

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board to be held in The Meeting Room, Kilkenny Court Extra Care Housing Scheme, Station Approach, Taunton on 24 September 2012 at 18:00.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 20 August 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 Verbal Update on Halcon North Project. Report of the Growth and Development Manager.
Reporting Officer: Tim Burton
- 6 Verbal Update on HRA Business Plan 2012 - 2042. Report of the Health and Housing Theme Manager.
Reporting Officer: James Barrahan
- 7 Report on Fire Safety Policy. Report of the Housing Estate Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Norah Day
- 8 Report on Mobility Scooter Policy. Report of the Housing Estate Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Norah Day

Tonya Meers
Legal and Democratic Services Manager

20 November 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
Mrs T Urquhart

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 20th August 2012 at 6pm in the Meeting Room, Kilkenny Court, Taunton.

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

Officers: Paul Harding (Corporate and Client Services Lead), Shari Hallett (Health and Housing Business Support Lead), Steve Boland (Housing Services Lead), Phil Webb (Property Services Manager), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Steve Clarke (Tenants Service Development Officer) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

Others: Lisa Wychwood and Graham Vickery from Halcon North Tenants & Residents Association

(The meeting commenced at 6.01pm)

1. Apologies

Mr M Edwards

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd July 2012 were taken as read and signed.

3. Public Question Time

A representative of the Halcon North Tenants and Residents Association expressed a desire to draw attention to officers of Taunton Deane and Members of Board:-

1. That Tenants and Residents Association encouraged tenants and residents at a recent public meeting to complete and return the questionnaire starting today.
2. Also to mention reports of Asbestos in two houses in Moorland Road. It was asked if this was discovered during the property surveys.

Members of Board thanked the Tenants and Residents Association for their support and encouragement regarding the questionnaire. The Board advised that the second item would be covered by item 8 on the agenda and would be dealt with at appropriate point in the meeting.

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. Report on Welfare Reform and Housing Benefit Changes.

There was a presentation to raise awareness of the key changes coming from the government's welfare reform agenda and how these would impact on our tenants and the HRA.

The following scheduled changes over 2012 and 2013 include increasing Non-dependant deductions.

Also from April 2013 the below changes would include:-

- Council Tax Benefit Abolished
- Maximum Benefit Cap
- Social Sector size criteria changes
- Empty Property Charges
- Council Tax Changes
- From October 2013 and beyond, Universal Credit would be introduced.

For Non Dependent Deductions, there would be a 10 year freeze on NDD reversed over 3 yrs from April 2011 to 2013. The figures are as follows:-

- Lowest HB NDD rates rise from £7.40 to £13.40
- Highest HB NDD rates rise from £47 to £90

It is predicted a higher incidence of adult children being asked to leave the family home would lead to an increase in demand for independent housing. With the possibility of a higher risk and incidence of increasing rent arrears and a reluctance for private landlords to accept benefit claimants, financial difficulties for social providers = possible rise in homelessness

Council Tax Support

The government has announced that it is reducing spending on Council Tax Support by 10 per cent and localising it, saving £490 million a year from 2013-14. Currently Council Tax support is delivered through the national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme.

From 1st April 2013 CTB is being abolished. Instead Council's like TDBC have been told they must design a scheme to help those on low incomes pay their Council Tax.

This is no longer demand led; councils will be given a fixed grant. Although, pensioners are protected under a national grant scheme, many people who have never had to pay council tax may have to start.

The final scheme must be adopted by the council before 31st January 2013 for introduction in April 2013.

Maximum Benefit Cap

The government have stated that no household would receive more in benefits than the average earnings of working households after tax. This doesn't apply to households temporary out of work and the disabled and pensioners.

This is based on national average earnings; for singles £350/week and for couples and lone parent's £500/week (these are current figures).

These are some of the areas affected by the cap; Large families entitled to a significant amount of CTC / families in high rental areas and families with 4/5 children are likely to see £12 / £40 per week shortfall applied to housing costs.

This benefit cap reduces max housing benefit entitlement by 14% for 1 bed under occupation and 25% for 2 or more.

Areas of the Council Tax reforms, which might affect tenants and/or HRA, are as follows:-

- Right to pay council tax by 12 instalments to be introduced and publicised.
- Allow councils to charge up to 100% council tax on properties undergoing major repair.
- Abolish the 12 months exemption relating to empty dwellings under major repair but allow council's to instead offer a discount of between 0% and 100% of the council tax.

Universal Credit

Some of the main features of the Universal Credit system are as follows:-

- National Scheme administered by DWP
- Replaces: IS, WTC, JSA, HB, Child Tax Credit, ESA etc.
- New work-related requirements / commitments / tough sanctions
- All claims for housing support will move to UC by end 2017.

The implications of universal credit are that it would be paid direct to the claimant. This could have the potential for major rent arrears. This direct payment could affect lending ability for registered providers.

Also this would affect parents who share the care of their children, meaning only one parent eligible to receive the child element of universal credit.

In addition, there will be a medical assessment for the Disability Living Allowance from 2013 for new and existing claimants.

Some additional implications with the introduction of Universal Credit would be as follows:-

- Child Benefit being withdrawn from higher rate taxpayers
- Tax Credit childcare costs reduced from 80 per cent to 70per cent
- Working Tax Credit hours changed for couples

In conclusion, this would mean a variety of implications for council tax payers. They would be the following:-

Council and private tenants paying out more to the council through size criteria, increased rent through non-dependent deductions, a benefit cap and also having to pay more for council tax

Rent harder to collect leading to higher arrears, in turn causing higher transaction costs. Also housing benefit being paid direct to the tenant instead of to their rent account, as well as welfare payments made monthly and not in line with the rent cycle.

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

- Member asked for confirmation relating to non-dependent deductions; as long as tenant tells the council about a boarder in their house, this would mean no deductions.
Officer said there was a benefit to having a boarder for tenants. The meaning of boarder is on single room not the whole house, which would be sub-letting.
- Members asked if you should declare having a boarder.
Officers said that tenants should declare it, as tenants would get 25% discount on Council Tax.
- Members asked if there was an incentive for down sizing.
Officers said there is currently a review of the policy and that Housing Services still has an incentive for down sizing. Currently, up to £2000, also housing services are looking at additional services including decorating, removals and help moving utilities.
- Members asked who would be charged for major works on council properties.
Officers said that the revenue would charge the HRA. Those empty properties could get 6 months allowance for free, and then at 6 – 12 months a 50% charge and over 12months 100% charge. This is only a rough idea.
- Members asked if disabled or carer allowance affected.
Officers said they were not aware of any change for carer's allowance but there would be a more robust assessment for disabled working age adults. Also looking to make the rules tougher for claimants.
- Members asked if council can ask for direct debts for Council Rent.
Officers said they were looking into multiple ways of paying rent. This includes looking at direct debts at any date in the month but the council need to look at the computer systems they use. Direct Debt not a tenancy condition.
- Members asked if direct debt could be a condition of the tenancy for those who continually don't pay.
- *Officers stated that very few tenants don't pay their rent on time in the Taunton Deane area. But officers want to include new measures to prevent this.*
- Members showed concerned over the number of people from outside of the county getting rented properties over local people after they have been priced out of areas such as London.
Officers felt that people moving into the Taunton area from larger places, are more likely to be from Bristol.
- *Officers asked what the board thought were a fair percentage rates for voids properties.*
- Members asked do the council charge void percentages by the day.
Officers said that the council don't charge by the day.
- Members asked if an incentive for leaving tenants who leave the properties in good state could be introduced.

Officers stated that the Members idea about incentive scheme for leaving tenants was interesting and they would look into it further.

- Members commented that a 3 month turn around period for void properties was a sufficient time period.
- Members asked what the scaled council charge would be for void properties.

Officer asked Members if the following charges would be agreeable; 0 – 3 months no charge, 3 – 6 months 50% charge and 6 – 12 months 100% charge. These charges would be across the board for both private and council.

Resolved that the officer's report be noted.

6. Report on Performance Indicators – Quarter 1 2012 /13.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the performance indicators play an important role in measuring how well housing services is performing, highlighting areas of strength and weakness and allowing services to be monitored and tailored to achieve their targets and objectives of providing the best possible service to tenants.

Performance indicators are reported on a quarterly basis and the report for Quarter 1 (1st April 2012 to 30th June 2012) has been produced.

Performance indicators measure the performance of housing services in specific areas and provide important information on the key services TDBC provides. They allow TDBC to continually improve the services it delivers to tenants. The indicators cover operational issues in greater detail which highlight trends and assist in decision making and service development.

Both councilors and officers use performance indicators in the form of regular reports to monitor performance. It is the intention of this report to propose that the use and publication of the reports is widened to those who use the services, i.e. tenants.

Performance indicators are reported on a quarterly basis, i.e. every three months. The Members of Board were asked to consider at what frequency they would like to receive the performance indicator reports. Officers proposed that the reports are presented to the Board Members on a quarterly basis as soon as the information has been collected.

Finance Comments

The cost of implementing the reporting of quarterly performance indicators can be met within the existing resources of staff and budget.

There are no legal, specific environmental, partnership or community safety implications on this specific topic. Although there are no specific links to performance indicators, the indicators themselves support the corporate priorities.

Equalities Impact

Regarding equality impacts, officers will be available to assist any tenants that may need specific help to fully access the quarterly reports and where required officers will visit vulnerable tenants to explain the performance indicators and then identify any specific needs.

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

- *Officers asked that Board Members discuss, which Key Performance Indicator they wish to report to the tenants and residents in the newsletter.*
- Members asked about when Taunton Deane would be replacing the tenants boilers as they are inefficient. Some tenants maybe waiting up to 7 years for a more efficient boiler.
Officers informed the Members that the reason this particular boiler being inefficient was due to it storing the water not heating it on demand. Taunton Deane are replacing the older style boilers as they go along.
- Members asked if there are plans to remove the electric storage heaters in tenants properties.
Officers said the removal of these would be done later.

Resolved that the:-

1. That the officer's report be noted.
2. The Board Members voiced the opinions on which ten Key Performance Indicators should be sent out to Tenants via the newsletter:-
 - Repairs and Maintenance
 - Rent Collection
 - Letting: Re-Letter (Voids)
 - Response times for repairs
 - Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Comparison to other Local Authority
3. The Board Members discussed and agreed timescales for further report as every quarter.

7. Verbal Update on Halcon North Project.

The Housing Services Manager gave a verbal update on Taunton Deane's Halcon North Project. The officer reported on the current activities of the project including the progress of the questionnaire.

The Officer informed the board that all residents had received the letter informing them about the questionnaire exercise happening over the next two weeks. Also eight estate officers were paired with tenant representatives and so far 65 questionnaires had been returned.

The Officer stated that no data or information was available at this time to be given to the Board Members. There would be a stakeholder consultation to include a wide range of agencies such as Police, Schools and Health Department. The board was informed that the Growth and Development Manager would be presenting the results and analysis of the main resident's questionnaire to the board on 17th September. The Officer would make enquires about board receiving an update on the stakeholder consultation.

The board were informed that the next step was to present this to the Community Scrutiny Committee on 9th October which would include the board's comments.

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

- A Board Member asked if the Board of Governors from the Schools would be invited to stakeholder consultation.
- Board Members asked if they could have an update on the result after this item had gone to Executive in October.

Resolved that the officer's report be noted.

8. Report on High Income Social Tenants: Pay to Stay Consultation

The report previously circulated was considered, that describes key government proposals that social landlords should be able to require tenants in social rented housing on high incomes to pay higher rents.

Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) is invited to comment on the key proposals which will be included in the final response to the consultation that ends on 12th September 2012.

Below are the Boards responses to the Key Proposals:-

1. Do you agree with principle that very high earners living in social housing should pay higher than social rent?
A. The Board Agreed with this and should be full market rent.
2. Do you consider that 60, 80 and 100 would be on appropriate threshold?
A. The Board agreed that a combined threshold split should £80,000 and £60,000.
3. Do you agree that certain groups should be exempt from the higher threshold?
A. The Board felt that if they have got the money they should not be exempt.
4. Do you agree that landlords should be able to charge 80% of market rates to high income households?
A. The board agreed with this 80% charge.
5. Would allowing Landlords to charge full market rents be appropriated in our area in your view?
A. The board agreed with this.
6. Do you consider the policy should be voluntary or compulsory for social landlords?
A. The Board felt flexibility on national as well as local basis.

The document can also be obtained by visiting the Communities and Local Government website: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/paytostayconsultation

Resolved that the:-

1. That the Officers report be noted.
2. The Board Members considered and agreed their final responses to the consultation questions.

9. Report on Housing (HRA) Capital Programme 2012/13.

Considered the spreadsheet previously circulated, concerning the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme for 2012/13. The officers gave a verbal explanation in relation to the previously circulated spreadsheet stating that programme of works planned for the coming months including the available budget. This is part of a 30 year business programme.

This programme of works includes a variety of types of contracts depending on the type of works being carried out.

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

- Board Member asked how the contracts would be delivered.
Officers stated that depending on the size of the contract, depends how the contract was actualised. Each contract specifies the deals included schedule and how much work to be completed.
- Board Member asked if there would be plan to remove and replace storage heaters.
Officers said there would be some investigation into those households that maybe able to have gas. Taunton Deane currently, looking into doing a deal with Transco for cheaper connections. For those homes that are unable to have gas, council will be looking into either updated versions of storage heaters or other alternatives such as Air Source Heat Pumps.
- Board Members brought to the attention to Housing Property Services Manager the reported Asbestos in Moorland Road and asked was found during the property surveys.
Officers reported that it was picked up during the property survey but these were one off's and not in all of the houses on Moorland Road.
- Board Member reported about problems with contractor 'Homesafe'. The contractor had no uniform and no ID as well as after they had finished, the Member had to clean up after them. The Member also had to push and negotiate with the contractor when getting a choice in glass and handles. The whole process felt rushed.
Officers said that those particular contractors are sub-contractors and these contracts are re-newed every three years. Officers noted the compliant and said that regardless it shouldn't be rushed.
- Board Member commented that they lived a conservation area and the replacement of doors and windows are affected but rules and restrictions, does this include Council Houses.
Officers said they would look into this matter.

Resolved that the officer's report be noted.

10. Report on Homefinder Somerset Annual Report 2011/12.

Considered the report previously circulated, concerning Homefinder Somerset which is the Choice Based Lettings partnership between the five local housing authorities and all the major housing associations within Somerset.

Homefinder Somerset has been operating for a number of years and an annual report provides all partner landlords and other agencies with information on the progress and outcomes achieved during the financial year 2011/12.

The Homefinder Somerset Annual Report – 2011/2012 summarises the outcomes of Homefinder Somerset in the financial year 2011/12.

The report contains:

- Statistics about the housing register in Somerset and the lettings made by social landlords over the course of the year;
- Background information about Homefinder Somerset and how the scheme works
- Information about the Monitoring Board and its membership is; and
- A summary of the main changes introduced after a review during 2010/11

As well as monitoring the outcomes of choice based lettings, the Monitoring Board looks closely at the time it takes local authorities to process housing applications and the size of any backlogs in each Council. It does this because delays in processing can affect a household's housing choices.

Currently on Homefinder Somerset, there are 3758 people registered and the number of the available vacancies per year stands at 548 properties.

Those registered are given a banding of Gold, Silver or Bronze. Officers looking at the statistics from the last year stated more people had been housed from the silver band.

Resolved that the officer's report be noted.

11. AOB

No further business was raised at this meeting.

(The meeting ended at 8.35pm)

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board 17 September 2012

Fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats

Report of the Housing Estates Manager

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

1.0 Executive Summary

Housing Services has carried out a review of its existing fire safety procedures.

This review has led to the formulation of a new draft fire safety policy to ensure the safety of tenants and leaseholders, staff contractors and visitors (see appendix 1).

TSMB are asked to consider and support a recommendation to the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services to approve the new policy.

1. Background

- 1.2 TDBC recognises its responsibility as a landlord to ensure the safety of its tenants and leaseholders, staff, contractors and visitors.
- 1.3 The new draft fire safety policy has been produced in response to the Local Government Group Fire Safety Report published in 2011 and also as a result of recent research undertaken by TDBC, the findings of which formulated a programme of inspections to address health and safety within council properties.
- 1.4 The new draft policy applies to all blocks of flats owned and or managed by TDBC irrespective of tenure.

2.0 Fire Safety Policy for council housing blocks of flats

See appendix 1 for draft Fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats.

3. Finance Comments

The views of the finance team were agreed that resources can be met within existing budget, and this will be monitored on a regular basis.

4. Legal Comments

The view of the legal team is agreed as follows:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies.
- Requires Responsible person to complete a Fire Risk Assessment of Common Areas of the building and record and act on the findings to ensure that general fire precautions are provided.

5. Links to Corporate Aims

This policy supports the HRA business plan 2012-2042 strategic housing objectives, which reflect the council corporate priorities.

6. Environmental Implications

No adverse implications.

7. Community Safety Implications

The recommendations from this report will form part of the overall policy on security and safety in TDBC flats.

8. Equalities Impact

Equality impact assessment has been undertaken as part of this policy and finding recorded in appendix 2

9. Risk Management

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a duty on TDBC as a landlord to take general fire precautions to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on the premises and in the immediate vicinity. Therefore, the main fire risks identified in communal areas are:

- Arson;
- Faulty electrical installations;
- Accumulation of flammable rubbish;
- Mobility scooters;
- Smoking
- Failures in construction (fire doors etc).

10. Partnership Implications

In order to deliver the policy it is crucial that we will continue to work in partnership with key agencies including the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership.

11. Tenants Forum comments

On 12th September 2012 TDBC officers met with members of the tenants forum to discuss the draft fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats. And the following comments are observations made:

- the group were keen for all contractors to comply with the policy;
- fire safety awareness training to be extended to include tenant inspectors and key hall users;
- good signage to be installed in all blocks;
- If space permits, TDBC to consider storage facilities.

The tenants forum expressed their support for this policy with the few adjustment, which have been included.

12. Recommendation

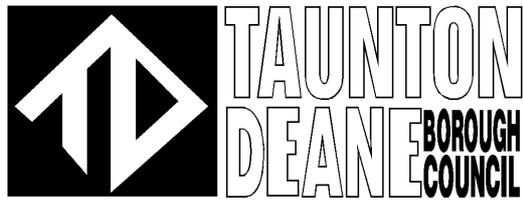
TSMB are asked to;

- Consider and comment on the draft fire safety for blocks of flats,
- support a recommendation for approval of the policy to portfolio holder.

Norah Day - Housing Estates Manager

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FIRE SAFETY POLICY FOR COUNCIL HOUSING BLOCKS OF FLATS

SEPTEMBER 2012

Policy Title:	Fire Policy for Council Housing Blocks of Flats
Lead Officers:	
Policy drafted by:	Norah Day – Housing Estates Manager
Date Agreed by Board:	
Date Equality Impact Assessment completed:	
Next Review Date:	



Fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats

Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) Housing Services aims to provide a safe environment in which tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff are assured that the risk of injury or damages to their homes caused by fire is minimised.

In aiming to deliver this environment, TDBC as a general principle, will seek to identify, assess and reduce risks to ensure compliance with Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

To encourage the assurance and confidence of our tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff regular fire safety awareness information will be made available. This will include ensuring that all are aware of their own responsibilities to themselves and towards others to ensure a safe environment.

TDBC will foster and maintain good working relationships with partner services to ensure the ongoing safety of tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff and a key relationship will be with the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service.

In discharging TDBC's responsibilities to fire safety, TDBC will:-

- Carry out fire risk assessments in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- Undertake fire risk audits with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service;
- Provide relevant employees, and relevant tenants, with fire safety training;
- Maintain and improve fire safety as required through the recommendations of the fire risk assessments and fire audits;
- Carry out joint training exercises with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and other agencies as necessary to ensure readiness for emergencies;
- Carry out all necessary servicing to ensure that fire prevention equipment is in full operation at all times; and
- Consider fire safety in all improvement programmes carried out by TDBC.
- All contractors and sub-contractors to be compliant the TDBC housing service fire safety policy.

Equality Impact Assessment – pro-forma

Responsible person	Norah Day	Job Title Housing Estates Manager
Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)	Proposed new policy/service	√
	Change to Policy/service	
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	
	Part of timetable	
What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which, service, MTFP proposal)	Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2012	
Section One – Scope of the assessment		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service?	<i>Aims to provide a safe environment in which tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff are assured that the risk of injury or damage to their homes caused by fire are minimised.</i>	
Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service?	<i>Fire Safety Policy is targeted at all the protected groups including: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation; Marriage and civil partnerships.</i>	
What evidence has been used in the assessment - data, engagement undertaken – please list each source that has been used The information can be found on....	<p>Data: Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005</p> <p>Engagement: Consultation with a diverse group of tenants, staff, , senior managers within the housing services carried out since January 2012.</p>	
Section two – Conclusion drawn about the impact of service/policy/function/change on different groups highlighting negative impact, unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality		
Consultation with tenants and officers concludes that it does not believe that any specific equalities impacts will arise.		

I have concluded that there is/should be:	
No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	√
Adjust the policy/decision/service	
Continue with the policy/decision/service	
Stop and remove the policy/decision/service	
Reasons and documentation to support conclusions <i>Consultation with tenants on 12 September 2012.</i>	
Section four – Implementation – timescale for implementation	
TSMB report 24 September 2012.	
Section Five – Sign off	
Responsible officer Norah Day Date September 2012	Management Team Housing estates Date
Section six – Publication and monitoring	
Published on	
Next review date September 2015	Date logged on Covalent

Action Planning

The table should be completed with all actions identified to mitigate the effects concluded.

Actions table						
Service area				Date		
Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed	Who is responsible?	By when?	How will this be monitored?	Expected outcomes from carrying out actions	

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board 24 September 2012

Mobility scooters policy for council housing blocks of flats

Report of the Housing Estates Manager

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

1.0 Executive Summary

Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services has produced a fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats.

TDBC seek to identify, assess and reduce risks to ensure compliance with Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

TSMB are asked to consider and support a recommendation to the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services to approve the new mobility scooter policy.

1. Background

- 1.2 TDBC recognises its responsibility as a landlord to ensure the safety of its tenants and leaseholders, staff, contractors and visitors.
- 1.3 The new draft mobility scooter policy has been produced to support the fire safety policy.
- 1.4 The new draft policy applies to all blocks of flats owned and or managed by TDBC irrespective of tenure.

2.0 Mobility Scooter Policy for council housing blocks of flats

See appendix 1 for draft Fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats.

3. Finance Comments

The views of the finance team were agreed that resources can be met within existing budget, and this will be monitored on a regular basis.

4. Legal Comments

Tenancy condition 5.2 applies.

5. Links to Corporate Aims

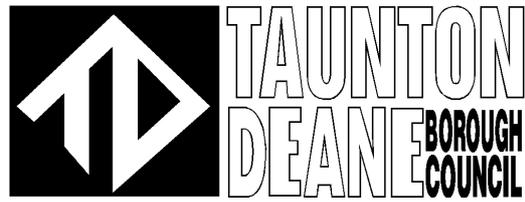
This policy supports the HRA business plan 2012-2042 strategic housing objectives, which reflect the council corporate priorities.

- 6. Environmental Implications**
No adverse implications.
- 7. Community Safety Implications**
The recommendations from this report will form part of the overall policy on security and safety in TDBC flats.
- 8. Equalities Impact**
Equality impact assessment has been undertaken as part of this policy and finding recorded in appendix 2
- 9. Risk Management**
The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a duty on TDBC as a landlord to take general fire precautions to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on the premises and in the immediate vicinity. Mobility scooters in communal hallways have been identified as a risk.
- 10. Partnership Implications**
In order to deliver the policy it is crucial that we will continue to work in partnership with key agencies including the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership.
- 11. Tenants Forum comments**
On 12th September 2012 TDBC officers met with members of the tenants forum to discuss the draft mobility scooter policy for council housing blocks of flats. And the following comments are observations made:
 - Some people will clearly be disadvantaged;
 - Assessment of designated areas suitable for storage and re-charging;
 - Guidance on storage and re-charging to be extended to those tenants considering purchasing mobility scooter.

The tenants forum expressed their support for this policy with the few adjustment, which have been included.

- 12. Recommendation**
TSMB are asked to;
 - Consider and comment on the draft mobility scooter policy for blocks of flats,
 - support a recommendation for approval of the policy to portfolio holder.

Norah Day - Housing Estates Manager
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MOBILITY SCOOTER POLICY FOR COUNCIL HOUSING BLOCKS OF FLATS

SEPTEMBER 2012

Policy Title:	Mobility Scooter Policy for Council Housing Blocks of Flats
Lead Officers:	
Policy drafted by:	Norah Day – Housing Estates Manager
Date Agreed by Board:	
Date Equality Impact Assessment completed:	
Next Review Date:	



Taunton Deane Borough Council Mobility Scooters Policy - In blocks of flats

TDBC aims to provide a safe environment in which tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff are assured that the risk of injury is minimised. Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs must not be parked or stored in protected corridors, staircases, passageways, and surrounding areas servicing the premises. Exception only in designated areas which have been assessed as suitable for storage and re-charging.

All communal areas **MUST** be free of obstruction.

What TDBC housing service will do:

- TDBC housing services officers will carry out inspections of the blocks of flats to ensure clear hallways;
- Tenants and leaseholders will be made aware of their own obligations to safely maintain their tenancies in a fashion that minimises the risk to themselves and the other occupants of the blocks in which they reside;
- If space permits it may be possible to create designated charging/storage facilities;
- TDBC housing service will offer positive guidance on re-charging and storage to those tenants with mobility scooters; or considering purchasing a scooter;
- Provide relevant employees with safety training.

Tenants must formally request permission to make alterations to their home to accommodate mobility scooters, and the housing service will consider all such requests for mobility scooters in blocks of flats.

Tenancy Condition 5.2 states:

You will undertake to keep the communal hall, staircases, landing, lifts, passageways and surrounding area serving your dwelling in a clean and tidy condition and free from obstruction. These areas must not be used in such a manner as to cause nuisance or annoyance to other residents.

Equality Impact Assessment – pro-forma

Responsible person	Norah Day	Job Title Housing Estates Manager
Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)	Proposed new policy/service	√
	Change to Policy/service	
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	
	Part of timetable	
What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which, service, MTFP proposal)	Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services Mobility Scooter Policy 2012	
Section One – Scope of the assessment		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service?	<i>Aims to provide a safe environment in which tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff are assured that the risk of injury or damage to their homes caused by fire are minimised.</i>	
Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service?	<i>Mobility Scooter Policy is targeted at all the protected groups including: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation; Marriage and civil partnerships.</i>	
What evidence has been used in the assessment - data, engagement undertaken – please list each source that has been used The information can be found on....	<p>Data: Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005</p> <p>Engagement: Consultation with a diverse group of tenants, staff, senior managers within the housing services carried out since January 2012.</p>	
Section two – Conclusion drawn about the impact of service/policy/function/change on different groups highlighting negative impact, unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality		
Consultation with tenants and officers concludes that some people will be disadvantaged.		

I have concluded that there is/should be:	
No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	
Adjust the policy/decision/service	Actions will be identified that will help mitigate the impact of this policy
Continue with the policy/decision/service	
Stop and remove the policy/decision/service	
Reasons and documentation to support conclusions <i>Consultation with tenants on 12 September 2012.</i>	
Section four – Implementation – timescale for implementation	
TSMB report 24 September 2012.	
Section Five – Sign off	
Responsible officer Norah Day Date September 2012	Management Team Housing estates Date
Section six – Publication and monitoring	
Published on	
Next review date September 2015	Date logged on Covalent

Action Planning

The table should be completed with all actions identified to mitigate the effects concluded.

Actions table						
Service area	Housing Services			Date	September 2012	
Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed	Who is responsible?	By when?	How will this be monitored?	Expected outcomes from carrying out actions	
Storage and re-charging of mobility scooters	If space permits it may be possible to create designated storage/recharging facilities	Housing services managers	2012 – on going	Inspections on site.	Providing a safe environment and support tenants with mobility needs.	
Guidance and advice	Estate officers will offer positive guidance on storage and re charging to tenants with mobility scooters and those considering purchase.	Estate officers	2012 – on going	Regular meetings and monitor of inspections carried out by officers.	Ensuring a safe environment and supporting tenants to safely maintain their tenancies in a fashion that minimises the risk to themselves and the other occupants of the blocks in which they reside.	

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 24th September 2012 at 6pm in the Meeting Room, Kilkenny Court, Taunton.

- Present:** Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chairman), Mrs Jessie Bunn, Mrs Enid Drage, Mr Mark Edwards, Mr Dennis Galpin, Mr Ian Gould, Mrs Judith Hegarty, Mr Robert Middleton, and Councillor Robert Bowrah.
- Officers:** Tim Burton (Growth and Development Manager), James Barrahan (Health and Housing Manager), Steve Boland (Housing Services Lead), Phil Webb (Property Services Manager), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Rosie Reed (Tenant Services Development Officer) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).
- Others:** Lisa Wychwood and Graham Vickery from Halcon North Tenants & Residents Association
Sarah Harwood on behalf of her parents.
John Beaman
Mrs B Edwards
Councillor Mrs F Smith

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

Mrs Tammy Urquhart, Councillor Steve Brooks and Mr Kevin Hellier

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 August 2012 were taken as read and signed.

3. Public Question Time

Representatives of the Halcon North Tenants and Residents Association as well as local residents and tenants have expressed a desire to ask questions express their opinions. Chairman suggested that this be done after Board Members have had their opportunity to question officers have given their report.

4. Declaration of Interest

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

- Mr Dustyn Etherington
- Mr Mark Edwards
- Mrs Jessie Bunn
- Mrs Enid Drage
- Mr Dennis Galpin
- Mr Ian Gould
- Mrs Judith Hegarty
- Mr Robert Middleton

Councillor Bowrah declared a personal interest as he has family members who are council tenants.

5. Update Report on Halcon North Regeneration Project.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning an update on the further work undertaken since the Executive resolved to progress the project to the next stage in October 2011. Board Members are requested to comment and provide a steer to the Community Scrutiny Committee as to whether the Council should still proceed to the next stage involving developing a more detailed business case leading to the procurement of a developer; or alternatively whether in light of this further information that alternative options should now be considered.

Halcon North comprises 7.25 hectares of housing land and approximately 220 dwellings. This part of Halcon features in the top 5% of most deprived wards in the country. The project comprises redevelopment of the area which covers Creechbarrow Road, Valley Road, Beadon Road and Moorland Road.

The Development appraisal indicated a maximum of fifty dwellings being returned to the HRA, whilst the consultation identifies 75 respondents would like to move back to the area as a Council tenant should redevelopment occur.

The Board was updated last year, when the Outline Business Case and the Project Brief was presented and considered. The Executive subsequently resolved to accept that the wider benefits of regeneration outweighed any concerns around mix and tenure and to proceed to the next stage and procurement of a developer.

The Board showed support for the Halcon Regeneration Project but not of the return of 50 houses coming back to HRA. Despite this objection to such a small return of houses the Board resolved to support the major regeneration of Halcon.

In the interim, the Council has been gathering information about the condition of the Council's Housing stock as well as re-engaging with the communities in the Halcon area.

After this update report is presented here, the board and residents' comments and opinions would be taken to first Community Scrutiny Committee then the Executive Committee.

There are still four options open to us as a Council. They are as follows:

1. Accept that the wider benefits of regeneration outweigh any concerns around mix and tenure and proceed to the next stage and procurement of a developer.
2. Remove the requirement to return any properties to the Housing Revenue Account which would improve viability and, therefore, increase the overall proportion of affordable housing within the scheme.
3. Move away from current proposals and explore options for a smaller scale redevelopment.
4. No longer consider full regeneration and look at retrofit options funded through

the HRA to address the overcrowding issues.

Consultation with residents was carried out during late August by the Estates and Community Development Teams accompanied by members of the Tenant services Management Board and Tenants' Forum. Eighty two per cent of households completed the questionnaire, the full results of which are attached as an appendix. Fifty Two per cent of respondees supported the preferred option i.e. full scale regeneration, although analysis of responses to questions two and six indicate that a number of the issues in this neighbourhood and improvements necessary to address such problems could be achieved without demolishing all the properties e.g. Removing problem families, dealing with rubbish, removal of planters, reduced speeding etc.

Answers to questions four and seven around size and occupancy of properties indicate that whilst the majority of properties are two bed roomed most are occupied by three or less people. This would seem to imply that overcrowding is not widespread and that extension of some existing properties could be a more proportionate response to this issue. Responses around general state of repair identify a wide range of issues not related to the structural condition of the properties.

The Halcon Multi-agency Group's (MAG) views were recently sought. Organisations represented at the meeting included the local church, Friends of Hamilton Gault Park, the Police, NHS, Halcon Primary School, the Link Centre and Knightstone Housing Association.

The group considered that there are housing issues in the area, but that a solely housing regeneration would be an opportunity missed to improve the area, other solutions apart from housing are needed.

There was general support to a phased approach to regeneration, which could act as a catalyst for further change. Development should be linked to an overall master plan which identifies opportunities for change across the entire estate (e.g. around school, church etc.) and not just in these four streets.

A full scale and unphased redevelopment would cause issues around the school roll and upon neighbour and family support networks.

The number of houses should not be maximised at the expense of the health and wellbeing of residents. Whilst stock is not necessarily the biggest issue in the area, issues arising from siblings sharing bedrooms should be addressed.

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

- Member suggested a phased regeneration of the Halcon area i.e. street by street. Also residents who said no to returning after the regeneration may change their mind once they have seen the area afterwards.
- Member asked what percentage of houses would be disabled friendly.
Officer said there would be a chance that residents may change their mind after the regeneration. The exact percentage is not known as yet. But officers would return to the Board to discuss the precise details at later date.
- Member suggested Officers speak to and ask residents with disabilities to advise them on the dos and don'ts for the houses.

- Members were happy with the report but were unsure what option to support for the Regeneration project. How many low cost houses would be available in the scheme.
Officer stated that there would be 200 affordable houses available under the new scheme. The total number of houses would be 350 to 400 houses. This would be split between the housing market and affordable. But not social rented.
- Member showed concerns over losing 192 houses. The Regeneration project was supposed to improve the lives of the residents and tenants of Halcon North. Council could start by removing the brick planters.
- Member was surprised by the number of residents and tenants who didn't want to return the estate after the regeneration.
- Member showed concerns that Council couldn't guarantee communities would stay together after the regeneration.
- Member suggested that the Council should be more sensitive at where it moves and relocates tenants and residents. In relation mainly to problem families.
- Member asked what the financial implications if they were to increase to 65 houses from 50.
Officer stated it would have to be funded by HRA but there is no exact cost. It would depend on the size of the houses.
- Member asked if money from business plan could go into providing additional houses.
Officer stated that this was not currently planned but something that the Council could look at.
Officer mentioned additional expenditure wouldn't just include the build cost but the ongoing maintenance of the additional houses.
- Member asked how many houses would be energy efficient of the 50 planned homes.
Officer stated that new homes would naturally be more energy efficient than the original houses as new builds generally are. The Council would have to look into this more and consider the increase in building cost for more energy efficient houses.

After Board Members discussed this item, Members of public made the following comments and asked questions. Responses shown in italics:

- A resident stated that only 1 or 2 houses in the area create problems for all the streets.
- Request for the removal of the brick planter was echoed. It was stated that residents felt they were a hazard.
- It was commented that the majority of the extra houses being built in the Regeneration Project would not be socially rented houses or Council owned and this would break up the links of familiarity and support that communities have built up.
- Concern was shown if the number of houses in the areas were to reduce this would impact the school including teachers and general staff. Impact could mean people in the area lose their jobs at the school.
- Resident asked if new community facilities could be part of the Regeneration including new school and health centre as well as just extending current houses rather rebuilding.

- Resident commented that current market value of the houses for some residents wouldn't allow them to purchase a similar size house elsewhere in Taunton. Value of most three or four bed houses £130,000.
- Resident commented also the many residents have been refused mortgages or not eligible due to age/value of property.

Chairman enquired of Board Members and members of the public present if there were comments, suggestions or ideas for solutions:

- Resident suggested a phased regeneration of the area, moving block by block through the estate. Moving residents into the empty houses as a temporary measure.
- Resident commented that not returning to the estate and limiting the number of times they have to move would reduce the amount of upheaval to their families.
- Resident commented that some of the houses suffer with overcrowding or under occupancy.
- Members showed support for suggestion of phased regeneration.
- Member asked why the Council couldn't undertake a small scale, block by block regeneration.
- Member showed concerns over financial impacts of taking money from the business plan.
- Member commented that the housing surplus could be used for other tenants and houses.
- Members commented that it needs to stack up financially whichever option Council goes with.
- Member supported the suggestion of looking at household sizes, making sure the families and people were in the correct size house.
- Member said that when promises are made they need to be kept and better estate management is needed.
- It was commented that only one option was given last time.
- Member commented that a long term phase of regeneration would be more costly.
Officer stated that it would be more costly. This is based on no loss of stock.
- Member commented that they were not happy with any loss of housing stock.
Officer mentioned another factor; money from the sales could be injected back into the scheme. The Council would be on their own but there is the possibility of Grant Funding.
- Member commented that it would be cheaper to improve the existing housing stock in some cases. This would prevent the breakup of communities.
- Observations of a resident who accompanied an estate officer; communities appeared to be well knitted and only a small percentage spoil it for the rest. The planners are a health and safety issue. The scheme is going to break knitted communities and also tidying up the roads would help.
- Member commented that increasing the size of the existing properties through extension and in return re-assessing the rent to be paid for the property.
- Member asked how varied the length of time some tenants had been in their properties is.
- Member asked how many general houses up for sale and how long had some people been on the waiting list as some houses had remained empty for years.
The two projects are linked i.e. Priority Area Strategy and Regeneration Project.

- Member asked residents how they would feel over the noise and disruption of small scale regeneration project.
- Resident commented that some residents and tenants would be affected by the work but small scale regeneration is preferred to large scale and all the upheaval.
- Members commented that they were happy with a form of option two and no loss of housing stock. Maybe a combination of options three and four.
Officers stated that the Council has had quotes for the removal of six of the planters. Advice from the Deane DLO tree section is to be taken in regards to the trees themselves throughout the area.
- Member asked if the Council could allocate money for planting trees in the area.
Officers would come back with results from a survey to the planters and trees. Officer wanted to thank the board and residents for their assistance with the surveys.
- Resident thanked Tenant Empowerment Manager for the way the survey was organised.

Resolved that the:

1. That the officer's report be noted.
2. That Board shows NO support for option one of the Regeneration Project.
3. That the Board shows support and recommends to the Community Scrutiny Committee and the Executive that a combination of options three and four with no loss of housing stock be considered for the Regeneration Project rather than the initial choice of option one.

6. Verbal Report on HRA Business Plan 2012 - 2042.

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update on Taunton Deane's HRA Business Plan. The officer gave a brief update as a full report would be presented to the Board Members next month.

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2012-2042 had gone live in April this year. The Business Plan is working document and changes/amendments to this would be continual made.

The officer informed the Board of the following issues and topics relating to the Business Plan:

- The assessment of Management overstating in spending costs,
- Spending on non-dwelling properties e.g. garages
- The wider allocation on spend for extensions
- Surveys for Water Treatment plants

The budget for disabled facilities has a proposed increase on five percent year on year.

The Officer details to funding areas as part of the Business Plan; the sustainable energy fund, this to include work on properties as well as education for residents as well as the

approval for a temporary project manager post and the Social Housing Development Fund; details of which to include how the money from this still to be decided through a development of policy.

The officer said that a maintenance programme back covering five years and a review of the original cut.

The officer informed the Board of the creation of a post to support residents and tenants through the Welfare Reform and the changes to the Welfare system.

Housing staff currently does not have the teams to deal with the individual project, these would have to be formed.

The officers said that models around the impact of the HRA Business Plan impact would be included in a future report for the Board to comment on.

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

- Board Member asked does the change in the timescale of maintenance to properties from eight to five years include painting.
Officers confirmed this change includes all outside maintenance.
- Board Members asked if Officers could keep a closer eye on their painters and some suggested they would rather do it themselves.
Officers reassured Board Members that they are aware of the regular issues with the painting contractors. Officers are reviewing and looking into long term contractors.

Resolved that the Tenant Services Management Board note the officer's report.

7. Update Report on Fire Safety Policy.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning an update report on the new Fire Safety Policy. Housing Services has carried out a review of its existing fire safety procedures. This review has led to the formulation of a new draft fire safety policy to ensure the safety of tenants and leaseholders, staff contractors and visitors.

TDBC recognises its responsibility as a landlord to ensure the safety of its tenants and leaseholders, staff, contractors and visitors as well as creating a safe environment and minimising risk.

The new draft fire safety policy has been produced in response to the Local Government Group Fire Safety Report published in 2011 and also as a result of recent research undertaken by TDBC, the findings of which formulated a programme of inspections to address health and safety within council properties. The new draft policy applies to all blocks of flats owned and or managed by TDBC irrespective of tenure.

The view of the legal team is agreed that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies and requires a responsible person to complete a Fire Risk Assessment of Common Areas of the building and record and act on the findings to ensure that general fire precautions are provided.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a duty on TDBC as a landlord to take general fire precautions to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on the premises and in the immediate vicinity.

This policy supports the HRA business plan 2012-2042 strategic housing objectives, which reflect the council corporate priorities.

In order to deliver the policy it is crucial that we would continue to work in partnership with key agencies including the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership.

The tenant's forum expressed their support for this policy with the few adjustments, which have been included.

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

- Board Member asked if Risk Assessments had been done for the communal areas.
Officer stated that the Risk Assessments for communal areas were some of the first to be completed.
- Board has if Officer's could define a fire hazard. Someone had told them that plug in air fresheners were a hazard.
Officers stated a rolling program of work assessments being completed on priority basis.
- Board Member asked if someone runs and organises an event in a communal area, does that person have to give out safety notices.
- Board Member asked if we have such a thing as Fire Safety Packs.
- Board Member commented Braille Notices were missing from some of communal areas.

Resolved that the: -

1. The Officers report be noted; and
2. The Tenant Services Management Board supports the recommendation for approval of the policy to portfolio holder.

8. Update Report on Mobility Scooter Policy.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning an update detailing a new Mobility Scooter Policy relating to Taunton Deane Borough Council compliance with Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This policy was produced alongside the new Fire Safety Policy.

The Council recognises its responsibility as a landlord to ensure the safety of its tenants and leaseholders, staff, contractors and visitors. The new draft mobility scooter policy has been produced to support the fire safety policy. The new draft policy applies to all blocks of flats owned and or managed by the Council, irrespective of tenure.

This policy supports the HRA business plan 2012-2042 strategic housing objectives, which reflect the council corporate priorities.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a duty on the Council as a landlord to take general fire precautions to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on the premises and in the immediate vicinity. Mobility scooters in communal hallways have been identified as a risk.

In order to deliver the policy it is crucial that we will continue to work in partnership with key agencies including the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership.

Comments Tenants Forum from 12th September 2012 expressed their support for this policy with the few adjustments, which have been included.

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

- Board Member commented that they were a Mobility Scooter user and despite being heavily insured as required, owners would be liable and open to theft if vehicles were stored outside.
Officers stated that the Council has a duty to ensure hallways and fire exits are kept clear at all times.
- Board Member asked if outside charging points and the installation of secure anchor points for scooters could be looked at.
Officers stated that the council were looking into a variety of storage solutions.
- Board Member suggested that tenants should pay for this facility, a cost per week.
- Board Member mentioned that there is an example of outside storage for scooters at Victoria Gate.
- Board Member suggested pairing empty properties more carefully with correct users.
- Board Member suggested establishing a medical need for a Mobility Scooter before making specific arrangements for tenants or residents.

Resolved that the:-

1. The officer's report on the New Mobility Scooter Policy be noted; and
2. The Board supports the recommendation for approval of the policy to portfolio holder.

9. AOB

No further business was raised at this meeting.

(The meeting ended at 8.16pm)