not yet 100% operational.

Resolved that the Community and Commercial Managers Report be noted.

6. Halcon North Project Update

The Housing Services Lead gave a brief update on Halcon North Regeneration project.

Currently, the draft questionnaire and information sheet, which would be sent out to the Tenants and Residents of Halcon North are still being worked. These will be completed soon. A sub-committee of the Board would then be called to look over the questionnaire and information sheets.

The Property Surveys are well under way and there are less than 60 properties left. The finalised Stock Condition data would be presented at the same sub-committee meeting. Also invited to the sub-committee will be Halcon North Residents and Tenants Association.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and statements and asked questions which included: - (Responses are shown in italics)

- Commented by a Board Member who had their house Survey by Taunton Deane Staff that he was a very polite gentleman. He surveyed both internally and externally.
- Property Services Housing Manager commented that he was having trouble contacting some remaining residents to arrange times to complete the surveys. *A Board Member offered to contact the remaining residents if Taunton Deane could supply the addresses.*
- Can the surveys be completed out of normal working hours?
Property Services Housing Manager said that could be arranged where ever needed.

Resolved that the Housing Services Lead Report be noted.

7. Changes to Right to Buy Policy

Considered report previously circulated, which summarised recent changes introduced by the Government concerning the Right to Buy provisions and the impact this would have on the Council.

The Right to Buy scheme was introduced in 1980 and gave qualifying social tenants the right to buy their home at a discount. The scheme was open to secure tenants of local authorities and non-charitable housing associations, and to those assured tenants of housing associations who had transferred with their homes from a local authority as part of a housing stock transfer.

The Government had recently announced its intention to increase the caps on Right to Buy discounts to enable more tenants to achieve their ambition for home ownership. It also set out the Government's commitment to ensure that the receipts on every additional home sold under the Right to Buy were used to fund its replacement, on a one for one basis, with a new home for Affordable Rent.

Reported that the key changes to existing policy were set out in the following table:-

Policy	Current Policy	From 2 April 2012
Discount Rates, Cap and Eligibility	<p>Current discount rates were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For houses: 35% of the property's value plus 1% for each year beyond the qualifying period up to a maximum of 60%; 	<p>The discount cap had been increased to £75,000 across England, giving tenants a much greater incentive to purchase their own home.</p> <p>Discount rates would not change and tenants would still need to have been public sector tenants</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For flats: 50% plus 2% for each year beyond the qualifying period up to a maximum of 70%. <p>Tenants must have been public sector tenants for 5 years before they qualified for the Right to Buy</p> <p>In practice, most Right to Buy discounts were limited by caps. These currently ranged from £16,000 in most parts of London and were currently £30,000 in the South West.</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="932 136 1404 517"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Years renting from council</th> <th colspan="2">Discount</th> </tr> <tr> <th>House</th> <th>Flat</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>35%</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>40%</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>45%</td> <td>70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20</td> <td>50%</td> <td>70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td> <td>55%</td> <td>70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30</td> <td>60%</td> <td>70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over 30</td> <td>60%</td> <td>70%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>for 5 years.</p>	Years renting from council	Discount		House	Flat	5	35%	50%	10	40%	60%	15	45%	70%	20	50%	70%	25	55%	70%	30	60%	70%	Over 30	60%	70%
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Use of Right to Buy Receipts	Subject to the deductions mentioned below, 75% of the receipts were paid to HM Treasury (“the poolable amount”) and the remaining 25% was retained by local authorities.	After calculating transaction costs and compensating authorities for loss of income above what had been covered in the self-financing settlement, HM Treasury and local authorities would receive the amounts they would have expected to receive, had the policy on Right to Buy remained unchanged.																										
Administration Costs	For the purposes of calculating the poolable amount, local authorities could deduct the actual transaction costs of successful sales from Right to Buy receipts, but there was no allowance for costs relating to Right to Buy applications which did not result in a sale.	Flat rate allowances for London and the rest of England had been set with a 50% uplift for withdrawn applications. Allowances would be fixed at £2,850 for London and £1,300 for the rest of England.																										
Buy Back	Councils could Buy Back former council properties and claim around 50% of the costs from their total Right to Buy receipts.	The Council would retain the Buy Back facility, allowing councils to claim up to 50% of the value of each property bought-up to a total of 6.5% of the value of net Right to Buy receipts (after administration costs, debt and assumed income). 6.5% was around the average level of Right to Buy receipts retained by local authorities for Buy Back over the last three years.																										

Cost Floor	Section 131 of the Housing Act 1985 (the cost floor) limited the Right to Buy discount to ensure that the purchase price of the property did not fall below what had been spent on building, buying, repairing or maintaining it over a certain period of time (relevant expenditure).	The period of time the cost floor covered had been increased from 10 to 15 years for new homes subject to Right to Buy, bringing rules for councils into line with those for Housing Associations and protecting initial investment in the housing. In addition the option for councils to apply for an exemption from pooling receipts for new homes built in future would be retained.
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Further reported that the Council had a legal duty to make tenants aware of these changes to the Right to Buy provisions.

Although arrangements to do this were in hand, due to the national publicity there had already been a number of enquiries from tenants about the new arrangements, suggesting a significant increase in sales. From the 1 April to 25 May, 22 Right to Buy applications had been received, against 25 in all of the last financial year.

Increases in numbers of Right to Buys would have an impact on administration and conveyancing, so capacity in both Housing and Legal Services would have to be monitored. The addition of uplift in deductible allowances for withdrawn applications was welcomed as a number of these may arise particularly in the early days of the new policy.

With regard to the new provision for the one to one replacement of dwellings, submitted for information an extract from documents released by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which explained the new system.

In essence, receipts from additional sales would be used to fund replacement stock on a one-for-one basis and that delivering these new homes would be through local authorities retaining receipts to spend in their areas.

In order for Taunton Deane to keep these additional receipts it would be necessary to enter into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government who would:-

- i. Allow the Council to retain additional Right to Buy receipts to fund the provision of replacement stock, and
- ii. Allow the Council three years (from commencement of the agreement) to invest those receipts before asking for the money to be returned.
(The agreement would not require the Council to complete the building of any home within three years. However, the Council would be required to have incurred expenditure sufficient that Right to Buy receipts formed no more than 30% of it.)

In return Taunton Deane would be expected to agree that:-

- i. Right to Buy receipts would not make up more than 30% of total spend on replacement stock, and

- ii. Any unused receipts were returned to the Secretary of State with interest. Should the Council not wish to enter into an agreement then any surplus receipts arising would have to be surrendered to the Secretary of the State for them to investment in replacement stock.

Noted that the 30% cap was necessary to ensure that the Government obtained maximum value for money from the Right to Buy receipts and enabled the building of as many new homes as possible. The Council would be expected to fund the remaining 70% from its own reserves or through borrowing serviced by the anticipated rental income from the new homes built.

Where retained receipts exceeded 30%, the Council would be required to return the additional receipt to the Secretary of State with interest.

Each financial quarter a report would have to be submitted to DCLG showing the cumulative sum the Council had retained for replacement stock and the cumulative amount it had spent on replacement stock.

Although there would be no requirement to return receipts in the first three years of the agreement, in Quarter 1 of 2015/2016 Taunton Deane would have to compare;

- the total amount spent on replacement stock from the start of the agreement to the end of that quarter, with
- The total amount it had retained from Right to Buy receipts in Quarter 1 of 2012/2013.

Where the latter was 30% or less than the former then no further action would be necessary.

In Quarter 2 of 2015/2016 the comparison would be between the total spent on replacement stock since the agreement began with the total it retained on Quarters 1 and 2 in 2012/2013 and then for each subsequent quarter.

Historically Right to Buy receipts had been used to fund our Housing Enabling Programme and had primarily been targeted to schemes in conjunction with Registered Housing Providers.

The recent introduction in the new Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 year business plan of a Social Housing Development fund provided a second option for the provision of new units retained within the HRA. In practice if the Executive was minded to accept an agreement with the Government for one for one replacement, both of these avenues would be needed to allow a suitable level of investment to be made to offset the 30% restriction. The additional investment now available for affordable housing in the HRA would improve our ability to meet the 30% requirement.

Reported that the Council did not have to sign up to an agreement now. However, if it was not signed by the deadline of 27 June 2012, the Council would not be able to retain any receipts for the first quarter of this financial year.

Other important issues to be noted on qualifying spend to put towards the 70% requirement included:-

- Any contribution from a partner housing association could not include any Homes and Communities Agency grant; and
- The Council could not use HRA receipts from non Right to Buy receipts for example selling surplus to requirements property, as a dispensation from Government already existed which allowed the Council to keep these receipts if spent on affordable housing;
- The Council could spend receipts on the acquisition of property but would have to decide whether to utilise the existing provision of Buy Back Allowance or not depending on which route would be more financially favourable.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and statements and asked questions which included: - (Responses are shown in italics)

- Where are the 3 year receipts going?
Receipts are accounted for previously into general fund (GF).
- What about putting Solar Panels on Council Properties?
There is a government grant scheme for the installation of Solar Panels but the council is not able to deliver this on Council Properties.
- What is the percentage of 'Green' Houses or Low Energy House?
The numbers of 'Green' Houses are not known.
- New Build Council Properties can be built more energy efficient.

Resolved that the Tenant Services Management Board Committee strongly support the recommendations of this report and that the report be noted.

8. **Housing Estates Team Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2012 – 2015**

Considered report previously circulated, which proposed the new Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services. This outlines the strategic overview that tenants in council housing can expect from Housing Services in relation to Anti Social Behaviour.

The background of this report is based around tackling anti-social behaviour in relation to Council properties. This is a priority for our elected members and tenant representatives. It is key to the effective management of our housing stock at Taunton Deane Borough Council.

Housing services are responsible for ensuring tenants comply with their tenancy agreement and do not behave in an anti-social manner within our communities. This strategy has been developed in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 & The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (as amended),

This new Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy is a living document and runs over three year period. The aim of this strategy is to provide:

- Providing an accessible and accountable service for all tenants.
- Taking swift action to protect tenants and communities from Anti Social Behaviour.
- Adopt a supportive approach to working with victims of and witnesses to Anti Social Behaviour.
- Encourage individual and community responsibility from our tenants. To support the development of sustainable communities.

Have a clear focus on prevention and early intervention to Anti Social Behaviour.

- Ensure staff in the service takes an effective value for money approach.

Resolved that the Tenant Services Management Board Committee have noted and approved the Report and attached Strategy.

9. Tenancy Termination Leaflet

Considered report previously circulated, which provides the members of the Board with details of a Tenancy Termination Leaflet for tenants who are intending to end their council owned housing tenancy.

Housing staff have been focusing on improving performance of void management of the councils housing stock, part of this focus was the implementation of a pilot project to improve performance of void turn round times.

It is vitally important for both the outgoing tenant and also the council that when tenancies are terminated the process is completed effectively to avoid rental loss to the council and also the possibility of re-charges to the outgoing tenant.

There are no financial implications to the introduction of the leaflet. Its production will be funded through existing budgets.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and statements and asked questions which included: - (Responses are shown in italics)

- Is the relative of the Council Tenant who is unable to stay in the property responsible for the charge?
No, the relative is not responsible for the charges. It can be taken from the Estates Budget.
- What is the number of Void Tenancies?
Is 548 re-lets during 2011/12.
- What is the period of weeks to clear the property?
A minimum of two weeks notice. This can be extended by the next of kin but this would mean them taking on the tenancy and paying the rent on the property.

Resolved that the Housing Managers – Lettings Report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 7.20pm)

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 23rd July 2012

Gas and Other Heating Quarterly Monitoring Report

Report of Property Manager- Maintenance- Steve Esau

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

1. Executive Summary

The report and Appendix A have been produced to give members monitoring information on the performance of the servicing and repair contract with Alhco.

This is the first quarterly report showing performance data with the new contractor. Comments from members would be welcomed on how the information is being presented and any changes required for future reporting.

2. Background

TDBC has a responsibility as a landlord to ensure that all rented properties have a valid Gas Safety Certificate, an annual gas safety check has to be carried out. In order to ensure that a certificate does not become out of date we have in place a 10 month cycle, this allows for the process of gaining access to properties to be carried out before the certificate becomes overdue. It is important that this process is managed effectively by both the contractor and the client team.

In addition the contractor is responsible for the servicing of solid fuel and oil appliances together with checking electric storage heaters, servicing of extract fans, smoke detectors and breakdown repairs. Whilst there is no legislative requirement to carry out checks to solid fuel and oil appliances every 12 months it is considered good practice and we follow a 10 month cycle as happens with the gas servicing programme.

The report and appendix show performance data for all the service and repair areas with comments where necessary.

3. Report

This is the first of the quarterly reports to the Tenant Services Management Board for the new contract. There are a number of gaps in the performance data where it has either not been available in time for the end of quarter reporting or particular tasks have not been carried out to date. I have made comments below on these areas.

A condition of the contract was for the contractor to have in place a computerised management system within six months of the commencement of the contract. This will provide real time reporting which will be beneficial to both the contractor and TDBC. I am pleased to inform members that the implementation of the system will happen in late July and early August ahead of schedule.

At the end of the quarter one property did not have a valid gas safety certificate. I am pleased to report access was gained and the service and safety check was carried out on 4th July 2012.

There have been some logistical issues with the number of certificates sent to TDBC within 5 days of the service date. A report is not available at this time.

Tenant satisfaction for reactive maintenance is not available in this report, there are some complications in the way this is reported. It is hoped we can resolve this for the quarter two reporting.

To date no third party audits have been carried out. This process is due to commence in August 2012.

Financial reporting information is not available for this report, we are looking closely at this and will be reporting in detail at the end of quarter 2.

4. Finance Comments

There are no financial issues arising from this report.

5. Legal Comments

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

6. Links to Corporate Aims

To ensure we meet our legislative responsibilities.

7. Environmental Implications

Heating systems that are serviced regularly work more efficiently therefore reducing CO2 emissions and the environmental impact.

8. Community Safety Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

9. Equalities Impact

This is not applicable.

10. Risk Management

There are significant risks associated with this area of the housing service. It is essential it is managed in a robust way. Where there are changes to legislation or working practices revised risk assessments and mapping are carried out.

11. Partnership Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

12. Recommendations

The Tenant Services Management Board is asked to note the report. Comments would be welcomed on how the information is being presented and any changes required for future reporting.

Contact: Officer Name Steve Esau- Property Manager – Maintenance
 Direct Dial No 01823 356593
 [e-mail](mailto:s.esau@tauntondeane.gov.uk) address s.esau@tauntondeane.gov.uk

ALHCO / TDBC QUARTERLY CONTRACT REPORT					AGENDA ITEM 5 - APPENDIX A	
Servicing	Target	Apr	May	Jun	Cumulative for year	Comments
Nr of gas services (CP12) that are planned for this calendar month.		298	544	321	1163	
Nr of services for solid fuel that are planned for this month.		37	8	0	45	
Nr of services for oil that are planned for this month.		2	1	0	3	
Nr of services for electric that are planned for this month.		68	188	32	288	
total number of services for month (all fuel types)		405	741	353	1499	
Number of properties not covered by a current CP12		0	0	1	1	
% of Properties Overdue (No valid Certificate)	0	0	0	0.311526		
% of gas Services completed on 1st visit attempt	100%	54	72	68	65	
% of gas Services completed on 2nd visit attempt		32	17	16	22	
% of gas Services completed on 3rd visit attempt		8	6.5	2	6	
% of gas Services completed on TDBC arranged visit		4	2.5	5	4	
% of gas Services completed on TDBC arranged forced entry		2	2	0	1	
Nr of properties with gas servicing outstanding still in date		0	0	9	9	Nine properies still to be visited expiry dates are in Aug
Number of appointments cancelled by ALHCO	0					
Nr of certificates sent to TDBC within 5 days of service date.	5 days					
Nr of tenant satisfactions received relating to servicing				108	108	
% of tenants satisfied				92	92	
Reactive Maintenance						
Nr of reactive jobs received		308	459	315	1082	
Priority 1 - emergency % (attend within 2 hours and repair within 24 Hours)	100%	100	98	97	98	
Priority 2 - Urgent % (Complete within 3 working days)	100%	97	97	96	97	
Priority 3 - Routine % (Complete within 7 working days)	100%	95	97	100	97	
% completed 1st visit	100%	96	95	97	96	
Nr of hot water systems out of action overnight	0 per month	0	0	0	0	
Nr of hot water systems out of action for longer than 24 hours	0 per month	0	0	0	0	
Nr of reactive maintenance appointments made		308	459	315	1082	
Nr of reactive maintenance appointments kept by ALHCO		303	447	315	1065	
Nr of Jobs cancelled due to no tenant contact.		5	12	0	17	
Nr of Out of Hours calls		45	7	5	57	
Nr of Tenant satisfactions received relating to breakdowns						
% of tenants satisfied						
Voids						
Nr of Voids this month		32	66	46	144	
% of voids completed within time (14 days)	100%	100	100	100	100	
Request for Service						
		1	0	0		Instance of damage to carpet - matter resolved with new carpet
Health and Safety						
Major reportable accidents		0	0	0		
Minor Accidents		0	0	0		
Instances of where Asbestos found		0	0	0		
Audits competed (internal and external)						
Finance						
Invoice for Servicing						
Invoice for Maintenance						
Invoice for Chargeable works						
Scrap money raised.						

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 23rd July 2012 at 6pm in the Meeting Room, Parmin Close, Taunton.

Present: Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chairman), Mr Mark Edwards (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Enid Drage, Mrs Judith Hegarty, Mrs Jessie Bunn, Mrs Tammy Urquhart, Mr Robert Middleton, Mr Dennis Galpin, Councillor Robert Bowrah and Councillor Steve Brooks.

Officers: James Barrahan (Health & Housing Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Phil Webb (Housing Manager, Property Services), Steve Esau (Property Services Manager, Maintenance), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Norah Day (Housing Estate Manager) and Rosie Reed (Tenant Services Development Officer)

Others: Councillor Jean Adkins, Councillor Fran Smith and Alan Murray (ALCHO General Manager for Contract with TDBC)

(The meeting commenced at 6.06pm)

1. Apologies

Kevin Hellier

Clare Hooper - Clare will not be standing as a board member due to family commitments. Tammy Urquhart was welcomed back to the board as a board member.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th June 2012 were taken as read and signed.

3. Public Question Time

The Chair of the Halcon North Tenants and Residents Association expressed the Association's comments in relation to the Draft Halcon North Resident Questionnaire and Information Sheet. The Association's comments were as follows:

- The questionnaire is too long.
- Confidentiality is an issue when the questionnaire is being completed on tenants/residents doorsteps.
- The Association would like the questionnaire to be left with the tenant/resident to be filled in privately and then returned.
- The Association would prefer if a member of the Tenant Services Management Board or Halcon North Tenants and Residents

Association accompanied TDBC staff when approaching tenants/residents to complete the questionnaire.

- Questions regarding property type, size and number of occupants are not necessary as TDBC should already have the information.
- Q 5 & 6 of the draft questionnaire needs to be re-worded to be directed at council tenants and to reflect the council's involvement with the estate.
- Would new housing be better quality? If the current properties are maintained properly, they are good quality housing.
- Doubts as to whether tenants/residents safety would be improved based on the architects 'concept' drawing which showed an increased number of smaller streets.
- Accurate wording is required for the number of council properties that will remain on the estate. Is it approximately 50 or up to 50?
- The Association requested timescales for the project be added to the proposal.
- The Association was pleased that the consequences of the proposal were clearly stated, with regards to how many council tenants could return to the area.

The Association stated they thought the documents were well written and clear and thanked officers for their hard work and commitment to involving tenants in the process.

During the discussion of this item, the Housing Portfolio Holder made the following comments:

- The Police are part of the consultation for the Halcon project to ensure a safer neighbourhood. The Police feel the current layout of Halcon is poor in terms of safety.
- All planning applications which would include Halcon would need to be seen as an improvement to receive approval.
- The previous drawing of the Halcon regeneration was an architects 'concept' and not a plan or an accurate representation of the designs for Halcon.
- It's the intention that there will be 50 council owned properties if Halcon regeneration proceeds.
- The timescales for the project would depend upon detailed planning if the project proceeds. It could be 8 and half years to do the whole area, with a different timescale for a phased approach.
- Tenants can complete and return the Halcon questionnaire in private if preferred.
- The council is not solely responsible for the condition of Halcon.

4. Declaration of Interest

The following members declared a personal interest as a council house tenants:

- Mr Dustyn Etherington

- Mr Mark Edwards
- Mrs Enid Drage
- Mrs Judith Hegarty
- Mrs Jessie Bunn
- Mrs Tammy Urquhart
- Mr Robert Middleton
- Mr Dennis Galpin
- Councillor Bowrah & Councillor Brooks both declared having family members who are council tenants.
- Councillor Brooks also declared he is a County Councillor.

The board requested that the existing declarations of interests are automatically recorded in the minutes at each TSMB meeting.

5. Gas & Other Heating Quarterly Monitoring Report

Alan Murray from ALCHO presented a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) report for the 1st quarter, including April, May and June 2012, and asked the board to suggest a format for future KPI reports.

The report showed that only 1 property was not covered by a current CP12 during the quarter, which was later obtained through legal action.

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

- The board congratulated ALCHO for 100% of voids servicing completed within the 14 day timescale.
- Does the 1st/2nd/3rd attempt include other things than refused access such as needing to revisit once a part has been obtained for a repair? -
 - *Yes, but ALCHO try to have stocked vans to reduce the need for revisits due to requiring parts.*
- What if tenants are on holiday, at work or in hospital? Is there appropriate notice before formal letters are received?
 - *ALCHO confirmed they start the process of renewing certificates 2 months before they expire. The board were also briefly reminded that the process for gaining access involves telephone calls, estate management and written communication.*
 - *ALCHO confirmed they are investigating evening and Saturday working as well as a new system which involves calling the next tenant once the previous survey is complete to provide a more specific time for an appointment. It was also confirmed that the gas supply can be 'capped' at properties where the tenant is for example in a long stay in hospital until a survey and new CP12 can be issued.*

The Property Services Manager, Maintenance advised the board that ALCHO are not responsible for the contract for communal heating and the contract for communal heating is being revised.

Resolved: to note the report and agree to receive quarterly updates in the current format.

6. Development and Social Housing Development Fund

The Social Housing Development Fund is a fund identified in the new Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2012-42. The Health & Housing Manager stated that a clear policy for building new properties, site selection and affordable rents etc is required.

Discussions have been held with partner organisations to learn skills and discuss purchasing some documents for a development manual. All of the partner organisations visited would be keen to be involved in joint schemes if the opportunity arose. The organisations visited include:

- Knightstone
- Magna
- Yarlinton
- Somer

The Health & Housing Manager and Housing Services Lead have visited approximately 40 potential sites for development. 5 have now been shortlisted and are going through a number of checks regarding ownership and servicing issues.

It was indicated that the broad plan for the 5 sites is to go forward with 1 being used for a Passivhaus development and 4 for traditional build. To reach this stage the sites would need to go through a notification process and discussions held with partners regarding viability.

The end of the process would be a clear indication of what can be achieved on each of the 5 sites for further consultation.

Contact has been made with Exeter City Council who have recently completed Passivhaus developments. The Health & Housing Manager has also visited the Home & Communities Agency office in Bristol and explained TDBC's intention to begin building.

It was explained that structural surveys and viability assessments are currently being undertaken at a number of TDBC garage sites. The Health & Housing Manager welcomed suggestions for potential development site from the board.

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

- Would new properties built be TDBC or Housing Association ownership?
 - *For small developments TDBC would own the new build properties, the housing associations would just be paid for their assistance and skills.*
 - *For large developments TDBC would need to be flexible over the % of ownership between council and housing association.*
- Would tenants be able to purchase the new build properties through their Right to Buy?
 - *Yes, tenants will still have the RTB for new properties but if they are purchased within 15 years of being built, full market value will be paid by the tenant.*
- Could TDBC focus on building sheltered housing that is exempt from the RTB?
 - *No, there are limited sites that would be suitable for sheltered housing.*
- Can TDBC use the Social Housing Development Fund for extending properties?
 - *The Portfolio Holder's preference is that the development fund be used to increase the number of properties.*
- In the broad plan, why would TDBC build more traditional build than Passivhaus?
 - *The numbers of traditional build or Passivhaus are not set but all new development would need to value for money and cost effective.*
- Would the Homes & Communities Agency provide funding for TDBC building plans?
 - *All of the HCA funding is allocated up to 2015, but TDBC would attempt to receive funding in the future.*
- Will TDBC develop its own skills for development?
 - *Yes, the Health & Housing Manager is visiting Somerset College on the 27th July 2012 to discuss skill development.*

Resolved: The board noted the update on development and the Social Housing Development Fund.

7. Updating of HRA Business Plan 2012-2042

Financial risks are raised with the debt associated with the HRA self financing and there is a need to establish clear governance around the business plan. An annual review will occur around budget setting each year.

A project group has been established with James Barraha as Project Lead and Rosie Reed as Project Manager to start review the business plan, the TSMB will be kept updated on the progress. Due to changes since April, the project group have the following issues to review:

- Componentisation
- Better interest rates
- Asset management database update
- Cost of IT provision
- Welfare Reform – higher debt provision
- RTB changes
- Downsizing/Transfer Removal Grants
- Council Tax provision for void properties
- Increasing Disabled Facilities Grants & Aids and Adaptations budgets
- Review introductory and flexible tenancies
- Social Housing Development Fund
- Tenants' Welcome Pack
- Environmental improvements – including additional parking on estates
- Sustainable energy fund
- Related assets (works to non dwellings)
- Heating replacement

During the discussion the Housing Services Lead explained the work currently been undertaken to look at underoccupying and to help those who want to downsize.

Resolved: The board noted the comments on the business plan review and requested a copy of the key issues.

8. Halcon North Project Questionnaire Update

Internal and external surveys of the properties at Halcon have been completed with the data in a raw state which is currently being collated to form a report. A final decision in the questionnaire will be made once all feedback is received, with the questionnaire sessions commencing a week after the letter is sent to Halcon residents.

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

- When will the report with the survey data be presented?
– *A specific date is not available at present but the report will be presented to Councillors in the Autumn.*
- Should door knocking with the questionnaire be completed by an independent organisation?
– *The board's opinion was divided on this issue but a compromise was agreed with tenant representatives who don't live in Halcon accompanying staff.*

Resolved: A tenant representative will be invited to accompany staff when completing the Halcon questionnaires.

9. Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Annual Conference Feedback

Four Tenant Services Management Board members attended the 2012 TPAS conference in Birmingham and provided feedback on the conference. From the three reports presented the review of the conference was as follows:

- Travel to the conference was much easier by car and preferred by all to the train.
- The conference was well run and the facilities were of the highest standard.
- The opening session from TPAS was well done and highlighted TPAS future aims and objectives well.
- All delegates found their workshops useful and learnt from the content.
- The board members that attended felt proud of TDBC Housing Services and what it achieves.
- The conference is extremely useful for networking and meeting other tenants/housing professionals.

The board provided conference material to the Tenant Empowerment Team for staff and other board members to read.

Resolved: The board noted the feedback from the board members that attended the TPAS conference.

10. Annual Report to Tenants 2011/2012

The Tenant Empowerment Manager explained that it's time to produce the annual report to tenants for Housing Services achievements between April 2011 to March 2012.

The annual report is to be sent to tenants at the end of October/start of November and events to consult with tenants on the content of the annual report will be scheduled for the summer of 2012.

Feedback from tenants on the previous annual report indicated that 88% felt the calendar format was useful and 85% wanted to see the calendar format used for future annual reports.

The board supported the calendar format for this year's reports and felt that the previous cash/other incentive for tenants providing feedback for annual reports was useful and should be used again.

Resolved: The annual report for achievements in 2011-2012 should be in calendar format.

11. AOB

- Changes to Homefinder Somerset Allocations Policy

– The Housing Services Lead is attending a Homefinder Somerset Monitoring Board meeting on the 26th July 2012 and will provide feedback to the TSMB. It was confirmed that no changes will be made to the policy without consulting the TSMB.

- The board requested a future report on the contractor's progress of bathroom refurbishments.

- The Housing Manager, Property Services will provide a position statement at a future TSMB meeting.

- The board requested a report on current contracts.

- The Housing Manager, Property Services confirmed a list is currently being compiled that highlights what contracts are being done with timescales and any ongoing issues.

(The meeting ended at 8.25pm)