

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board to be held in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 20 January 2014 at 18:00.

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## **Agenda**

- 1 Housekeeping
- 2 Apologies.
- 3 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 16 December 2013 (attached).
- 4 Public Question Time.
- 5 Declaration of Interests  
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- 6 Kilkenny Court Update. Report of the Support Housing Manager and Property Manager for Maintenance (verbal).  
Reporting Officers: Steve Esau  
Christine Thompson
- 7 Review of HRA Business Plan 2012 - 2042. Report of the Director for Housing and Communities (attached).  
Reporting Officer: James Barrah
- 8 Taunton Deane Borough Council Organisational Structure Update. Report of the Director for Housing and Communities (verbal).  
Reporting Officer: James Barrah
- 9 Legionella and Electrical Installation Testing Policies. Report of the Property Manager for Maintenance. (attached)  
Reporting Officer: Steve Esau
- 10 Update on Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014. Report of the Tenant Empowerment Manager (attached).  
Reporting Officer: Martin Price

Bruce Lang  
Assistant Chief Executive

11 February 2014

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

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

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

Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chairman will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors or Tenant Services Management Board Members begin to debate the item.

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

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

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

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



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

**For further information about the meeting, please contact the Corporate Support Unit on 01823 356414 or email [r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.bryant@tauntondeane.gov.uk)**

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**Tenant Services Management Board Members:-**

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

**Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 16 December 2013 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, Belvedere Road, Taunton.**

**Present:** Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chairman),  
Mrs J Hegarty (Vice-Chairman),  
Mrs J Bunn, Mrs E Drage, Mr M Edwards, Mr D Gaplin, Mr K Hellier, Mr R Middleton, Councillor Bowrah and Councillor Miss Smith.

**Officers:** Paul Hadley (Housing Manager – Lettings and Anti-Social Behaviour), Steven Clarke (Tenant Services Development Officer), Michaela Mullen (Welfare Reform Project Officer), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Lisa West (Housing Income Manager), Phil Webb (Housing Manager – Property Services), James Barrahan (Health and Housing Manager), Simon Lewis (Assistant Director – Housing & Community Development wef 1 January 2014), Lucy Clothier (Accountant), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

**Others:** Councillor Mrs F Smith  
John Beaman; Vice-Chair of Tenants' Forum.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

**1. Apologies**

No apologies received.

**2. Public Question Time**

Resident of Kilkenny Court approached the Board and Officers for details of the Kilkenny Court works timetable. The residents would like to know more information regarding the planned ongoing works at Kilkenny Court including when some of it would start and how long it would take?

It had been five months since the residents had approached the Board for support regarding works that needed doing. Although, Officers informed the Kilkenny resident that the work on the guttering had been completed, in places the guttering was falling on the building.

Kilkenny Court residents felt that the work needing to be done at Kilkenny Court had been brushed under the carpet or forgotten about.

Would the officers be able to provide more information to the residents regarding the works and their schedule?

*The Housing Manager for Property Services wanted to reassure the residents of Kilkenny Court that the planned works for the building had not be brushed under the carpet or forgotten but that the work needs to be done correctly, which included right down to the planning of each job. The majority of the planned works would be completed by the end of March 2014. The lift repair and replacement project would start in April 2014, but there were still no firm details relating to these works as yet. The officer did not have the precise details of the all planned works for Kilkenny Court. If the residents had any concerns or questions regarding all the planned works, they could contact the Scheme Manager or Supported Housing Manager with any of their concerns.*

*Board Members requested an update report from the Housing Manager regarding the planned works at Kilkenny Court to be presented to the Board at the next meeting in January 2014. The Board also asked the Supported Housing Manager and Property Manager from Maintenance to present at the January meeting of the Board.*

### **3. Declarations of Interests**

Councillor Bowrah and Councillor Miss Smith declared personal interests as several members of their families were Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants. Mr Etherington, Mrs Hegarty, Mrs Bunn, Mrs Drage, Mr Edwards, Mr Galpin, Mr Gould, Mr Hellier and Mr Middleton declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

### **4. Tenants and Leaseholders Open Day**

The Vice-Chair of Tenants' Forum gave a verbal update concerning the Tenants' Forum input towards Tenants and Leaseholder Open Day 2014.

The Forum had some suggestions to present to the Board regarding 2014 Open Day and their future involvement with the organisation of the Open Days; this had previously been discussed with the Tenant Empowerment Manager. Below was a summary of the Forums' suggestions brought to the Board and Officers:

- A 'working group' should be set up to include representatives from Tenants' Forum, Tenant Services Management Board, Supported Housing Service Development Group and Leaseholders Forum to shape the open day.
- The Tenants Forum had felt the last two Open Days had not been published to the fullest potential.
- The Forum was looking for three volunteers from the Board to sit as representative on the working group to help organise the Open Days.
- First meeting would be on 6 January 2014 from 10:00am until 3:00pm at The Deane House.
- The Forum were also setting up a 'proofing reading group' to work through all the Housing Department leaflets, handouts, letters and information documents as there had been some small mistakes spotted and the Forum felt this looked unprofessional.

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

- Three Tenant Services Management Board volunteers to sit on Forums' working group were Judith Hegarty, Jessie Bunn and Dustyn Etherington.

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

## 5. Welfare Reform Update

The Tenant Services Development Officer presented a Welfare Reform update via Powerpoint presentation. The Welfare Reform Project Officer and Housing Manager from Lettings and Anti-Social Behaviour provided additional verbal information in support.

Below was a summary of the topics and information covered during the presentation to the Board Members:

- The Welfare Reform Act became law in April 2013. This only affected working age tenants, those below state pension credit age.
- Under the new act, the followings areas changed; Under Occupancy Charge, Benefit Cap, Non Dependant Deductions and Universal Credit.
- There were currently 15 tenant families affected by the Benefit Cap in the Taunton Deane area.
- Also central government changes to Council Tax; this has in turn affected Council Tax Benefit for low income and non-working households.
- Overall those tenants in rent arrears were down in comparison to last year.
- Overall that tenants affected by Welfare Reform was down.
- Of the 5795 properties, 406 tenants were affected by the changes 43 of which have moved with six pending.
- The main issues reported from the project sites nationally were increase in rent arrears and lack of smaller properties.
- Currently, within Taunton Deane there was a lack of one bedroom property.
- There were a variety of sources to provide support and advice for tenants.
- 35 Transfer Removal Grants in 2012/13 and 38 so far in 2013/14.
- The project objectives for the future consist of
  - a. Digital Inclusion Project
  - b. Improved partnership working to tackle deprivation
  - c. Funding
  - d. Training for staff and tenants.

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

- 90 plus people want to downsize their properties? When would it level out and would this decrease officer time?  
*The Council had probably cleared that stage at the moment but there was still work to be done.*
- Was access to IT at a stage for advertisement yet?  
*The Council was not at the publishing stage yet with this project as it didn't have internet access. The vast majority of the facilities were meeting halls and community buildings. There was also the possibility of a mobile internet access facility through the Somerset County Council mobile library facility for those rural areas with no facilities.*
- 'Help you get online' or HUGO; was advertised at the TPAS conference.  
*The key to digital inclusion project was getting members of the communities not just Council Tenants.*
- Would there be CRB or Criminal Background checks for IT champions within those facilities?  
*Officers were looking into the DBS checks, especially for those who would be working with vulnerable persons using those facilities.*

- Would Wifi internet access be available at these facilities to everyone using the space?  
*The Council didn't want to exclude anyone using these facilities so Wifi was being looked into.*
- Concerning the blocking of unwanted or inappropriate websites, how would the council implement this at the facilities?  
*The Council were looking into set locations and set times with staff or champions to support.*
- Board Members shared concerns that the SCC Library Bus didn't stop anywhere long enough for internet access.

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

## **6. Taunton Deane and West Somerset Re-structure Update**

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update regarding the Taunton Deane and West Somerset Shared Services and Council Re-structure.

The project was now progressing with the re-structure of both councils.

The Health and Housing Manager had recently been appointed the new Director of Housing and Communities.

The Strategy and Performance Manager had recently been appointed the new Assistant Director of Housing and Communities.

There would be more information to come in the New Year.

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's update.

## **7. Rents for Social Housing from 2015-16; Communities and Local Government Consultation.**

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the key government proposals on rent policy for social housing from April 2015 onwards. Draft guidance for stock-owning local authorities on rents for social housing was also set out.

Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) was invited to comment on key rent policy proposals and the guidance. Comments would be included in the council's final response to the consultation which ended on 24th December 2013.

In October 2013 the Department for Communities and Local Government announced proposals on rent policy for social housing from April 2015 onwards.

The main proposals were:

- Moving from annual increases in weekly rents of RPI + 0.5 percentage points, to increases of CPI + 1 percentage point. As a result, removing the flexibility available to landlords to increase weekly social rents each year by an additional £2, above the increase in formula rent, where the rent was below the rent flexibility level and rent cap; and

- Making clear that rent policy does not apply where a social tenant household had an income of at least £60,000 a year.

Draft guidance setting out the Government's policy on rents for local authorities was also proposed, and replaced the "Guide to Social Rent Reforms", published by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions in 2001, and "A Guide to Social Rent Reform in the Local Authority Sector", issued in February 2003.

During the meeting, the Board Members had the opportunity to discuss and agree their views on the proposals which would be incorporated into the final response to be made to government by the officers.

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

- The additional rent, could it be kept locally?  
*It could go to either building affordable homes or maintain current stock.*

**Resolved** that the:-

1. The officer's report was noted.
2. Board Members provided the final responses to officers regarding the consultation issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government on Rents for Social Housing from 2015-16.

## **8. Review of the HRA Business Case Update**

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal briefing on the planned review of the HRA Business Plan.

A report of the HRA Business Plan review would be brought to the Board in the New Year.

Below was a summary of the headlines regarding the HRA Business Plan review:

- There was a theoretical surplus of £242,000.
- There were big changes, financial issues concerning main income.
- There would be changes to the rent policy and current stock levels.
- The reduced reserve position stands at £91,000.
- Final Balance £167,064
- So far 39 Right to Buy's sales this year. This was higher in comparison with last year.
- There had been no impact on business with the change from RPI to CPI.
- Looking at rent convergence, the target was 91%, but only 14% converged currently. The convergence would be halted after 2014/15.
- All new tenancy would be subject to the new rent formula.
- Reviewing the Voids budget, altering the budget to what the Council should be spending not, what the Council was spending.
- There were 600 Voids this year, still ongoing. Previously, year's figures were 400.

- Consider increasing the budget. The individual cost per voids was £3000.
- Looking at a pre-planned maintenance cycle of every five years.
- Budget brought forward for some expenditure now, which would reduce expenditure in the future.
- Management costs had increased by £77,000 per year.

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

- Were the loans that the Council had taken out at a Fixed Rate of Interest?  
*The majority were fixed rate but some were viable rate. The information presented to the Board was the worse case scenario.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

(The meeting ended at 7.50pm)

## Declaration of Interests

### **Tenant Services Management Board**

- Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants;
  - Mrs J Bunn
  - Mrs E Drage
  - Mr M Edwards
  - Mr D Etherington
  - Mr D Galpin
  - Mr I Gould
  - Mrs J Hegarty
  - Mr K Hellier
  - Mr R Middleton
  
- Family Member(s) are Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenant;
  - Councillor Bowrah
  - Councillor Miss Smith

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Tenant Services Management Board – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014

### Review of HRA Business Plan 2012-2042

**Report of the Director – Housing and Communities - James Barrah**  
(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jean Adkins)

#### 1.0 Executive Summary

Following the HRA Self Financing settlement a 30 year HRA Business Plan 2012-2042 was agreed from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012. At this time a regular review process was agreed. Since the last review process a number of significant changes and issues have arisen that impact on the Business Plan, consequently a further review has been undertaken.

The purpose of this report is to consider the aspects of the HRA Business Plan 2012-42 under review, and refresh the financial aspects of the plan to ensure they remain current and robust.

#### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 It was agreed by the Council that the HRA Business Plan would be subject to a formal annual review involving member scrutiny and agreement as part of the budget setting timetable each year.
- 2.2 The context in which Housing Services operates continues to change rapidly. As a result a review of the business plan has now been undertaken and these issues and their impact are outlined in this report.

#### 3.0 Business Plan - Income

##### 3.1 Stock Figures and Average Rent

Due to increased discounts, the number of Right to Buy sales has significantly increased since the last review of the Business Plan (see table below).

Table showing RTB sales

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 (to Nov13)
Right to Buy Sales	6	7	9	11	37	37

There have also been a small number of disposals to housing associations for redevelopment such as Parmin Close and Victoria Gate and the planned demolitions involved in the councils own Creechbarrow Road development, which have also been reflected in the updated assumptions.

In addition some acquisitions have been made using Right to Buy receipts (buybacks of dwellings previously bought under the Right to Buy scheme).

This has meant that the number of dwellings at 2014/15 has been reduced to 5941 (from 5980), and consequently the rent income forecasted in the Business Plan has needed to be reduced in line with this.

However, the average rent is slightly higher than was forecast in the last review and this has reversed the reduction of rent in the early years.

### **3.2 Changes to the Rent Formula**

Since 2001, rents for social housing have been set based on a formula set by Government. The formula creates a "formula" rent for each property, which is worked out based on a combination of the relative value of the property, relative local earnings levels and the size of the property.

Landlords have been expected to move the actual rent of a property to this formula rent, over time, by annually increasing the weekly rents by Retail Price Index (RPI) + 0.5% plus a convergence factor of up to an additional £2 per week where the rent is below the formula rent for the property.

At the Spending Round 2013 the Government has directed that from 2015-16, rents in the social sector would increase by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 1% and that this rent policy will apply for 10 years.

The change from using RPI to the generally lower CPI measure of inflation is not expected to adversely affect the Business Plan as the government target for CPI is 0.5% lower than for RPI which has been reflected in the change in additional uplift from 0.5% to 1%. The actual impact will however depend on the difference between RPI and CPI in future years.

The change in the formula to remove the convergence factor of up to £2 will however have an effect on future rents and income. Rents have previously been set with the intention of reaching formula rent (also known as target rent) where possible in 2015/16, but with the changes proposed the convergence factor will not be included after 2014/15 leaving only 14% of rents converged to formula rent (if convergence continued 91% of rents would have been converged in 2015/16).

This means that for one year rents will be higher than was previously thought because rather than spreading the remaining difference in actual rent and target rent over two years as previously planned, the difference (up to the maximum convergence factor of £2 per week) will be increased in one year, giving higher than

expected increases in rent for 2014/15. However after this, rent will only be uplifted only CPI + 1% and so rents will increase by less than expected in the Business Plan.

Since the proposal to change rent policy lasts for 10 years, after this time an increase of only CPI (and no additional increase) has been assumed. This adversely impacts the income further since the previous rent policy with an above inflationary uplift has no end date and so was assumed to continue for the length of the Business Plan.

### 3.3 Relets at 'Formula Rent'

Formula rent figures have already been calculated and set for all Taunton Deane Borough Council properties and in order to help mitigate the loss of income in the Business Plan, through the change in convergence, all dwellings being relet with effect from December 2013 are let at formula rent level.

## 4 Business Plan - Expenditure

### 4.1 Voids

The number of void properties has shown a steady increase for a number of years and a more recent significant increase in the first part of this year. Historically void costs have generally exceeded budget.

In addition, a new Lettable Standard has been introduced to provide a specification for relets, which has increased costs slightly and our average cost of voids remain high. We are currently investigating the reasons for this apparently high cost and we are being assisted with this by Deane DLO. It is anticipated that improvements to DLO software and the introduction of schedule of rates by the DLO will provide better control on voids expenditure in future. For the purposes of the Business Plan we have proposed a voids budget for 2014/15 of £1.8m reducing to £1.55m in future years, this represents an average void cost of £3k reducing to £2.6k, the latter being closer to market expectations. The service will continue to provide further efficiencies aiming to reduce this budget further.

Table showing voids and spend

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 (Forecasted)
Budget	N/A	909,030	1,099,930	1,099,930	1,128,600
Outturn Spend	1,143,564	1,493,802	1,076,075	1,668,031	2,000,000
No. of Voids	469	435	494	488	600
Average Cost of Void	2,440	3,430	2,180	3,420	3,330

## 4.2 Planned Maintenance

Following the “No” vote to stock transfer in 2006, a significant cut was made in HRA expenditure in order to fund the work that was known to be required to achieve Decent Homes. One of the changes that was made at this time was to reduce the frequency of planned maintenance (external repair and decoration) from a cycle of 5 years to 8 years. A 5 year contract is planned which will combine external repairs and redecoration with the replacement of fascias and soffits with uPVC. This is currently at tender stage and should start early in the new financial year.

Consequently, an appropriate budget has been proposed for a five year period, for the completion of this work. Following this period these costs are expected to reduce due to the volumes of lower maintenance components installed, and the extensive door replacement programme which is ongoing. Although this is a higher cost in the short term, over the longer term this will deliver savings.

Table showing Pre-planned Maintenance Budget.

Business Plan Year (Financial Year)	3 (2014/15)	4 – 7 (2015/16 – 18/19)	8 – onwards (2019/20 - )
Budget	£1,100K	£800K pa	£100K pa

## 4.2 Compliance

There are a number of important areas of safety checking and specialist maintenance within the housing maintenance theme. A number of these areas are covered by statute and compliance with these and codes of practice is essential. There are some weaknesses in our approach to compliance issues and this has resulted in action plans being put in place to move these forward. We seek expertise in these specialist areas and have to rely on contractors and third parties which is not ideal.

Procedures and arrangements that we currently have in place would include: Asbestos sampling, testing and removal; Gas, oil and solid fuel servicing and maintenance; Fire risk assessment; Smoke detector servicing; Sewerage and water treatment plant servicing and maintenance; Construction Design and Management Regulations.

We are currently seeking to employ specialist services in a number of additional areas commencing with what we would consider to be the priority areas. The costs for these include not only the servicing and testing procedures but also any remedial work that may become necessary. These areas are set out in the table below.

Table showing compliance items and costs

Compliance Item	Estimated Annual Cost	Length of programme	Testing Cycle
Periodic electrical testing	£350,000	3 years	10 years (5 years for Supported

			Housing)
Legionella monitoring/ L8	£10,800	Ongoing	Monthly
Emergency lighting testing	£9,600	Ongoing	Monthly
Oil supply systems	£2,500	1 year	10 years
Lift replacement at Kilkenny Court	£135,000	1 year	N/A

#### 4.4 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Aids & Adaptations (A and A) Budget

The HRA currently budgets £525K capital per year to provide disabled aids and adaptations for tenants in our stock, this work is undertaken by the Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership (SWPSHP) on behalf of the housing service.

Table showing Spend on DFG and A and A

Financial Year	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14 (forecast)
DFGs	£324K	£197K	£176K	£339K
A and As	£112K	£139K	£83K	£109K

It can be seen that annual spend on A and As is in the order of only £120K. Therefore it is proposed to reduce the budget to this level whilst not impacting on service delivery.

It is anticipated that the need is likely to increase in future years as the population ages. So last year for business planning purposes it was thought prudent to increase this provision by 5% per year for the next 10 years and then for it to remain fixed for the remainder of the plan. However, currently there is no evidence to support a 5% increase and as this would have a significant impact on the Business Plan financial model it is proposed to freeze this budget. There is no envisaged significant impact on service delivery however this will be monitored very closely.

In addition work is being undertaken, in collaboration with representatives within Occupational Health at Somerset County Council, to ensure existing adaptations within the housing stock are utilised where possible.

#### 4.5 Staffing

In line with the recently agreed Joint Management Structure between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council, the management costs have been increased by £77.6k per annum. This is to build leadership capacity in order to maximise the opportunities and manage the financial risk of the self financed HRA.

Provision has been made within the Halcon One Team for one third of co-ordinator post to assist in the continuation of the project.

## **5 Other Financial Adjustments**

The cost of support services provided by the General Fund is recalculated annually to ensure the cost is apportioned fairly. The Housing Revenue Account share has increased due to the proportionate increase in the size of the HRA against the GF.

Inflation has been amended from RPI to CPI within the financial model to bring this in line with the change in rent policy that is to be set using CPI.

## **6 Voluntary code for a self-financed Housing Revenue Account**

The introduction of HRA self financing has given local authorities the freedom to develop and deliver a more positive, less constrained, vision for council housing. In order to support local authorities in assessing and developing, a voluntary code of practice has been developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Chartered Institute of Housing. The principles and provisions of the code will:

- Assist housing authorities in ensuring effective governance, finance and business planning;
- Provide transparency to tenants, members and officers on how the housing business is being managed. The code will give tenants and members a framework against which to hold the authority to account;
- Allow housing authorities to assess where they may need further support and assistance.

The principles included within the code are included under the following headings: Co-regulation; Financial viability; Communications and governance; Risk management; Asset management; Financial and treasury management (copy attached in Appendix 2).

We shall be undertaking a self assessment against these principles which will be validated by an independent audit process.

Members have been asked to approve the adoption and use of this voluntary code.

## **7 Finance Comments**

A number of factors have affected the financial position of the Business Plan since the introduction of Self Financing and the original Business Plan. Some influences have come from Government policy such as the change in Right to Buy discounts, welfare reform and rent policy. Others have been based on local plans such as asset management and maintenance changes and staffing restructures. As such the Business Plan has been updated to reflect these changes.

The detailed table below illustrates the impact of the changes outlined in this report. This table uses the measurement of in year cash flow and impact on the HRA reserve at the end of the 30 year Business Plan (2042).

The overall impact of these changes is a forecast change in projected reserves balances in 2042, from £242.4m to £167.1m - a reduction of £73.3m. Although a significant reduction in expected reserves this still represents a healthy long term reserves position. However, this does highlight the importance of a robust approach to managing the Business Plan.

The changes to rent policy account for the majority of the change in position, with the biggest impact (£61.5m) due to the assumption that the annual uplift on rent will be limited to Consumer Price Index (CPI) level of inflation only at the end of the 10 year rent policy. However this does not affect the Business Plan until 2026/27 and this assumption could be updated again within this time, as and when further rent policy is issued.

The loss of convergence from rent policy has an impact of £12.3m over the length of the Business Plan however the change to move dwellings on to formula rent upon re-let is likely to negate £7m of this, leaving a net impact of £5.3m.

Updated stock numbers and average weekly rents are expected to reduce the closing balance by £24.3m when compared to the previous Business Plan. However, the true impact will be dependent on future Right to Buy levels.

The net impact on changes to expenditure reduce the Business Plan reserves balance by £10.8m, which is more than offset by changing the inflation assumption from RPI to CPI (in line with rent).

#### Summary of changes to Business Plan

Item	Impact on Business Plan Reserve at 2041/42 £000s	Business Plan Reserve at 2041/42 £000s
Reserve balance on previous Business Plan		242,431.1
Update stock numbers and rent	(24,309.9)	
Changes in rent policy	(66,810.7)	
Update expenditure	(10,770.7)	
Change inflation	23,963.6	
Other changes	2,560.8	
Final Balance		167,064.2

The changes to forecast costs and income are projected forward on an annual basis for the Business Plan / HRA MTFP. Current projections indicate that spending plans are affordable over the longer term but there is a potential cash flow management

requirement between 2016/17 and 2019/20. There are a number of options available to manage the HRA budget during this period:

- Defer or reduce spending on revenue and/or capital maintenance
- Defer or reduce investment in the Social Housing Development Fund
- Undertake further capital borrowing to support capital investment instead of using HRA Revenue resources

We are currently working with Arlingclose, our treasury management advisors, to determine the options for managing the cash and debt position for the HRA in the most effective way. A verbal update will be given in the meeting. From a service cost perspective it is important to manage the budget requirement based on what is affordable.

### ***Conclusion***

Overall the 30 year Business Plan continues to forecast a healthy financial position over the long term. However, the future reserve investment in the HRA has reduced significantly, largely due to changes in rent policy and the increase in Right to Buy sales. The current spending plans create a budget pressure in the medium term, which will need to be managed in order to produce an affordable budget forecast for the HRA MTFP.

Table to show variances identified in report and their impact on cash flow and reserve position

	Cash Flow (at 2014/15 prices)													Impact on Business Plan Reserve at 2041/42	Business Plan Reserve at 2041/42	
	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yrs 11 - 15	Yrs 16 - 20	Yrs 20 - 25	Yrs 26 - 30	Total			
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 - 2026/27	2027/28 - 2021/22	2022/23 - 2036/37	2037/38 - 2041/42				
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s			
Reserve balance on previous Business Plan review																242,431.1
<b>Income</b>																
Update Stock Numbers and Average Rent	700.9	452.6	(128.2)	(607.3)	(622.0)	(637.3)	(651.7)	(663.2)	(3,496.8)	(3,740.4)	(3,942.9)	(4,084.1)	(17,420.4)	(24,309.9)		
Rent Policy																
Change from RPI + 0.5% to CPI + 1%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Loss of convergence	142.3	(262.8)	(286.6)	(296.0)	(299.4)	(303.2)	(306.7)	(310.5)	(1,615.6)	(1,714.9)	(1,827.5)	(1,953.0)	(9,033.8)	(12,305.0)		
End of above inflation uplift after 10 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(764.3)	(6,418.5)	(12,981.9)	(19,729.8)	(39,894.5)	(61,520.8)		
Relet at formula rent	12.4	38.2	59.5	78.2	96.9	113.5	130.1	145.0	897.4	1,077.3	1,164.5	1,215.5	5,028.3	7,015.1		
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>855.6</b>	<b>228.0</b>	<b>(355.3)</b>	<b>(825.1)</b>	<b>(824.5)</b>	<b>(827.0)</b>	<b>(828.3)</b>	<b>(828.7)</b>	<b>(4,979.3)</b>	<b>(10,796.5)</b>	<b>(17,587.8)</b>	<b>(24,551.4)</b>	<b>(61,320.4)</b>	<b>(91,120.6)</b>	<b>151,310.5</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>																
Voids budget	(671.4)	(419.4)	(419.4)	(419.4)	(419.4)	(419.4)	(419.4)	(419.4)	(2,097.0)	(2,097.0)	(2,097.0)	(2,097.0)	(11,995.2)	(17,678.9)		
Pre planned maintenance	(786.4)	(478.4)	(478.4)	(478.4)	(478.4)	221.6	221.6	221.6	1,108.0	1,108.0	1,108.0	1,108.0	2,396.8	3,450.9		
Compliance	(557.2)	(451.2)	(451.2)	248.8	248.8	135.8	135.8	135.8	(1,118.6)	905.0	(1,118.6)	905.0	(981.8)	(1,264.2)		
DFGs and Aids and Adaptations	116.3	143.8	172.8	203.1	235.0	268.6	303.7	340.7	1,703.5	1,703.5	1,703.5	1,703.5	8,598.0	11,604.6		
Shared Services/Joint Management restructure	(108.6)	(77.6)	(77.6)	(77.6)	(77.6)	(77.6)	(77.6)	(77.6)	(388.0)	(388.0)	(388.0)	(388.0)	(2,203.8)	(2,934.0)		
Support Services increase	(86.5)	(86.5)	(86.5)	(86.5)	(86.5)	(86.5)	(86.5)	(86.5)	(432.5)	(432.5)	(432.5)	(432.5)	(2,422.0)	(3,204.9)		
Halcon One Team/Link Centre	(19.8)	(19.8)	(19.8)	(19.8)	(19.8)	(19.8)	(19.8)	(19.8)	(99.0)	(99.0)	(99.0)	(99.0)	(554.4)	(744.2)		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>(2,100.6)</b>	<b>(1,389.1)</b>	<b>(1,360.1)</b>	<b>(629.8)</b>	<b>(597.9)</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>57.8</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>(1,323.6)</b>	<b>700.0</b>	<b>(1,323.6)</b>	<b>700.0</b>	<b>(7,149.4)</b>	<b>(10,770.7)</b>	<b>140,539.8</b>	
Inflation changed to CPI in line with rent																23,963.6
Other minor changes																2,560.8
<b>Final Balance</b>																<b>(75,366.9)</b>

## 8 Legal Comments

Legal issues are addressed in the body of the report in particular in relation to compliance matters.

## 9 Links to Corporate Aims

The corporate priorities have influenced the Business Plan; including recognising how changes in national housing finance and policy will impact on the Council's priorities for the housing service. The business plan aims to support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and wider housing and community objectives.

The business plan is structured around four housing strategic objectives:

### **1. *Securing a long term future for our housing service.***

- This means continuing to invest in the management of the housing stock to ensure it meets tenants' needs, who should be at the heart of decision making.

### **2. *Tackling deprivation and sustainable community development***

- This means taking action so that disadvantaged communities will have better access to local housing services, training and employment, continuing our support for a range of vulnerable people.

### **3. *Investing in our housing stock, regeneration and affordable housing***

- This means investing in our existing stock to deliver a standard that meets the needs of the stock and local aspirations. It also means planning and successfully managing the regeneration of our housing estates and communities, providing homes that cater for the needs of an expanding and diverse population within communities that people are proud of.

### **4. *Climate change***

- This means taking action to reduce carbon emissions across our housing stock through our investment planning, service delivery, partnership and community action to address climate change and reduce fuel poverty.

## 10 Environmental Implications

Climate change is a strategic priority for Housing Services and our Business Plan has been created to have positive implications for the environment. Housing Services aims to take action to reduce carbon emissions across the housing

stock through investment planning, service delivery, partnership and community action.

## **11 Community Safety Implications**

Community safety is incorporated in the strategic priority for Housing Services and our Business Plan has been created to have positive implications for community safety. Housing Services aims to take action so that disadvantaged communities will have better access to local housing services, training and employment. Housing Services also aims to continue its support for a range of vulnerable people and to tackle crime and fear of crime through reducing anti-social behaviour.

## **12 Equalities Impact**

An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 1. There are no significant impacts arising from this report.

## **13 Risk Management**

In creating this report advice has been received from the Council's treasury management advisors concerning, in particular, how our interest savings should be viewed against our ongoing debt position. This advice has been incorporated into the recommendations in this report.

## **14 Consultation**

This report was considered by the Tenants Services Management Board in outline on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013. The board were supportive of the changes to the Business Plan and understood and accepted the revised position. This is a more detailed report for consideration by the board.

## **15 Recommendations**

Recommendation 1 - To comment on the proposed changes to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Recommendation 2 – To comment on the use of the voluntary code for a self-financed Housing Revenue Account.

<b>Contact:</b>	Officer Name	James Barrah- Director – Housing and Communities
	Direct Dial No	01823 358 699
	<a href="mailto:j.barrah@tauntondeane.gov.uk">e-mail</a> address	j.barrah@tauntondeane.gov.uk

# Review of HRA Business Plan 2012-2042 dated December 2013

## Appendix 1

### Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Responsible person</b>	<i>James Barra</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> Health and Housing Manager
<b>Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)</b>	Proposed new policy/service	
	Change to Policy/service	√
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	√
	Part of timetable	
<b>What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which, service, MTFP proposal)</b>	Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) Review of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2012 – 42	
<b>Section One – Scope of the assessment</b>		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service?	<p>The strategic objectives of the business plan are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Securing a long term future for our housing service;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This means continuing to invest in the management of the housing stock to ensure it meets tenants’ needs, who should be at the heart of decision making.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Tackling deprivation and sustainable community development;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This means taking action so that disadvantaged communities will have better access to local housing services, training and employment, continuing our support for a range of vulnerable people.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Investing in our housing stock, regeneration and affordable housing; and</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This means investing in our existing stock to deliver a standard that meets the needs of the stock and local aspirations. It also means planning and successfully managing the regeneration of our housing estates and communities, providing homes that cater for the needs of an expanding and diverse population within communities that people are proud</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

	<p>of.</p> <p><b>4. Climate change.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This means taking action to reduce carbon emissions across our housing stock through our investment planning, service delivery, partnership and community action</li> </ul>
<p>Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service?</p>	<p>Taunton Deane Borough Council's HRA housing stock comprises of approximately 6,000 rented homes, with a further 372 leasehold properties. In addition, the Council also manages two private leasehold schemes for the elderly. Housing services are designed to ensure they meet the needs of wide ranging customer base. As such the HRA Business Plan 2012 – 2042 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.</p>
<p>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>	<p><b>Data:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major changes in national housing finance, welfare benefits reform, housing policy and proposals for change to national rent policy – 2011;2012; and 2014; and</li> <li>Values and priorities reflected in the Council's Corporate Business Plan 2013-2016.</li> </ol> <p><b>Engagement:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation with tenants and stakeholders which included regular meetings with the Tenant Services Management Board during 2013.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Section two – Conclusion drawn</b> about the impact of service/policy/function/change on different groups highlighting negative impact,</p>	

unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality

*The proposed variances identified in the reviewed HRA Business Plan 2012- 2042 will apply to all existing and new tenants and as such no potential discrimination amongst the protected groups has been identified.*

*Specifically, the proposed reduction in Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and Aids and Adaptation (A and A's) budget reflects the current level of spend over recent years, the lack of substantive evidence of higher levels of need and enhancements to working practices that help make better use of existing investment and provision. Housing Services will continue to carefully monitor need against budget spend in this area of our work.*

**I have concluded that there is/should be:**

No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	No major change, as there is no specific equality impact on the protected groups.
Adjust the policy/decision/service	
Continue with the policy/decision/service	
Stop and remove the policy/decision/service	

Reasons and documentation to support conclusions

**Section four – Implementation – timescale for implementation**

The reviewed Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2012 -2042 will be effective from April 2014.

**Section Five – Sign off**

Responsible officer: James Barrah Date	Management Team Date
---	-------------------------

**Section six – Publication and monitoring**

Published on

Next review date

Date logged on Covalent

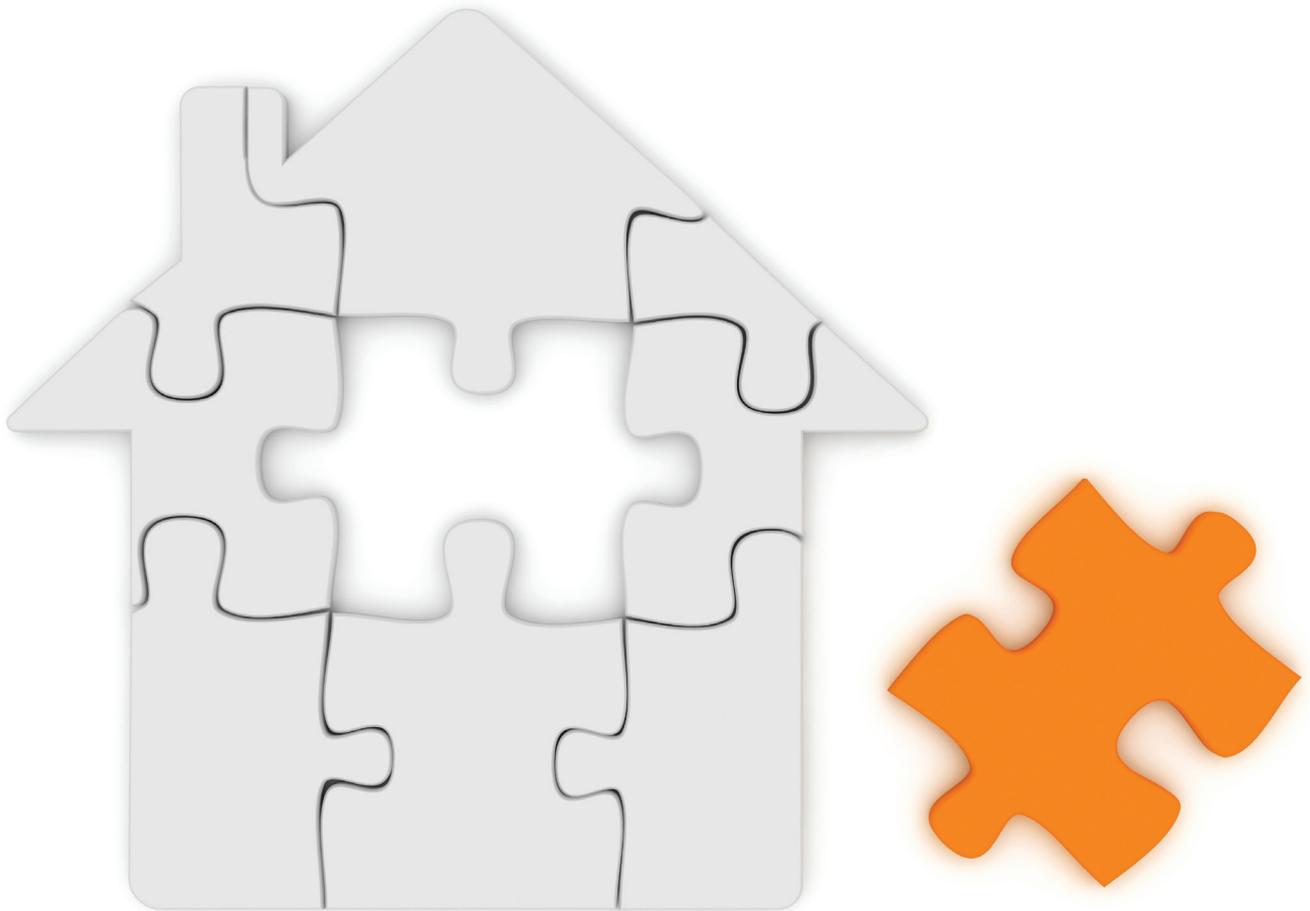
## Action Planning

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

Service area	Housing and Communities		Date	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2013		
Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed	Who is responsible?	By when?	How will this be monitored?	Expected outcomes from carrying out actions	
Potential to make insufficient resource provision to meet the DFG and A and A's needs of tenants across TDBC's housing stock.	Need to carefully monitor future need against budget spend in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants and Aids and Adaptation Grants	Simon Lewis AD – Housing and Communities	Ongoing throughout 2014/2015	Monthly budget forecasting meetings and quarterly performance monitoring of service delivery.	To ensure we continue to provide support for a range of vulnerable people residing within our housing stock.	

Voluntary code for a

# self-financed housing revenue account



**CIPFA**, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, is the professional body for people in public finance. Our 14,000 members work throughout the public services, in national audit agencies, in major accountancy firms, and in other bodies where public money needs to be effectively and efficiently managed.

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# Foreword

The introduction of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) self-financing has given local authorities the freedom to develop and deliver a more positive, less constrained, vision for council housing. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Chartered Institute of Housing believe that it is vital that local authorities have effective governance and financial management frameworks in place in order for self-financing to be a success.

In order to support local authorities in assessing and developing these frameworks the two institutes have worked together to produce a voluntary code of practice for the sector. The principles and provisions of this voluntary code will:

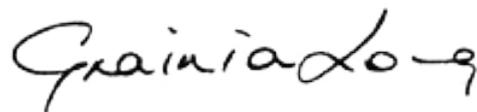
- assist housing authorities in ensuring effective governance, finance and business planning
- provide transparency to tenants, members and officers on how the housing business is being managed. The code will give tenants and members a framework against which to hold the authority to account
- allow housing authorities to assess where they may need further support and assistance.

In some cases, these principles are already covered through other regulatory or professional guidance. These are highlighted along with any specific provisions relating to a self-financed HRA.

These principles are designed to be self-regulatory and we believe that they represent a key tool in assisting local authorities to account for the management of the HRA to tenants and residents and those charged with governance.



**Ken Lee**  
Chair, CIPFA Housing Panel



**Grania Long**  
Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Housing

# Acknowledgements

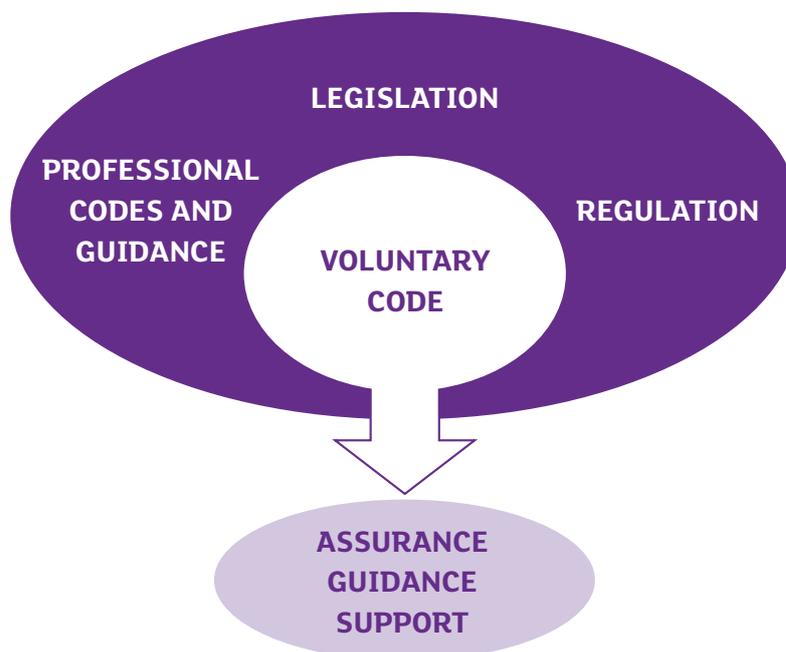
The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) are grateful to the authors, Louise Dunne and Ben Taylor, and to the members of the project team who undertook the background research:

Julie Crook	<i>St Leger Homes of Doncaster</i>
Louise Dunne	<i>CIPFA</i>
Steve Partridge	<i>Chartered Institute of Housing</i>
Peter Pennekett	<i>Portsmouth City Council</i>
Ben Taylor	<i>Chartered Institute of Housing</i>

# Introduction

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) self-financing commenced in April 2012. For the first time in generations, local housing authorities are able to fully retain the money they receive in rent in order to plan and provide services to their current and future tenants. This represents a monumental shift in outlook from the previous financial system, replacing an annual short-term focus with a longer term planning horizon with the freedom to develop and deliver a more positive, less constrained, vision for council housing.

With freedom and flexibility comes responsibility. Councils are keen to make the most of this opportunity and do so in a prudent, viable and measured way. There are already a number of checks and balances in the system, including formal regulation of consumer standards in housing by the Homes and Communities Agency and the financial and accounting framework operating for local government. This document is designed to support councils in their aim to ensure effective and sensible management of the housing business and to be consistent with existing frameworks.



Viable and sustainable council housing relies upon effective governance, financial and business planning. Decisions about appropriate arrangements for effective management of long-term housing business plans need to be decided and democratically accountable at the local level. However, there is an appetite within the sector for some guiding principles to assist in establishing those arrangements, and to demonstrate that councils are managing self-financing in a responsible and appropriate way.

# Purposes

Councils have responded to the move to self-financing by putting in place formal and comprehensive objectives, policies and practices, strategies and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of their self-financed HRA.

To support this work CIPFA and the CIH have produced this voluntary code of practice and accompanying provisions to assist the local authority in its management of the HRA in the following ways:

- To assist councils in ensuring effective governance, finance and business planning.
- To provide transparency to tenants, members and officers on how housing business is being managed. The principles will give tenants and members a framework against which to hold the authority to account.
- To allow housing authorities to assess where they may need further support and assistance.

## HOW THE CODE WORKS

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This is a voluntary code of practice covering six principles. Along with these high level principles, the code comprises a series of supporting provisions which together describe what the sector considers as essential elements for the continued sustainability of a self-financed HRA. In some cases, these principles are already covered through other regulatory or professional guidance. In these cases, this is stated along with any specific provisions relating to a self-financed HRA.

The code is designed to be self-regulatory and compliance is not formally required. As such there are no formal entry level requirements and no formal sanctions for non-compliance. It will be for a housing authority to determine how it wishes to assess its compliance with the code on an on-going basis and this reflects our belief that this code is a tool to assist the authority to account for the management of the HRA to its stakeholders. One option available to housing authorities is to undertake reviews of compliance with the code and report these reviews to the appropriate scrutiny groups and include them within the authority's Annual Governance Statement. Where an authority does not feel it is complying with the code, it is a prompt to review its approach and question whether different things need to happen.

## STATUS

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The voluntary code has the support of a wide range of organisations, including those who work alongside tenants and residents – this set of principles and provisions is intended to support these groups and individuals to better challenge and scrutinise the performance of the HRA under self-financing.

Finally, it is not intended that any of the Principles or Provisions as set out in this code will override or countermand Statute.

# The Principles

1. **Co-regulation.** The housing authority complies with the principles of co-regulation as set out in *The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012*<sup>1</sup>.
2. **Financial viability.** The housing authority has put in place arrangements to monitor the viability of the housing business and takes appropriate actions to maintain viability.
3. **Communications and governance.** The housing authority keeps under review the communications and governance arrangements with regards to the new operating environment and adopts governance arrangements appropriate to supporting viability and accountability of the housing business.
4. **Risk management.** The housing authority has in place an effective system for the on-going management, monitoring and reporting of risks to the HRA.
5. **Asset management.** The housing authority has in place arrangements to maintain its assets to maximise their value into the future. The authority complies with the principles of good asset management as they apply to HRA assets.
6. **Financial and treasury management.** The housing authority complies with proper accounting practices including CIPFA's *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom*<sup>2</sup> and CIPFA's *Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice*<sup>3</sup>.

## PRINCIPLE: CO-REGULATION

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The housing authority complies with the principles of co-regulation as set out in *The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012*.

### Existing provisions:

There are six provisions outlined in the Regulatory Framework:

- Councillors and boards who govern providers are responsible and accountable for delivering their organisation's social housing objectives.
- Providers must meet the regulatory standards.
- Transparency and accountability is essential to co-regulation.
- Tenants should have opportunities to shape service delivery and to hold the responsible boards and councillors to account.

<sup>1</sup> *The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012*, Homes and Communities Agency, March 2012

<sup>2</sup> *The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom*, CIPFA, annual

<sup>3</sup> *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes*, CIPFA, 2011

- Providers should demonstrate that they understand the particular needs of their tenants.
- Value for money goes to the heart of how providers ensure current and future delivery of their objectives.

## **Voluntary code provisions**

Financial and other performance information is presented in a format that is inclusive to all.

## **PRINCIPLE: FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

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The housing authority has arrangements in place to monitor the viability of the housing business and takes appropriate actions to maintain viability.

## **Voluntary code provisions**

### **Provision 1:**

The housing authority has put in place a business planning process underpinned by appropriate financial modelling that allows the cash flows of the business to be forecast. The process incorporates an appropriate set of assumptions relating to forecast:

- rent levels
- general income and expenditure levels
- interest rates on investment and borrowing, and associated costs
- levels of void properties and bad debts.

### **Provision 2:**

The housing authority tests the viability of proposed major capital expenditure projects against the resources generated in the business plan. This ensures that additional activity (for example the development of new housing) is fully integrated into the business planning process and does not introduce liabilities that are unable to be fully funded within an appropriate timescale.

### **Provision 3:**

The housing authority ensures that sufficient resources are allocated for the long-term maintenance of the stock and other assets, adopting an appropriate mechanism to transfer resources from revenue to a reserve ensuring that the peaks and troughs of lifecycle investment needs are able to be met.

### **Provision 4:**

Assumptions are kept under regular review and tested against actual financial performance. Alterations to underlying assumptions are made in direct relation to the impact on the overall plan.

### **Provision 5:**

The housing authority maintains accurate data about the cost of its services, and regularly reviews these in relation to its procurement and commissioning strategies. The business plan allocates resources to ensure the continued viability of high quality management services.

## PRINCIPLE: COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

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The housing authority keeps under review the communication and governance arrangements with regards to the new operating environment and adopts governance arrangements appropriate to supporting viability of the housing business.

### Voluntary code provisions

#### Provision 1:

The housing authority undertakes to achieve openness in communication and sharing of information, and expresses all internal and governance communications in clear language.

#### Provision 2:

The housing authority engages in appropriate levels of consultation with tenants, members, officers and other stakeholders in a way that ensures it delivers efficient management and control of its business plan.

#### Provision 3:

The housing authority reviews on a regular basis the quality, accuracy and utility of all information pertaining to the management of its housing business including financial and performance based sources.

#### Provision 4:

The housing authority has an appropriate mechanism to assess its on-going compliance with the key principles and accounts to residents on this compliance. One option could be to undertake to publish a commentary on its compliance as part of its Annual Governance Statement or through other appropriate channels.

#### Provision 5:

The housing authority has adopted suitable governance arrangements consistent with the effective operation of a housing business, paying attention to the long-term nature of the business: incorporating for example the need to plan maintenance and investment over the long term and the need to manage large levels of long-term housing debt.

#### Provision 6:

The housing authority ensures that resources are appropriately allocated between investment, maintenance and management priorities in line with business plan objectives and that the balance of priorities is agreed with tenants, members and other stakeholders as appropriate.

## PRINCIPLE: RISK MANAGEMENT

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The housing authority has in place an effective system for the on-going management, monitoring and reporting of risks to the HRA. A different set of risks have been transferred to the housing authority from central government within the self-financing system.

## Voluntary code provisions

### Provision 1:

The housing authority carries out appropriate sensitivity analysis across the business plan to identify potential high, medium and low level risks to the financial viability of the HRA. In particular, attention is given to evaluating risks arising from: changes in government policy; treasury management risks; inflation; income recovery rates; void levels; changes to rent policy; changes in the composition of the stock; investment return; right to buy; debt levels and grants.

### Provision 2:

The housing authority has a risk management system in place which, as a minimum, includes the following processes:

- identification of risk
- quantification of risk
- management of risk
- reassessment of risk
- communication of risk to appropriate decision-makers.

### Provision 3:

The housing authority identifies appropriate mitigating actions where higher level risks to the overall sustainability of the business plan are identified, to ensure the long term viability of the HRA. These may include:

- an active treasury management strategy and procedures to manage treasury management risks in accordance with CIPFA's *Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice*
- a suitable level of balance of reserves maintained by the HRA as a contingency against risks on inflation and income, bad debt increases as well as investment risk
- performance management frameworks effectively enforced to manage the risks of poor performance in voids, income collection and investment scheme delivery.

## PRINCIPLE: ASSET MANAGEMENT

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The housing authority has in place arrangements to maintain its assets to maximise their value into the future. The authority complies with the principles of good asset management as they apply to HRA assets.

## Voluntary code provisions

### Provision 1:

The housing authority takes a strategic approach to asset management ensuring that the long-term strategic vision for the authority is underpinned by a thorough understanding of current and future needs.

**Provision 2:**

The housing authority's strategic asset management and business planning processes are fully integrated. The business plan supports the maintenance and development of the asset base which in turn provides value to the business plan.

**Provision 3:**

The housing authority has agreed asset management standards with tenants, members and other stakeholders having regard to the financial resources generated within the business plan.

**Provision 4:**

The housing authority maintains accurate information relating to the condition, maintenance and investment needs of its housing stock and other HRA assets.

**Provision 5:**

Asset management information forms the basis for the asset investment programme of the housing authority driven by the business plan and set out over an appropriate medium-term financial period.

## PRINCIPLE: FINANCIAL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT

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### Existing provisions:

The housing authority complies with proper accounting practices including CIPFA's *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* and CIPFA's *Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice*.

### Voluntary code provisions

There are two specific provisions in relation to the operation of a self-financed HRA relating to accounting for interest charges and depreciation.

**Provision 1:**

Housing is a long-term investment and HRA borrowing policy needs long term stability to ensure long-term planning is undertaken on a reasonable and consistent basis. The housing authority has set out a policy stating how a reasonable charge for borrowing costs of the HRA will be calculated, set for the long-term such that it enables long-term planning of HRA resources and borrowing.

**Provision 2:**

The depreciation charge to the HRA is calculated on a componentised basis in line with proper accounting practices<sup>4</sup>. The housing authority is moving to a full depreciation accounting charge in line with the transitional arrangements set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

<sup>4</sup> For more information see *Housing Finance under Self-financing*, CIPFA, 2013.

# Glossary

**Co-regulation:** the principle that underpins the Homes and Communities Agency's regulatory approach. Councillors who govern providers' service delivery are responsible for meeting the regulatory standards and being transparent and accountable for their organisation's delivery of its social housing objectives.

**Housing authority:** the same meaning as in the Housing Act 1985.

**Housing business:** the housing activity that is accounted for in the Housing Revenue Account.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA):** the Housing Revenue Account of the local housing authority as defined by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended).

**Proper accounting practices:** in relation to the accounts of a local authority these are defined in accordance with section 21 of the Local Government Act 2003.

**Self-financing:** a system for financing council housing introduced in April 2012 that replaced the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system.





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# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Tenant Services Management Board – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014

### Legionella and Electrical Installation Testing Policies

#### Report of – Property Manager – Maintenance – Steve Esau

#### 1. Executive Summary

This report has been produced to propose the new Legionella and Electrical Installation testing policies for Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services.

It outlines the strategic overview that the tenants can expect from Housing Property Services in relation to Legionella and Electrical Installation testing of our properties.

The Legionella policy gives the organisations arrangements for managing the risk of exposure to *Legionellosis* within Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Revenue Account properties

The Electrical Installation Testing Policy sets out the aims and objectives of the organisation and outlines responsibilities for managing the Electrical Condition Inspection Report programme.

The policies are living document and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

#### 1.0 Information

The policy covers all activities under the control of the Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Property Services and includes all properties that it owns, occupies or where it acts as landlord.

Housing Property Services recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees and the public who may be affected by its facilities and services. This statement is an expression of the Housing Property Service's commitment to managing risks arising from any activities under its control.

#### 2.0 Background

Legionellosis is the collective name given to pneumonia illnesses caused by Legionella bacteria; the most serious is Legionella's disease. Similar but less serious illnesses include Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever. To date over 50 species of Legionella bacteria have been identified

Housing Property Services has obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, that electrical installations are inspected and tested.

### **3.0 Aim**

Housing Property Services recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees and the public who may be affected by its facilities and services. The policies are an expression of Housing Property Services commitment to managing Legionella and Electrical Installations risks arising from any activities under its control. Housing Property Services will, so far as is reasonably practicable take all reasonable steps to protect the health and environment of:

- Employees
- Contractors (employed directly or indirectly)
- Clients and tenants
- Other persons

### **4.0 Approximate costs**

The cost of implementing this policy will be met within existing budgets.

### **5.0 Impact on tenants**

Tenants will be better informed on what to expect from the Housing Property Services team.

### **6.0 Equalities impact**

An equality impact assessment has been carried out and views and feedback have been obtained from tenants.

### **7.0 Risk management**

No risks have been identified from the equality impact assessment

### **8.0 Diversity**

Some people may need specific help to fully access the policy and leaflet. Additionally information may be required in different formats:

- Large Font
- Audio Version
- Different Languages
- Website page

### **9.0 Recommendation**

We recommend that the Tenant Services Management Board approve the policies.

Once approval is obtained the policy will be forwarded to the portfolio holder  
Councillor Jean Adkins for affirmation.

**Contact officers**

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# TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Housing Property Services

### Legionella Policy

Policy	
<b>Policy Number</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Legionella Policy
<b>Author</b>	Steve Esau
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Phil Webb
<b>EQIA Date</b>	
<b>Date Agreed by TSMB</b>	
<b>Date agreed by Housing Portfolio Holder</b>	
<b>Next Review Date</b>	
<b>Version</b>	1.1

## **1.0 Information.**

The policy covers all activities under the control of the Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Property Services and includes all properties that it owns, occupies or where it acts as landlord. Where premises do not come under the direct responsibility of housing services, this Policy and Code of Practice will be commended to them.

Legionellosis is the collective name given to pneumonia illnesses caused by Legionella bacteria; the most serious is Legionella's disease. Similar but less serious illnesses include Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever. To date over 50 species of Legionella bacteria have been identified.

## **2.0 Intention**

The policy gives the organisations arrangements for managing the risk of exposure to *Legionellosis* within Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Revenue Account properties.

Housing Property Services recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees and the public who may be affected by its facilities and services. This statement is an expression of Housing Property Services commitment to managing Legionella risks arising from any activities under its control. Housing Property Services will, so far as is reasonably practicable take all reasonable steps to protect the health and environment of:

- Employees
- Contractors (employed directly or indirectly)
- Clients and tenants
- Other persons

This policy has been drawn up to set out clearly the systems and procedures, which will be implemented to manage the risk from exposure to Legionella bacteria. It therefore:

- Puts procedures in place to control and minimise these risks
- Ensures work is to higher standards than the minimum required by law, where reasonably practicable
- Provides information, guidance and training for managers responsible for properties and other key managers to

ensure they are aware of their role with regard to this policy

- Promotes good system design to reduce the risk of Legionella bacteria multiplying
- Promotes good maintenance procedures to reduce the risk of Legionella bacteria multiplying.

### **3.0 Responsibilities**

The Housing and Communities Director has responsibility for Housing Property Service's Legionella Risk Management procedures and ensuring their implementation and proper compliance through the Housing Property Services Manager who is responsible for health and safety issues relating to housing revenue account properties. The Housing Property Services Manager will be the "responsible person" for ensuring adequate systems is in place to ensure compliance and control the risks from Legionella in council housing stock.

The nominated deputy is the "The Housing Property Manager (Maintenance)" The theme manager will ensure that sufficient time and resources are provided to implement the policy and procedures within the Housing Property Services, through their services' management systems. They are responsible for ensuring full compliance with the procedures through their managers and staff.

The responsibilities of Housing Property Services staff and others involved in the control regime are as follows:

#### **3.1 The Housing Property Services Manager is responsible for**

- Implementing this policy, for the delivery of Legionella risk assessments and for monitoring to ensure that recommendations arising from risk assessments are carried out
- Instructing maintenance contractors to undertake any improvement and adaptation works necessary following a risk assessment, for properties where housing property services holds the central building maintenance budget.
- Responsible for promoting good design practice and operating procedures to reduce as far as is reasonably practical the risk of Legionellosis from premises, equipment under their control;
- Overall responsibilities for ensuring arrangements are in place in their areas of control for the effective management of Legionella. In particular they are responsible for ensuring that this policy and the HSE approved Legionella code of practice (L8) is implemented.

## Taunton Deane Borough Council

- Monitoring the implementation of the housing property services policy. Ensuring that a person is identified (the Responsible Person) for the housing stock and there is clearly an identified line management regime established with responsibility for ensuring that duties are carried out;
  - Distributing this policy throughout their Department;
  - Arranging appropriate training and ensuring competence for those staff identified as requiring training;
  - Responding appropriately with respect to emergency procedures;
  - Ensuring systems are in place for monitoring the implementation of this policy.
  -

Managers and staff are responsible for ensuring that contractor access is available to complete tasks in line with this policy.

Managers responsible for housing stock are responsible for ensuring that this policy is complied with in their premises and that they have a risk assessment in place, and are following the actions required as a result of that assessment.

Additionally they must:

- Have available, and keep up to date, all information supplied for the operation and management of their premises, including a copy of all the relevant records, schematic diagrams and risk assessments for the premises under their control;
- Inform staff of the potential health risks of exposure to Legionella bacteria (for which they will receive appropriate training), their responsibilities in the implementation of the services policy and actions that Housing Services/ Property Services are taking to mitigate the risks.
- Monitor, or arrange for the monitoring of, water systems as detailed in the Written Scheme produced following a risk assessment.
- Establish and implement appropriate controls for any maintenance or modification work to be done by contractors, service engineers, volunteers and own staff (e.g. Site maintenance staff);
- Ensure safe systems of work are effectively implemented;
- Understand the implications of modifying or maintaining the water systems and the characteristics which govern

the risk and control of the susceptibility to colonisation by Legionella;

- Understand the risks of exposure to Legionella bacteria; and ensure that regular risk assessments are completed and actioned.
- Know what action to take if a case of Legionnaires disease is found or suspected;
- Ensure, where there is information known about the water system that this is drawn to the attention of the maintenance contractor and those who do maintenance work etc before they commence work. Close consultation and co-operation with contractors, staff and tenants will assist managers in meeting this obligation;
- Update the property records and schematic diagrams where they have ordered any changes to the water systems in their properties.
- Review the risk assessments every two years or where a change occurs in the water systems or a substantial change in the type and susceptibility of users and tenants.
- Co-operate and co-ordinate with other managers on shared properties.
- 

3.2 Staff are responsible for advising the Housing Property Services Manager on any issues relating to their premises that may affect the risk assessment in premises under their control and must:

- 
- All employees have a duty not only for their own health and safety but also a duty to co-operate with the service in the implementation and maintenance of its arrangements to satisfy its statutory duties for health and safety. Employees therefore have a responsibility to:
- Understand the health risks associated with exposure to Legionella bacteria;
- Report any defective equipment or systems;
- Use any water system in a safe manner; and
- Attend training and read briefing documents.
- 

Housing Property Services Legionella Consultant/Contractor or a competent and trained staff member is contracted to deliver risk assessments to sites where the service holds the maintenance budget.

#### **4 References**

The Health & Safety Commission Approved Code of Practice & Guidance, document L8 “The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems”, is taken as the primary source of guidance on Legionellosis risk management, however further reference is taken from BS8580, COSHH, HASAWA 1974, MHASAWR 1999, Water Regulations, CIBSE Guidance etc.

#### **5 Monitoring and review**

Monitoring and review of this statement, ongoing assessments and control precautions will be reviewed at intervals as appropriate, and at least annually. Revisions will be made as necessary to reflect organisational, technical or legislative changes. Housing Property Services will obtain further competent advice as required. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

A copy of this policy will be made available to employees. It will be reviewed, added to and modified as appropriate to sustain its effectiveness, and such changes will be brought to the notice of employees. It may be supplemented in appropriate cases by further statements relating to the work of particular departments or groups of workers.

# Legionella Control Principles

Persons with responsibilities for the control of Legionella must comply with the following principles:

## 1. Eliminating the risk

This must be the first consideration in any design or alteration proposal. If the risk cannot be eliminated and alternative options are available and can be provided, then a thorough assessment must be undertaken to ensure that the appropriate solution is used.

## 2. Reducing the risk and controlling the risk in hot and cold water services

Where elimination of risk is impractical, the risk should be controlled so as to minimise the release of water droplets and prevent water conditions that permit the growth of Legionella. It is possible to have very low concentrations of Legionella in many water systems and by careful control prevent them from multiplying. Generally, proliferation of Legionella may be avoided by:-

- keeping water temperatures outside the range 20-45 degrees Celsius;
- minimising water stagnation;
- not using materials that provide nutrients for the bacteria or other organisms;
- keeping systems clean;
- ensuring effective water treatment programmes are in place, e.g. Spa Baths;
- operating systems safely and keeping them correctly maintained.

This is achieved by: -

- identifying and ensuring the proper application of maintenance, repair, cleaning and treatment regimes for all water services and ancillary equipment. This is necessary to maintain satisfactory water quality with respect to potential health hazards;
- maintaining an up-to-date premises record containing details of a risk assessment, Written Scheme of Control for minimising the risk, and reports of periodic water quality checks and reviews by an independent competent assessor. These records must be kept on the premises and made available to any person with the authority to inspect them. Such persons would include the competent assessor, inspectors of the Health & Safety Executive, officers of the County and District Council, the Health Protection Agency and maintenance and repair personnel.

### Specific methods of control are as follows:

- The temperature regime shall be the main method employed, in any new or refurbished system, to control bacteria in water systems.
- Direct cold mains water systems must be considered in all new designs in preference to providing cold stored water, however, if required for backflow prevention or if the design assessment requires cold-water storage to be available, it must be sized to hold the minimum amount of water possible and no more than 8 hours use, and the temperature must be maintained and distributed at low temperature not exceeding 20° C. It is crucial that the inlet of the cold water supply and outlet from the cold-water tank are at opposite sides of the tank to ensure that there is no stagnation. All tanks must comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 and must be easily and readily accessible for both maintenance and monitoring.
- All cold-water pipework must be appropriately insulated and isolated from heat sources.
- Preference shall be given to using instantaneous direct-fired gas water heaters, or direct-fired gas water heaters with water stored at a minimum of 60°C. All stored hot water in main calorifiers shall be maintained at a minimum temperature of 60° C, which must be matched to demand. All calorifiers must be fitted with a drain valve, temperature gauge on the inlet and outlet pipework, and an access panel for cleaning and located in such a position as to be easily accessible for maintenance.
- The system design must ensure that the entire contents of the calorifier can achieve a temperature of 60° C for at least one hour before the building users draw off any water at the start of each day and for one hour after the last user has drawn off water at the end of each day. An additional, time controlled, shunt pump must be fitted on all new calorifiers to aid circulation throughout the calorifier. When upgrading or reutilising existing calorifiers, shunt pumps shall only be fitted following an assessment of the internal condition of the calorifier. Where there is any doubt the calorifier should be replaced.
- For new installations, where possible, a minimum distribution temperature of 55° C should be available at the outlet or any point of use mixer valve within 30 seconds of opening the tap. For existing installations and/or where a risk assessment supports a lower temperature, a minimum temperature of 50°C must be achieved within one minute of opening the tap.

- On circulation systems, the return temperature to the calorifier must be greater than 50°C.
- Where the water temperature is reduced at the point of use from 55°C, by the use of a thermostatic mixing valve, the pipework length must be kept to a minimum. The leg from the distribution circuit must not exceed 3.0 metres and the leg from the blender must not exceed 2.0 metres.
- Where hot water is to be provided by electric point of use heaters, a blending valve must be fitted so that the stored water can be maintained at 60°C. However, in exceptional circumstances, where this is not practicable due to insufficient water pressure a thermostatically controlled unit may be considered, the temperature must be set to suit the outlet requirements and a thermal disinfection regime must then be put in place as appropriate.
- All materials and fittings used in any water system must be low corrosion and in compliance with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations.
- For cold water services, where possible, lower use outlets must be installed upstream of higher use outlets.
- Generally, all hot and cold outlet pipes must be of minimum length, and any pipework that is removed must be cut back to the main pipe work runs to ensure no dead legs or blind ends remain.
- If standby equipment is installed, e.g. pumps, these must operate automatically and at least once a week to avoid stagnation.
- All new and refurbished hot water systems and any systems that have been out of use without regular flushing on at least a weekly basis must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with BS 6700:1987, section three clause 13.9 or as amended.

### **3. Design Standards**

For all building services systems containing water must comply with the requirements specified in:

- 3.1.** the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, SI 1999 No 1148 and incorporating amendment SI 1999 No 1506;
- 3.2.** the Health and Safety Commission Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L8: "Legionnaires disease. The control of Legionella bacteria in water systems";

**3.3.** BS 6700: 1987 or as amended “Specification for design, installation, testing and maintenance of services supplying water for domestic use within buildings and their curtilages”.

**4.** A **Risk Assessment** must be carried out by a competent person (who has sufficient knowledge and understanding of the system and of control schemes) to enable them to prior to the occupation of any new premises, or occupation of any extension to an existing premises, where there is a foreseeable risk of exposure to Legionella bacteria. This must include premises where any of the following exist:

- Cooling towers & evaporating condensers
- Hot water services
- Cold water services
- Shower heads
- Ultrasonic humidifiers/foggers & water misting systems
- Spray humidifiers, air washers & wet scrubbers
- Water softeners
- Emergency showers & eye wash stations
- Lathe & machine tool coolant systems
- Swimming Pools
- Hydrotherapy pools
- Spa baths
- Horticultural misting systems
- Vehicle washing facilities [lance or drive through]
- Indoor fountains & water features
- Any water system not listed above which is between a temperature of 20°C to 45°C and where an aerosol may be produced

**5.** The **significant findings** of the risk assessment must be recorded at the premises and a copy sent to the Housing Property Services Manager. If the assessment has shown that there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of exposure to Legionella bacteria, there must be a written scheme in place to control that risk.

The written scheme for controlling the exposure must be implemented and properly managed. The scheme must include instructions on the operation of the system and details of the precautions to be taken to control the risk of exposure to Legionella bacteria, including checks and their frequency.

The recommended inspection frequencies must be based on Appendix 1 of the Health and Safety Commission Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L8: “Legionnaires disease- The control of Legionella bacteria in water systems”. In the absence of premises-specific procedures, Appendix 2 of this policy specifies typical tasks, with their associated frequencies, that must be undertaken.

- 6. All records** must be kept at the offices of Housing Services / Property Services preferably as an electronic copy. They must be maintained and managed under the control of the Property Services Manager, and retained for a period of at least 5 years following expiry.
- 7. Consultation with employees** must be undertaken at regular team meetings and briefing sessions. All employees must be aware that the two primary objectives of this policy are to avoid:
- conditions that allow the proliferation of Legionella; and
  - avoid the creation of sprays or mists that give rise to respirable water droplets.
- 8. Risk assessments must be reviewed** at least every 24 months and when:
- significant changes have been made to a system, e.g. following maintenance or alteration ;
  - significant changes have occurred in the way a system is being used, e.g. a formerly fully occupied building is now only partially occupied;
  - changes to the occupancy of the building e.g. higher risk users;
  - changes have been made to the management and/or maintenance of the system, e.g. 6 months after a new maintenance company has been appointed;
  - the results of checks indicate that control measures are no longer effective;
  - a case of Legionnaires' disease or Legionellosis is associated with the; system;
  - there is new relevant information about risks or control measures;

If there is doubt as to what changes should trigger a risk assessment, a programme of annual reviews or audits should be considered.

If it is considered that microbiological testing is required, samples should only be taken by a competent person and analysed by a United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) approved laboratory.

## 1. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

1.1. To provide a document for risk assessment/testing tender between **Taunton Deane Borough Council – Housing Property Services** (Client) and the **Specialist Service Provider** (Contractor).

1.2. The scope of this specification includes the identification and assessment of risks to staff; visitors and members of the public exposed to water systems operated by the client and testing to comply with ACOP L8 and are limited to Legionella. The Legionellosis risk assessment is intended to demonstrate compliance with the Approved Code of Practice L8 (2000): Legionnaires' disease the control of legionella bacteria in water systems.

1.3. This specification does not include assessment of mechanical condition, pressure system compliance, electrical safety or any other health and safety risks.

1.4. The Contractor will be asked to provide comment on water-system compliance with the following documents;

1. Water regulations (WRAS Water Regulations Guide, second edition).
  2. Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Approved Code of Practice L24
3. ACOP L8
  4. CIBSE Guide TM13
  5. COSHH regulations
  6. HaSAWA 1974
  7. MHaSAWR 1999
  8. BS 8580

1.5. Terms;

1.5.1. 'Client' refers to the employer / self-employed person / person in control of the premises (ACoP L8 Para 23).

1.5.2. 'Contractor' refers to the service provider contracted to conduct the specified services.

1.5.3. 'Assessor' refers to the individual person(s) carrying out the risk assessment.

## 2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

2.1. Clauses within this specification are mandatory. The Contractor shall identify in the tender return any items they wish to be excluded or modified for consideration at the pre-tender selection process.

2.2. The Contractor shall seek clarification from the Client where any specification clauses appear to be ambiguous or do not appear to correspond to the requirements for this project.

2.3. The work shall comprise all labour and materials necessary to complete the risk assessment, testing & descaling tasks

2.4. The contractor is expected to include the costs of specialist access equipment as required.

2.5. The scope does not include for labour or materials to dismantle replace or repair building fabric obscuring access to water systems.

2.6. The Client will not be responsible for providing simple access equipment such as steps / ladders. Assessors will be expected to carry a ladder (or step ladder) to be used: -

For visual inspection of equipment in one position for less than 30 minutes;

For 'light work' – where the task involves a worker carrying less than 10 kg up the ladder, tool belts or shoulder bags are to be used.

Surveyor's ladders should extend to 10 – 12ft.

Where higher (or difficult) access is required a safe method of access must be designed. The required equipment will be stated in the property schedule for safety and costing purposes.

2.7. The Contractor shall provide the Client with sufficient information to allow the Client to assess the competency of the Contractor and individual personnel carrying out the risk assessments. This might include, among any other relevant information: -

The names of each person who may carry out surveys and produce assessments together with their qualifications and relevant experience. **Which must include a current certificate showing that the operative has attended and passed an approved asbestos awareness course**

An up to date certificate indicating the Contractor is a member of the Legionella Control Association (LCA).

2.8. The Contractor will obtain agreement from the Client before substituting alternative personnel before or during the contract.

2.9. The Contractor must provide details of any sub-contractors including microbiological testing laboratories to be used in the contract. No sub-Contractors will be allowed on site without the prior approval of the Client.

2.10. Any person attending site will be required to carry a photographic identity card issued by either the Client or the Contractor if no Client system is in operation.

2.11. The Contractor will be required to provide a method statement & specific risk assessment for the work to be undertaken prior to starting works.

2.12. The Contractor's insurance must include Professional Indemnity for the sum of at least £1,000,000 for any one event and be in force before work is allowed to commence. The Contractor should make copies of the policies available for approval.

2.13. The Contractor must comply with the Client's Health and Safety Policy including all permit-to-work and risk assessment procedures. Failure to do so will result in immediate expulsion of Contractor personnel from the site.

2.14. All work and procedures shall be undertaken with due care to avoid damage to the contents and fabric of the building.

2.15. The Contractor is expected to exercise discretion if questioned by Client staff during the course of the survey. Results of the risk assessment may not be divulged to the Client's staff or other persons prior to being formally supplied to the nominated person.

2.16. Where a serious and/or immediate risk to health and safety is identified during survey works the Contractor shall inform the nominated individual directly at the earliest opportunity. The use of hand written urgent attention reports will be required.

### **3. PROGRAM OF WORKS**

3.1. The contractor is to supply a proposed program of work within 10 days of contract award advising on approximate inspection dates for each site to ensure all works are completed within the required time scales. Each property will require at least 48 hours notice prior to the site visit commencing.

3.2. Reports are to be supplied to the Client within 2 weeks of the site survey.

3.3. The Contractor must indicate in the tender where he is likely to require accompaniment from site personnel or Client staff.

3.6. The Contractor should advise the Client at the earliest opportunity where plant may need to be shut down and/or dismantled to provide access for the purposes of the risk assessment.

3.7. The Client must indicate to the Contractor where he requires the Contractor to be accompanied by site personnel or Client staff, e.g., for safety / security reasons.

3.8. The Client will provide the Contractor with any special equipment required to complete the work, e.g., special attire for entry into restricted areas.

### **4. SAFE WORKING**

4.1. It is considered that the work specified is outside the scope of the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations.

4.2. The Contractor shall allow for ensuring that all operations both on and off the Works are carried out in complete accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and appropriate existing enactments which are relevant Statutory provisions under that Act, and all appropriate Codes and Regulations made under that Act and other relevant Statutes and any amendments thereto.

4.3. Working practices must ensure that they do not endanger the health and safety of all personnel engaged upon the Works, employees of the Client or any other persons entitled to be near the area of Works.

4.4. The Contractor must comply with the Clients Health & Safety practices as supplied with this tender invitation.

4.5. The Client will appoint a Health and Safety Manager who may make unannounced visits to the site from time to time and he shall be allowed to inspect the Works in order to ensure compliance with Method Statements.

4.6. The Client reserves the right to terminate any contract that fails to meet the above H & S requirements.

4.7. As one of the more obvious risks the Contractor will be required to demonstrate compliance with *Work at Height Regulations 2005* SI 2005/735

Reg 4. - (1) Every employer shall ensure that work at height is - (a) properly planned; (b) appropriately supervised; and (c) carried out in a manner which is so far as is reasonably practicable safe, and that its planning includes the selection of work equipment in accordance with regulation 7.

4.8. In order to comply with the above regulations the contractor will need to demonstrate personnel are trained and understand the risks of accessing water storage cisterns and that the Contractor has a safe system of work.

4.9. The Client accepts the duty to manage asbestos as contained in regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006. We have: -  
Taken reasonable steps to find out if there are materials containing asbestos in premises, and if so, its amount, where it is and what condition it is in;  
Listed, and kept up-to-date, a record of the location and condition of the asbestos containing materials – or materials which are presumed to contain asbestos;

We will provide information on the location and condition of the materials to the Contractor where they are liable to work on or disturb them.

4.10. The Contractor shall be aware of the need to notify the Supervising Officer or his appointed representative immediately, of situations which have a potential involvement with asbestos based or similar composition of material in the form of thermal insulation to services pipe work, storage tanks and calorifiers. **IF IN ANY DOUBT HE SHOULD CONTACT THE CLIENT IMMEDIATELY FOR FURTHER ADVICE.**

## **5. ASSESSMENT OF "AT RISK" SYSTEMS**

**Stage 1** of the risk assessment shall be to identify a comprehensive list of all water-related systems on site.

5.1. The Contractor will identify all water systems and go on to conduct a Stage 2 assessment where appropriate.

5.2. A premises shall be regarded as possibly comprising of the following separate water systems. Each should be assessed as a separate entity: -  
Wholesome water (fluid category one): mains cold water from the outside stop valve.

Cold water down services; stored cold water feeding outlets other than those fed by direct mains.

Hot water services; stored hot water feeding outlets, including small point of use water heaters.

Air conditioning; to include chilled water drip trays and any humidification plants.

Water features; indoor fountains or artificial outdoor ponds.

Fire fighting systems; to include hose reels and sprinkler systems.

Closed systems; such as heating and chilled systems, which are normally considered to be low risk. (Stage 2 not required).

Other systems (any specialised water systems).

5.3. This tender does not cover any of the following types of water system. If identified during Stage 1 survey they will form part of a separate agreement: -

Cooling towers; to include evaporative condensers or any other evaporative cooling system.

Swimming pools.

Spa baths.

**Stage 2** of the risk assessment shall be the visual inspection of water systems from Stage 1.

5.4. Extent of inspection

5.5. To achieve a satisfactory degree of inspection pipework should be visually traced along its routes (as far as practicable) and components of the installation located.

5.6. In buildings where distribution pipework is partially concealed: -  
Sufficient loose or removable panels shall be taken down or lifted, to allow pipe routes to be ascertained, and carefully replaced when the examination has been completed.

Where access is not possible without causing structural damage the assessor shall make an educated assumption as to the routing of the pipework. As these assumptions are open to question then a note should be made on the line diagram clearly indicating that an assumption was made at this point.

5.7. The Contractor shall inspect and comment upon the records held by site in order to assess the completeness of the management system as required by the ACOP including the written scheme for controlling the risk from exposure to Legionellosis.

5.8. The Contractor is being employed as the expert therefore the method of inspection is left open. The Client requires the Contractor to report on aspects of the system design, installation, condition, operation and usage that present

a Legionellosis risk using ACoP L8[Ref 1], BS 6700 [Ref 9] and the Water Regulations Guide[Ref 10] as standards. This survey is not designed to provide evidence of full compliance with the Water Regulations.

5.9. Backflow prevention devices, dead legs, TMVs and stagnant regions should be identified on the outlet asset register or marked on the schematic diagrams. The Contractor will need to question the Client on typical water use patterns in order to assess possible dead legs and stagnant regions.

5.10. The Contractor shall indicate if any materials of non-approved type are noted, including Lead pipework.

5.11. The increased risk of scalding must be commented on if recommendations include raising hot water temperatures to comply with the ACoP.

5.12. The Contractor should take into account special provisions for extended plant shut-down and restart such as school holidays in educational buildings.

5.13. Temperature measurement shall be conducted on all water systems to generate a representative picture throughout the

To assess performance typically 10 to 20% of the building outlets will be tested with careful attention paid to select sentinel outlets (points nearest to & furthest from plant and long

Circulating loops), flow / return & base on each calorifier, inlet and outlet of cold storage cisterns and & any locations of concern present such as remote or little used areas. The client requires comment on the condition of outlets if they are damaged, scaled or not operating. All temperature measurements shall be carried out. High usage on the HWS may reduce temperatures during peak loads this should be considered by the assessor when conducting the assessment.

5.14. In addition where water systems employ control measures other than temperature then measurements should be taken at representative points to assess the distribution and effectiveness of the process.

5.15. All measurement points and shower heads must be included in an outlet asset register.

5.16. Microbiological sampling for general (heterotrophic) bacteria is to be carried out on water systems only after approval by the client and will be additional to the contract sum. The Contractor should state the site specific reason for sampling as it is not considered to be good practice to collect samples on an ad hoc basis.

5.17. *Legionella* sampling will only be conducted after approval by the client and will be additional to the contract sum. Where sampling is carried out the method of draw off and subsequent handling of samples shall comply with The determination of Legionella bacteria in water and other environmental samples (2005) - Part 1 - Rationale of surveying and sampling.[Ref 8].

5.18. All sampling points must tie up with outlet locations recorded in the outlet asset register.

5.19. All microbiological measurements shall be carried out using approved methods and by UKAS (or equivalent) accredited laboratories. Dip slides are not acceptable for analysis of hot & cold water systems.

## 6. REPORTING

- 6.1. The written report shall contain the following:
- 6.2. A header page signed by the person responsible for the assessment.
- 6.3. A brief description of the site, its activities and its management structure
- 6.4. An overview of the systems and key points raised by the survey, and assessment of the overall risks associated with each system.
- 6.5. A summary list of all systems found and inspected for Legionellosis risk including the survey date(s).
- 6.6. The inspections surveys, temperature measurements, shower descales, and any other tests undertaken.
- 6.7. Photographs (including electronic copies) are to be included where they highlight poor conditions or specific points of concern.
- 6.8. Schematic drawings of the water systems will be updated or produced (many sites have little or no drawings) for each site. An example of the required standard can be found in the appendices. Any system schematic diagrams known to the Client will be made available to the Contractor for updating. The Contractor should assume service drawings are out of date until proven correct by survey. The schematic drawings shall be produced using CAD software (AutoCAD, Turbo Cad or compatible package). The drawings shall be provided both as paper prints per site and as stored files on CD-ROM in a suitable format DWG/DXF format. Drawings shall be a maximum size of A1, but preferably A4 or A3 where practicable.
- 6.9. A specific evaluation of the existing written scheme for controlling the risk of Legionellosis including recommendations for additional provisions.
- 6.10. A list of detailed recommendations should be included for each water system the list should be ordered by risk rating prioritizing the highest risks.
- 6.11. The Contractor shall include detailed proposals for the site specific tasks to be conducted with frequencies in order to allow the production of a control scheme.
- 6.12. Two copies of the report shall be provided.
- 6.13. Classification of Risk – The contractor is required to produce a system that provides some indication as to the degree of risk present, for example: -

Risk Level	Action	
0	No risk	No action required
1	Slight risk under exceptional operating conditions	Consider risk reduction measures when more urgent

2	Slight risk under normal operating Conditions	risks have been actioned. Program risk reduction measures for completion.
3	Serious present risk	Implement remedial actions or changes in procedure to reduce the risk as soon as practicable.
4	Imminent danger to health	Consider closing down the system until risk reduction measures have been implemented.

## 7. TESTING

Water Temperature Testing is to be completed in line with the TDBC Property Services Legionella Policy and ACOP L8. The methodology of reporting and recording the findings of these tests are to be agreed with the Contract Administrator appointed by TDBC Property Services prior to the commencement of the contract but it is envisaged that hard copy log books retained at TDBC offices will be the preferred method.

## 8. QUOTATIONS FOR REMEDIAL WORKS

Fully costed and itemised quotations to complete identified remedial works should be provided to the Contract Administrator appointed by TDBC Property Services on;

1. Submission of the risk assessments & 2. Following any identified non compliance with TDBC policy or ACOP L8.

However TDBC reserve the right to obtain alternative competitive quotations for any works.

## 9. REFERENCES

1. Approved Code of Practice L8 (2000): Legionnaires 'disease The control of Legionella bacteria in water systems, HSC. ISBN 0 7176-1772-6.
2. HS(G)70: The Control of Legionellosis Including Legionnaires' Disease, HSE 1993. ISBN 0 11 882150 4 (Withdrawn).
3. Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.
4. Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. Approved Code of Practice L24, HSE 1992. ISBN 0 7176 0413 6.

5. Health and Safety - The Work at Height Regulations 2005 SI 735 ISBN 0-110-72563-8 (& Amendment 2007).
6. Guidance to the Standard Specification of Water Services Risk Assessment - FMS 4/99. BSRIA 1998. ISBN 0 86022 518 6.
7. Water Management Society Guide to Risk Assessment.
8. Environment Agency - The determination of *Legionella* bacteria in water and other environmental samples (2005) - Part 1 - Rationale of surveying and sampling.
9. BS 6700:2006 Specification for the Design, Installation, Testing and Maintenance of Services Supplying Water for Domestic use Within Buildings and their Curtilages.
10. Water Regulations Advisory Scheme WRAS Water Regulations Guide ISBN 0-9539708-0-9

## Outbreaks of Legionella

1. **In the event of an emergency** the Responsible Person or their deputy must be immediately advised by the nominated person, or other duty holder as appropriate. The Responsible Person's contact details are in Appendix 3.
2. In the event of an outbreak the authority will follow the guidance presented in Appendix 2 of the Health and Safety Commission Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L8: "Legionnaires disease - The control of Legionella bacteria in water systems".
3. **Medical Advice** is available if exposure to Legionella bacteria has occurred.

The Council's employees who may be affected or involved will be offered an appointment with the Council's Occupational Health Service (OHS). The purpose of this appointment is to:

- establish an Occupational Health Record. This must be retained for 50 years by the Council's OHS;
- document the type and level of exposure for each employee exposed. A written summary should be provided for the OHS to attach to the records; within 14 days of the exposure.
- establish a baseline medical record of health;
- provide an opportunity for employees to discuss risks and concerns in confidence;
- ensure that employees' general practitioner (GP) services are informed, via the OHS, so that GPs can monitor the individuals concerned.

## **Background information relating to Legionella risks and infection routes;**

Legionellosis is the collective name given to pneumonia illnesses caused by Legionella bacteria; the most serious is Legionella's disease. Similar but less serious illnesses include Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever. To date over 50 species of Legionella bacteria have been identified.

The disease first came to prominence in July 1976 following an outbreak of a typical pneumonia among the delegates of the 1976 Legionnaires convention in Philadelphia. 221 people developed symptoms and of these, 34 died. The syndrome became known as "Legionnaires' disease", and was at first thought to be caused by a virus, a commonly held misconception that is still reported in most newspapers following outbreaks.

In January 1977 the causative agent, a hitherto unknown gram-negative bacterium was identified by the Centre for Disease Control in Atlanta. This was isolated from the lung tissue of the victims; and significantly, from a condensate tray in the hotel's air-conditioning system. It was dignified with the name Legionella pneumophila, "pneumo" relating to the lungs and "phila" from Philadelphia. As more information became known about the micro organism it became apparent that it may have been responsible for previous outbreaks of fatal pneumonia, as revealed by diagnostic tests conducted on deep-frozen post mortem tissue from cases of atypical pneumonias dating from the 1940s.

There have been numerous high-profile outbreaks throughout the world; in the UK, the BBC and Stafford General Hospital and more recently, the Barrow-in-Furness outbreaks have all received major press coverage. Other European outbreaks include a flower show in Amsterdam, where 28 out of 242 people infected died; Alcala de Henares and Murcia in Spain. These major outbreaks caused widespread concern and increased the profile of the disease, leading to heightened awareness and the introduction of legislation aimed at controlling Legionella.

Legionnaires' disease is a relatively recently discovered condition, but Legionella have probably been present unrecognised in the natural environment for aeons, and it was only when they interacted with the built environment in such a catastrophic way that they had any recognised impact on human activities.

The organism occurs widely in nature where it exists in soil, streams, lakes and rivers and other fresh surface waters. It does not grow actively at temperatures below 20°C, but can remain dormant for many months, surviving in ice. It is rapidly killed at temperatures above 60°C. Its favoured growth range is between 32 and 41°C and it has a nutritional requirement for iron and for cysteine. Growth is slow compared to many other water borne

pathogenic bacteria such as *E. coli* or the salmonellae. Legionellae are also resistant to short term acid exposure down to pH 2.

Bacteria exist in water in two principal forms: planktonic (free living), and sessile, (attached to surfaces). Research has shown that the sessile mode is preferred in natural and in reasonably clean built water systems (i.e., having low levels of nutrients), with typically only 0.1% being present in the planktonic form (Geesey et al, 1978). This is a significant finding as it implies that a degree of caution should be taken on interpreting the counts obtained for *Legionella* in domestic water systems. It is the view of both AEC and the HSC that random sampling for *Legionella* in water systems is not recommended, but that selective *Legionella* sampling can be beneficial as part of a management plan in a high risk system, to demonstrate the effectiveness of an existing control strategy. *Legionella* monitoring is a requirement in the management of cooling towers and evaporative condensers.

The preference for a sessile existence confers a high degree of protection to Legionellae, enabling them to exploit environments that would otherwise be too harsh. They are particularly successful in their ability to exist in biofilm, the slimy layers found on submerged surfaces of a variety of materials. Biofilms are complex miniature ecosystems composed of a range of bacterial, algal and protozoan species, which coexist and interact. Micro organisms within the biofilm matrix are protected from a range of chemicals and to some extent heat and sunlight, by the layer of slime.

Legionellae are known to be ingested by protozoa such as amoebae, where they exist in a vacuole or cyst within the amoeba, evading digestion and are thus protected from environmental difficulties. This is a major factor in the survival of the bacteria. The cysts are very hardy, remaining intact following the death of the amoebae. They can sometimes re-seed water systems following cleaning and disinfection.

The principle infection route is via inhalation of atomised droplets of infected water (the higher the concentration the higher the risk). Aspiration of infected drinking water is also a possible (but unusual) route for infection.

Water can be atomised into an aerosol in various ways, the most commonly found in buildings are; showers, spray taps, hose heads, spa baths etc although the action of water impacting on basins, sinks, baths etc via standard taps can also produce aerosols.

**Responsible Person Contact Details;**

**Mr Phil Webb**

**Housing Services Property Manager**

**01823 356505.**

**Deputy;**

**Mr Steve Esau**

**Property Manager - Maintenance**

**01823 356593.**

## Appendix 2 Control Measures at TDBC Properties

Frequency	System	Check	Carried Out By
Weekly	Hot and cold distribution pipe work	Flushing of all deadlegs* identified on risk assessment	Appointed Contractor
Monthly	Communal Hot water storage vessel(s)	Check flow and return temperatures. Flow should be 60°C and return 50°C	Appointed Contractor
	Communal Cold water storage tanks	Check make up and stored water temperature. Stored water temperature should be below 20°C. Carry out visual inspection of tanks	Appointed Contractor
	Communal Hot and cold water outlets	Check sentinel+ hot and cold water outlets. Hot water outlet should be between 50 and 60°C within 1 minute of opening. Cold water below 20°C within 2 minutes of opening	Appointed Contractor
	Communal Hot and cold water outlets	Check 10% of non-sentinel hot and cold water outlets on rotational basis. Hot water outlet should be between 50 and 60°C within 1 minute of opening. Cold water below 20°C within 2 minutes of opening	Appointed Contractor
	Communal Hot outlets fitted Thermostatic Mixing Valves (TMVs)	The water supply to the TMV temperature should be at least 50°C within a minute of running the water. The outlet temperature should be no more than 46°C	Appointed Contractor
	Communal Showers	Remove shower head and hose and descale and disinfect.	Appointed Contractor
Annually	Hot water storage vessel – Dukes Court	Drain down vessel and inspect the internal conditions. Descale if required.	Water Treatment Consultant / Maintenance Contractor
As required	Hot and cold water storage and distribution system - Dukes Court & Chertsey House	Drain down and clean cold water storage tanks. Disinfect cold water storage tanks, hot water storage vessel and associated services.	Water Treatment Consultant

\* Pipes leading to a fitting through which water only passes when there is draw-off from the fitting, includes low use outlets

+ For a hot water services - the first and last taps on a recirculating system. For cold water systems (or non-recirculating hot water systems), the nearest and furthest taps from the storage tank. The choice of sentinel taps may also include other taps which are considered to represent a particular risk.

### Non- Compliance and Escalation Procedures;

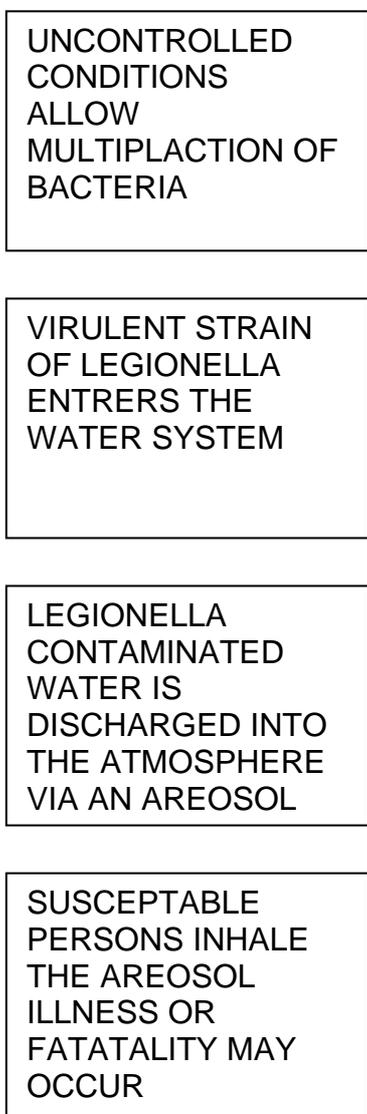
Should any task result fall outside the designated control criteria then the defects / non-compliance section of the logbook shall be completed and the Site/Premises Manager and the Property Services Manager shall be informed of the nature of the non-compliance. The Site / Premises Manager shall take the appropriate steps, as reasonably practicable, to resolve the non-compliance and ensure that the system has been returned to a safe condition within the specified control limits.

Should the Site / Premises Manager be unable to resolve the non-compliance or the system is still outside the control limits they will inform the TDBC Responsible Person who will authorize the use of additional resources outside the remit of the Site / Premises Manager

Once the non-compliance / control failure has been resolved it will be closed off in the defects / non-compliance section the site water hygiene logbook and signed by the Site / Premises Manager and/or Responsible Person.

### **Appendix 3**

## **CAUSATION CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT LEAD TO LEGIONELLA OUTBREAKS**



# TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Housing Property Services

### Electrical Condition Testing Policy

<b>Policy</b>	
<b>Policy Number</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Electrical Condition Testing
<b>Author</b>	Steve Esau
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Phil Webb
<b>EQIA Date</b>	
<b>Date Agreed by TSMB</b>	
<b>Date agreed by Housing Portfolio Holder</b>	
<b>Next Review Date</b>	
<b>Version</b>	1.1

## 1.0 Introduction

The policy sets out the aims and objectives of the organisation and outlines responsibilities for managing the Electrical Condition Inspection Report programme.

The policy covers all activities under the control of Housing Property Services (HPS) and includes all the properties that it owns, occupies or where it acts as landlord. Where properties do not come under the direct responsibility of the Housing Revenue Account, this Policy and Code of Practice will be commended to them. Housing Property Services has obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, that electrical installations are inspected and tested.

Housing Property Services recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees and the public who may be affected by its facilities and services. This statement is an expression of the Housing Property Service's commitment to managing risks arising from any activities under its control.

The Housing Property Services will, so far as is reasonably practicable take all reasonable steps to protect the health and environment of:

- Employees
- Contractors (employed directly or indirectly)
- Clients and tenants
- Other persons

## 2.0 Intention

Housing Property Services recognises its duties in law, to safeguard the health and safety of its employees and of others affected by its actions. The policy has been drawn up to set out clearly the systems and procedures, which will be implemented to manage the risk from electrical systems. It therefore:

- Puts procedures in place to control and minimise these risks; and
- Ensures work is to higher standards than the minimum required by law, where reasonably practicable; and
- Provides information, guidance and training for managers responsible for premises and other key managers to ensure they are aware of their role with regard to this policy; and
- Promotes good system design to reduce the risk to stakeholders.

### 3.0 Responsibilities

The Housing and Communities Director has responsibility for Housing Property Services Electrical Testing Regime procedures and ensuring their implementation and proper compliance through the Housing Property Services Manager who is responsible for health and safety issues relating to the Housing Revenue Account properties. The Housing Property Services Manager will be the “responsible person” for ensuring adequate systems are in place to ensure compliance and control of the risks from electrical systems in the housing stock.

The nominated deputy is the “Housing Property Manager (Maintenance)” The theme manager will ensure that sufficient time and resources are provided to implement the policy and procedures within the Housing Property Services, through their services’ management systems. They are responsible for ensuring full compliance with the procedures through their managers and staff.

The responsibilities of staff and others involved in the control regime are as follows:

The Housing Property Services Manager is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy, for the delivery of the programme and for monitoring to ensure that recommendations arising from testing are carried out.
- Instructing the maintenance contractors to undertake any improvement and adaptation works necessary following an unsatisfactory test for properties where the service holds the central building maintenance budget.
- Responsible for promoting good design practice and operating procedures to reduce as far as is reasonably practical the risk of harm from premises, equipment under the services control;
- Ensuring arrangements are in place in their areas of control for the effective management of the testing programme. In particular they are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented and managed.
- Ensure the competence of the staff employed to manage and administer the programme and ensure that appointed contractors are competent by ensuring that;
  1. The contractor’s professional registration (NICEIC, NAPIT etc) is current.
  2. Copies of public and employee liability insurance certification are suitable and current.
  3. There have been no improvement or enforcement notices issued by the HSE to the contractor, or if there have been suitable action has been taken to negate this.
  4. The contractor has in place sufficient and suitable; health & safety policy, site specific risk assessments, method statements, lone working procedures etc.

## Taunton Deane Borough Council

- A proportion of the inspections are quality and cost audited to ensure compliance with the HPS specification, Health and Safety at Work Act Regulations, A competent employee has day to day responsibility for the testing programme

The Housing Property Services Manager is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the authority's policy. They are responsible for:

Ensuring that a person is identified (the Responsible Person) for the housing stock and there is clearly identified line management regime established with responsibility for ensuring that duties are carried out;

Distributing this policy throughout the service;

Arranging appropriate training and ensuring competence for those staff identified as requiring training;

Scheme Managers and site personnel are responsible for ensuring that contractor access is available to complete tasks in line with this policy.

Managers in the housing service are responsible for:

- Ensuring that this policy is complied with.
- Have available, and keep up to date, all information supplied for the operation and management of their premises, including a copy of all the relevant records, schematic diagrams for the properties under their control;
- Arrange for the testing of electrical systems as detailed in the programme.
- Establish and implement appropriate controls for any maintenance or modification work to be done by contractors, service engineers, volunteers and own staff (e.g. Site maintenance staff);
- Ensure safe systems of work are effectively implemented;
- Know what action to take if a condition report identifies unsatisfactory or dangerous installations;
- Ensure, where there is information known about the electrical system that this is drawn to the attention of the maintenance contractor and those who do maintenance work etc. **before** they commence work.
- Close consultation and co-operation with contractors, staff and tenants will assist managers in meeting this obligation;
- Update the premises' records and schematic diagrams where they have ordered any changes to the electrical systems in their properties.
- Co-operate and co-ordinate with other managers on shared premises.

## Taunton Deane Borough Council

- Staff are responsible for advising the Housing Property Services Manager on any issues relating to their premises that may affect the safe use of the building or electrical installation in premises under their control:

All staff have a duty for their own health and safety and a duty to co-operate with Housing Property Services in the implementation and maintenance of its arrangements to satisfy its statutory duties for health and safety.

Employees therefore have a responsibility to:

- Understand the risks associated with electrical systems
- Report any defective equipment or systems;
- Use any electrical equipment or system in a safe manner; and
- Attend training and read briefing documents as required.

Contractor(s) are contracted to deliver test and inspections to sites where the authority holds the maintenance budget.

### 4.0 References

British Standard 7671, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1999, Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers, National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors, Electrical Contractors Assn, Guidance etc.

### 5.0 Monitoring and review

Monitoring and review of this statement, ongoing assessments and control precautions will be reviewed at intervals as appropriate, and at least annually. Revisions will be made as necessary to reflect organisational, technical or legislative changes. The authority will obtain further competent advice as required.

**A copy of this policy will be made available to employees. It will be reviewed, added to and modified as appropriate to sustain its effectiveness, and such changes will be brought to the notice of employees. It may be supplemented in appropriate cases by further amendments relating to the work of particular departments or groups of workers. The policy will be reviewed every three years.**

## Appendix 1 - Process.

To comply with the obligations and legal duties Housing Property Services (HPS) will appoint contractors to complete a programme of testing;

The contractor will be asked to provide a Periodic Inspection and Test Report to BS 7671: 2008 for the electrical installation in each building.

The specification information for contractors is herewith attached in appendix 1.

The report will state if the installation is **satisfactory** or **unsatisfactory**. If the report states that the installation is unsatisfactory arrangements will be made for remedial works to be carried out to ensure a satisfactory certificate is available. Following any remedial works the contractor should provide an electrical installation certificate. A copy of the certificate will be held on file in the Housing Property Services office.

It is not necessary for the installation to comply with all aspects of the current standard (BS7671 2008) for the system to be safe hence it may not be necessary to repair all the non-compliances listed in the report.

The reports are not necessarily a specification from which a contractor can produce a competitive tender for any necessary repair work. Liaison between the contractor and the designated HPS surveyor may be required for some properties. However, a reliable contractor should be asked to advise and give an estimate for the work required to make the installation safe.

A registered electrical contractor should do any repair work that is required. It is a legal requirement that electrical work in dwellings and associated properties be done by a registered contractor. Confirmation that the work has been completed to current building regulations standards and has been self certificated under an "approved persons" scheme will be required along with a minor works certificate.

**Appendix 2 – Responsible Person.**

**Mr Phil Webb**

**Housing Services Property Manager**

**01823 356505.**

**Deputy;**

**Mr Steve Esau**

**Property Manager - Maintenance**

**01823 356593**

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Tenant Services Management Board 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014

### Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day Tenant Services Management Board Annual General Meeting

#### Report of the Tenant Empowerment Manager – Martin Price

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

#### 1. Executive Summary

A Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day is an event which typically runs all day and gives tenants and leaseholders an opportunity to gain information on and ask questions about topics that are of interest to them. The day is informal in terms of tenants and leaseholders can pop in at any time during the day; appointments do not have to be made.

The first such event was held in April 2011 and received a very positive feedback with over 100 tenants attending. The second and third events in 2012 and 2013 proved even more successful in terms of numbers attending and feedback.

The Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) has previously taken the decision to hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the end of the open day.

Representatives of the Tenant Services Management Board, Tenants' Forum and Supported Housing Service Development Group met to shape the event for 2014. This report details the conclusions of this group.

#### 2. Background

The three Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open days have been held in April since their introduction in 2011. The venue has been the Somerset County Cricket Ground and over 100 tenants and leaseholders have attended each event, with over 20 stalls available including various departments of Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and representatives from external organisations who were able to answer questions on a wide variety of housing related issues and other matters.

Representatives of the Tenant Services Management Board, Tenants' Forum and Supported Housing Service Development Group met on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014 to shape the event for 2014. Issues discussed by the group included timings and venue for the event, guest speakers, publicity and who should be invited to have stalls.

The group has agreed that there will be further meetings to review progress and ensure everything is on track. There will also be further meetings after the event to see what lessons can be learnt and plan for future year's events.

### **3. Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 – Venue and Date**

The group came to the conclusion that the open day should be held at the Somerset County Cricket Ground on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014. The Tenant Empowerment Team has booked a function room at the Somerset County Cricket Ground for the whole day on this date. It should be noted that wi fi access is available at the cricket ground and stall holders should be encouraged to use this to enable them to answer questions at the event where they are dependant on referring to their computer system.

It was agreed that members of tenant and leaseholder groups would be on the front desk of the venue to meet and greet attendees and give feedback forms. It should be noted that by completing the feedback forms tenants and leaseholders will be entered into a prize draw.

### **4. Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 - Timing**

The group agreed that the event should be open from 10am to 5pm. However, it is important that all stalls are set up and ready before the 10am start time. The group felt that Councillor Adkins should be invited to open the event. It was also stated that tea and coffee should be available throughout the day.

### **5. Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 – Invitations to stallholders**

By looking at the organisations that have attended previously and the type of subjects that should be covered a suggested list of organisations and TDBC departments has been drawn up:

#### **Tenant and Leaseholder Organisations – ONE STALL**

- Tenant Services Management Board
- Tenants' Forum
- Tenant and Resident Associations
- Leaseholders' Forum
- Supported Housing Service Development Group

#### **TDBC Housing Services**

- Estates Management
- Leaseholder Section
- Property Services

- Repairs Section
- Supported Housing
- Housing Options
- Digital Inclusion
- Development Section
- Welfare Reform
- Anti-social behaviour
- Right to buy
- Community Development

#### Other TDBC Sections

- Revenue and Benefits
- DLO
- Deane Helpline
- Environmental Health
- Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership
- Tone Leisure
- Parks

#### Non TDBC Organisations

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Energy saving organisation
- Avon and Somerset Police
- Age UK
- Credit Union
- Devon and Somerset Fire Service
- ALHCO
- Somerset County Council Children's Services
- Community Centres (Halcon, Priorswood, Wiveliscombe)

The group felt that the Repairs section stall should have plenty of room to allow tenants and leaseholders to access staff and have their queries answered. Owing to the number of queries dealt with at this stall in previous years the Repairs section should also ensure that there is sufficient staff available throughout the day.

#### **6. Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 - Publicity**

Each tenant and leaseholder will be sent an invitation to the event, detailing time, venue, stall holders and guest speakers. Other methods of advertising the event identified are:

- Tenant and Leaseholder newsletters
- Taunton Deane Borough Council website
- Notice boards across the borough
- Somerset County Gazette and local newspapers
- Posters

- Banner (similar to the one used to advertise the Affordable Housing Open Day)
- TV Screens in reception of Deane House
- Family centres/Children Centres
- Shops/supermarkets
- Post offices
- Local radio stations
- Tenants' Forum notice board in reception of Deane House
- Satellite offices (for example Wellington)
- Front line staff (for example Estate Officers, Supported Housing Officers and DLO)
- Councillors
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Large sign on the front of the cricket ground

There are other methods of publicity that will be investigated:

- On buses
- At schools
- Quarterly rent statement that is sent to tenants
- Annual rent level letter that is sent to tenants
- At village halls
- In libraries
- At GP surgeries
- In hospitals
- On DLO vans
- On ALHCO vans
- In church halls and in church magazines

Debbie Rundle, Media and Public Relations Officer at Taunton Deane Borough Council, will offer advice and useful contacts to ensure the publicity is as effective as possible.

## **7. Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 – Guest Speakers**

The group agreed that having guest speakers would be a welcome addition to the event. It was decided that there should be two guest speakers, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The topics and times would be widely advertised and the talks would be held in another part of the cricket ground. There would also be an opportunity to have a question and answer session at the end of the talk. The group decided that the two guest speakers to be invited are:

- James Barra, Director – Housing and Communities. To discuss future plans for Housing Services.
- Phil Webb, Housing Manager – Property Services. To discuss future plans for improving the housing stock.

## **8. Tenant Services Management Board AGM – Timing and Venue**

The Terms of Reference of the TSMB state that:

“An Annual General Meeting will be held in April each year, or within 15 months of the previous AGM”

Last year the AGM of the TSMB formed part of the Tenants’ and Leaseholders’ Open Day, with the formal meeting held at 3.30pm.

It has already been agreed that the AGM will be held on the 28th April 2014. This date has been publicised in the Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders calendar that was sent out in December 2013.

As well as the date detailed in the Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders calendar if the TSMB agrees to hold the AGM on the same date as the Tenants’ and Leaseholders’ Open Day (as it did in previous years) information could form part of the invitation letter sent out to all tenants and leaseholders.

There is no set format to the AGM. However, it is customary to include agenda items such as:

- reports from the outgoing Chairperson on the board’s activities during the year
- reports on issues that face the TSMB and Housing Services in the coming year
- Consider and vote on any resolutions put forward by tenants
- Elect the TSMB’s Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. This is not applicable this year as the TSMB election will be held in May 2014.

## **9. Finance Comments**

The cost of hiring a function room at the Somerset County Cricket Ground is free up to 5pm, with an additional charge to keep the venue open until 7pm. There would also be a cost to provide lunch for stall holders (dependant on how many stall holders are at the event) and teas/coffees/water throughout the day.

There would also be a cost of sending invitation letters to each tenant and leaseholder and other forms of publicity.

The main costs of the AGM would be the hire of the venue and publicity. However, if the TSMB agrees that the AGM will be held at the same venue of the Tenants’ and Leaseholders’ Open Day the expenditure will be included in the cost of this event.

The cost of the event can be funded from existing budgets.

## **10. Legal Comments**

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

## **11. Links to Corporate Aims**

The event can contribute positively to the aims of the council as a whole and in particular housing services' aims of:

### **1. *Securing a long term future for our housing service.***

- This means continuing to invest in the management of the housing stock to ensure it meets tenants' needs, who should be at the heart of decision making.

### **2. *Tackling deprivation and sustainable community development***

- This means taking action so that disadvantaged communities will have better access to local housing services, training and employment, continuing our support for a range of vulnerable people.

### **3. *Investing in our housing stock, regeneration and affordable housing***

- This means investing in our existing stock to deliver a standard that meets the needs of the stock and local aspirations. It also means planning and successfully managing the regeneration of our housing estates and communities, providing homes that cater for the needs of an expanding and diverse population within communities that people are proud of.

### **4. *Climate change***

- This means taking action to reduce carbon emissions across our housing stock through our investment planning, service delivery, partnership and community action to address climate change and reduce fuel poverty.

## **12. Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## **13. Community Safety Implications**

The event gives the opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to hear what TDBC does to tackle anti-social behaviour and be able to ask questions of the relevant officers.

## **14. Equalities Impact**

A function room of the Somerset County Cricket Ground has been chosen as it has easy access for all.

The invitation letter will include a section that will allow tenants and leaseholders to have the information translated into a different language if necessary, in Braille, large print, audio tape or CD.

## **15. Risk Management**

There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

## **16. Partnership Implications**

The main aim of this event is to provide information to tenants and leaseholders that they will find interesting and worthwhile. It is therefore important to invite TDBC's partners to allow a wider amount of information.

## **17. Recommendations**

It is recommended the Tenant Services Management Board:

- Note this report
- Review and comment on the organisations to invite to the event
- Review and comment on the timing of event
- Comment on the methods of publicity
- Consider the venue and timing for the TSMB Annual General Meeting

**Contact:** Martin Price  
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**Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 20 January 2014 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, Belvedere Road, Taunton.**

**Present:** Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chair)  
Mrs J Hegarty (Vice-Chair),  
Mrs J Bunn, Mrs E Drage, Mr M Edwards, Mr D Gaplin, Mr I Gould, Mr K Hellier, Councillor Bowrah and Councillor Miss Smith.

**Officers:** Steve Esau (Property Manager; Maintenance), Christine Thompson (Supported Housing Manager), Phil Webb (Housing Manager; Property Services), James Barrah (Director for Housing and Communities), Simon Lewis (Assistant Director; Housing and Community Development), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

**Others:** Councillors Jean Adkins and Cllr Mrs F Smith

(The meeting commenced at 6.05pm)

**1. Apologies**

Mr R Middleton

**2. Public Question Time**

No questions received for Public Question Time.

**3. Declarations of Interests**

Councillor Bowrah and Councillor Miss Smith declared personal interests as several members of their families were Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants. Mr Etherington, Mrs Hegarty, Mrs Bunn, Mrs Drage, Mr Edwards, Mr Galpin, Mr Gould and Mr Hellier declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

**4. Kilkenny Court Update**

The Supported Housing Manager and Property Manager for Maintenance gave a verbal update on the planned works for Kilkenny Court Extra Care Facility.

**Communal Bathrooms** – Below was a summary of the planned modernisation of the two communal bathroom facilities.

- These planned modernisations would bring the bathrooms up to standard and compliant with the regulations.
- All current fittings would be removed.
- The new style of facility would be walk in/wet room.
- There had been ongoing issues around water pressure, so this would be addressed when the facilities were modernised to allow for good pressure when using the new facilities.

- The contractor for this planned works was 'Mi Space'.

**Refurbishment of the Four Lifts** - Below was a summary of the planned refurbishment of the four lifts.

- The tenders would be back at the end of this month.
- The contract would start early May this year.
- The work would be phased with only one lift in each block out of action at anyone time.

**Installation of Mobility Scooter Storage** - Below was a summary of the planned installation of Mobility Scooter Storage facilities.

- There would be two new facilities available.
- The idea behind was to clear the communal areas of mobility scooters.
- These would be access through key fob system opening individual shutters.
- Inside there would a charging point access.
- These would be wide enough to allow for transfer to frame walkers or manual wheelchairs.

Also part of the planned of works for the both blocks communal water testing, emergency lighting testing and electrical testing.

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

- Didn't the residents also mention issues with the door entry and the key fobs? Had this issue been sorted?
- *This issue wasn't in the current planned works but the officer said they would investigate the issue and look making the system more user friendly for the Residents*
- Mentioned issues with the guttering and windows at Kilkenny Court?  
*The guttering issue was being investigated and more work would be planned for the future.*  
*The Property Manager would look into the issues concerning the windows and go back look at the repairs history for the properties.*
- Repairs works would be and can be done but it would take time for these to be completed.
- Some of residents/people didn't understand the restrictions and difficulties relating to budgets and think works and development should happen instantly.

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

## 5. **Review of HRA Business Plan 2012 - 2042**

Considered report previously circulated, which detailed the latest review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2012-2042.

Since the last review process, a number of significant changes and issues had arisen that impacted on the Business Plan, which had resulted in a further review being undertaken.

## **(1) Business Plan - Income**

**Stock Figures and Average Rent** - Due to increased discounts, the number of Right to Buy sales had significantly increased since the last review of the Business Plan.

There had also been a small number of disposals to housing associations for redevelopment such as Parmin Close and Victoria Gate, Taunton and the planned demolitions involved in the Council's own Creechbarrow Road, Taunton development, which had also been reflected in the updated assumptions. In addition some acquisitions had been made using Right to Buy receipts.

This meant that the number of dwellings at 2014/2015 had been reduced to 5941 (from 5980), and consequently the rent income forecasted in the Business Plan had been reduced in line with this.

As the average rent was slightly higher than forecast in the last reviewed, this had reversed the reduction of rent in the early years.

**Changes to the Rent Formula** - Since 2001, rents for social housing had been set based on a formula set by Government. This "formula" rent was worked out based on a combination of the relative value of the property, relative local earnings levels and the size of the property.

Landlords had been expected to move the actual rent of a property to this formula rent, over time, by annually increasing the weekly rents by Retail Price Index (RPI) + 0.5% plus a convergence factor of up to an additional £2 per week where the rent was below the formula rent for the property.

At the Spending Round 2013 the Government had directed that from 2015-2016, rents in the social sector would increase by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 1% and that this rent policy would apply for 10 years.

The change from using RPI to the generally lower CPI measure of inflation was not expected to adversely affect the Business Plan in the short term. The actual impact would depend on the difference between RPI and CPI in future years.

The change in the formula to remove the convergence factor of up to £2 would however have an effect on future rents and income. Rents had previously been set with the intention of reaching formula rent (also known as target rent) where possible in 2015/2016, but this would not now happen with the majority of current rents.

The result of the changes would mean that for one year (2014/2015), rents would be higher than previously thought for the reasons explained. However after this, rent would only be uplifted by CPI + 1% meaning rents would increase by less than expected in the Business Plan.

Since the proposal to change rent policy would last for 10 years, after that time an increase of only CPI had been assumed. This adversely impacted upon the income further since the previous rent policy had had no end date.

**Re-lets at 'Formula Rent'** - Formula rent figures had already been calculated and set for all Council properties and in order to help mitigate the loss of income in the Business Plan, all dwellings being re-let with effect from December 2013 would be let at formula rent level.

## **(2) Business Plan - Expenditure**

**Voids** - The number of void properties had shown a steady increase for a number of years and a more recent significant increase in the first part of this year. Historically void costs had generally exceeded budget.

Although a new Lettable Standard had been introduced to provide a specification for re-lets, the average cost of voids remained high. The reasons for this were currently being investigated. It was anticipated that improvements to Deane DLO software and the introduction of schedule of rates would provide better control on voids expenditure in future.

**Planned Maintenance** - Following the "No" vote to stock transfer in 2006, a significant cut was made in HRA expenditure in order to fund the work that was known to be required to achieve Decent Homes. One of the changes that was made at this time was to reduce the frequency of planned maintenance (external repair and decoration) from a cycle of five years to eight years.

A five year contract was now planned for the new financial year which would combine external repairs and redecoration with the replacement of fascias and soffits with UPVC. An appropriate budget had been proposed for the completion of this work.

Following this period these costs were expected to reduce due to the volumes of lower maintenance components installed and the extensive door replacement programme which was continuing. Although this was a higher cost in the short term, over the longer term this would deliver savings.

**Compliance** - There were a number of important areas of safety checking and specialist maintenance within the housing maintenance theme. There were some weaknesses in our approach to compliance issues and this had resulted in action plans being put in place to move these forward.

The Council was currently seeking to employ specialist services in a number of additional areas which included periodic electrical testing and Legionella monitoring. The costs for these included the servicing and testing procedures and any remedial work that might become necessary.

**Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Aids and Adaptations (A and As) Budget** - The HRA currently budgeted £525,000 capital per year to provide disabled aids and adaptations for tenants in our stock.

The annual spend on A and As was in the order of only £120,000. Therefore it was proposed to reduce the budget to this level whilst not impacting on service delivery.

It was anticipated that the need was likely to increase in future years as the population aged. For business planning purposes it was thought prudent to increase this provision by 5% per year for the next 10 years and then for it to remain fixed for the remainder of the plan. However, as there was currently no evidence to support a 5% increase a freeze to this budget was proposed.

**Staffing** - In line with the recently agreed Joint Management Structure between Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils, the management costs had been

increased by £77,600 per annum. This was to build leadership capacity in order to maximise the opportunities and manage the financial risk of the self financed HRA.

Provision had also been made within the Halcon One Team for one third of the cost of a co-ordinator post to assist in the continuation of the project.

### **(3) Other Financial Adjustments**

The cost of support services provided by the General Fund (GF) was recalculated annually to ensure the cost was apportioned fairly. The HRA share had increased due to the proportionate increase in the size of the HRA against the GF.

Inflation had been amended from RPI to CPI within the financial model to bring this in line with the change in rent policy.

### **(4) Voluntary Code for a self-financed Housing Revenue Account**

The introduction of HRA self financing had given local authorities the freedom to develop and deliver a more positive, less constrained, vision for Council housing. In order to support local authorities, a voluntary Code of Practice had been developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Chartered Institute of Housing. The principles and provisions of the code would:-

- Assist housing authorities in ensuring effective governance, finance and business planning;
- Provide transparency to tenants, Members and officers as to how the Housing business was being managed. The Code would provide tenants and Members with a framework against which to hold the authority to account;
- Allow housing authorities to assess where they might need further support and assistance.

A copy of the Code of Practice had been appended to the report for the information of Members.

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

- Page three, section 4.1 Voids investigations into high void property costs and assistance from the DLO. Could you explain this in more detail?  
*Currently, waiting for the new back office software, this would allow for greater transparency on costing for work as well as with the introduction of a schedule of rates. This was part of bigger review and restructure with the way work was monitored and planned.*  
*There was a planned review of all high expenditure areas relating to Voids and they would be investigated to help understand why then try and reduce them.*
- Would that help with the costing of labour?  
*This would make savings with the new working policies for the DLO.*
- Page eight, relating to the outcome bullet points. Would the officers be coming back to the Board to update us on the outcome?  
*The answer to that was none of the bullet point options. There had now been put into place treasury management measures.*
- There were no references within the review about increasing our housing stock. Was this still part of the Council's plan?

*There would be £1million per year from year four invested in increasing the Council's housing stock. This included buying back ex-council properties with RtB receipts. So far, there had been four completed purchases.*

*Ideally the Council would like to keep the housing stock levels above 6000 units/properties. Current, the Council total stock sits at 5940. This was due to RtB's. The government was still pushing RtB.*

- When the Council start the self-assessment audit?  
*This discussion still needed to be hand. There hadn't been any specific decisions made regarding timescales for this process.*
- Board members stated they were happy with the use of CIPFA code.

**Resolved that:-**

1. The Board noted the Officer's report.
2. The proposed changes to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be approved;
3. To adopt the use of the voluntary code for a self-financed Housing Revenue Account;

## **6. Taunton Deane Borough Council Organisational Structure Update.**

The Director for Housing and Communities gave a verbal update concerning changes to organisational structure after the joining of management team and shared services between Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council.

The structure showed for tiers 1 – 3. This included the following positions:

- Chief Executive Penny James
- Assistant Chief Executive Bruce Lang
- Directors; Shirlene Adam, Brendan Cleere and James Barra
- Assistant Directors; Richard Sealy, Simon Lewis, Tim Burton, Paul Fitzgerald, Ian Timms, Chris Hall and a vacant post.

During the presenting of this verbal update, the officer gave a brief run down the responsibilities for each of the positions of tiers 1 – 3.

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

- How long for the next tier?  
*The next tier was middle management. The process had a broad outline for this including populating the new structure by June to mid summer.  
Then the restructure would be looking at individual teams.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

## **7. Legionella and Electrical Installations Testing Policies.**

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the new Legionella and Electrical Installation testing policies for Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services.

It outlined the strategic overview that the tenants could expect from Housing Property Services in relation to Legionella and Electrical Installation testing of our properties.

The Legionella policy gave the organisations arrangements for managing the risk of exposure to Legionellosis within the Council's Housing Revenue Account properties. The Electrical Installation Testing Policy sets out the aims and objectives of the organisation and outlined responsibilities for managing the Electrical Condition Inspection Report programme.

The policies were living document and would be reviewed on a regular basis.

The policy covers all activities under the control of the Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Property Services and included all properties that it owned, occupied or where it acts as landlord.

Legionellosis was the collective name given to pneumonia illnesses caused by Legionella bacteria; the most serious was Legionella's disease. Similar but less serious illnesses include Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever. To date over 50 species of Legionella bacteria had been identified

Housing Property Services had obligations under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, that electrical installations were inspected and tested.

## **Aim**

Housing Property Services recognised and accepted its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees and the public who could be affected by its facilities and services. The policies were an expression of Housing Property Services commitment to managing Legionella and Electrical Installations risks arising from any activities under its control. Housing Property Services would, so far as was reasonably practicable take all reasonable steps to protect the health and environment of:

- Employees
- Contractors (employed directly or indirectly)
- Clients and tenants
- Other persons

The cost of implementing this policy would be met within existing budgets.

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

- Electrical Testing in bathrooms, was this a separate action or part of this regular testing programme?  
*Bathroom installation had to have a circuit test completed as part of this the installation process. This was separate to the planned regular and full testing of the properties electrics as part of the testing policy.*

- Would you be notifying tenants via letter prior to appointments, similar to the servicing programme?  
*The Council would issue to all tenants an initial letter explaining the planned programme relating to properties electrical testing.*
- Could the Council consider using local contractors for electrical testing?  
*The Council could put questions in tender process to encourage the use of local contractors. But Ojeu notice had gone out countrywide; this was due to European Regulations for the electrical testing contract.*
- What would be tested on the electrical side?  
*All circuits would be tested and the results and any recommendations would be feedback to the Council and any required actions would be arranged to be completed.*
- If you had to re-wire a property, what system would the Council be using to hide the wiring?  
*The Council would most likely be considering discrete surface mounting for the re-wiring of properties.*
- Connected to the re-wiring of properties, when the Council was completing a re-wiring, could they consider bring the height of the electrical sockets further off the floor? Some of the tenants struggle with those sockets that are at floor level.  
*This would be considered on a case by case basis. The majority of properties would just have the re-wiring completed.  
The electrical testing was a 10 year programme.*

**Resolved that:-**

1. The Board noted the Officer's report.
2. Recommended to Executive Councillor Adkins, the approval of the Legionella and Electrical Installation testing policies for affirmation.

**8. Update on Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014.**

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the planning and organising of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014.

This was an event which typically ran all day and gave tenants and leaseholders an opportunity to gain information on and ask questions about topics that were of interest to them. The day was informal in terms of tenants and leaseholders could pop in at any time during the day; appointments did not have to be made.

The first such event was held in April 2011 and received a very positive feedback with over 100 tenants attending. The second and third events in 2012 and 2013 proved even more successful in terms of numbers attending and feedback.

The Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) had previously taken the decision to hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the end of the open day.

Representatives of the Tenant Services Management Board, Tenants' Forum and Supported Housing Service Development Group met to shape the event for 2014. This report details the conclusions of this group.

The three Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open days had been held in April since their introduction in 2011. The venue had been the Somerset County Cricket Ground and over 100 tenants and leaseholders had attended each event, with over 20 stalls available including various departments of Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and representatives from external organisations who were able to answer questions on a wide variety of housing related issues and other matters.

Representatives of the Tenant Services Management Board, Tenants' Forum and Supported Housing Service Development Group met on the 6th January 2014 to shape the event for 2014. Issues discussed by the group included timings and venue for the event, guest speakers, publicity and who should be invited to have stalls.

The group had agreed that there would be further meetings to review progress and ensure everything was on track. There would also be further meetings after the event to see what lessons could be learnt and plan for future year's events.

### **Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 – Venue and Date**

The group came to the conclusion that the open day should be held at the Somerset County Cricket Ground on the 28th April 2014. The Tenant Empowerment Team had booked a function room at the Somerset County Cricket Ground for the whole day on this date. It should be noted that wifi access was available at the cricket ground and stall holders should be encouraged to use this to enable them to answer questions at the event where they were dependant on referring to their computer system.

It was agreed that members of tenant and leaseholder groups would be on the front desk of the venue to meet and greet attendees and give feedback forms. It should be noted that by completing the feedback forms tenants and leaseholders would be entered into a prize draw.

### **Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 - Timing**

The group agreed that the event should be open from 10am to 5pm. However, it was important that all stalls were set up and ready before the 10am start time. The group felt that Councillor Adkins should be invited to open the event. It was also stated that tea and coffee should be available throughout the day.

### **Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 – Invitations to stallholders**

By looking at the organisations that have attended previously and the type of subjects that should be covered a suggested list of organisations and TDBC departments had been drawn up:

#### **Tenant and Leaseholder Organisations – ONE STALL**

- Tenant Services Management Board
  - Tenants' Forum
  - Tenant and Resident Associations
  - Leaseholders' Forum
  - Supported Housing Service Development Group
- TDBC Housing Services

- Estates Management
- Leaseholder Section

- Property Services
- Repairs Section
- Supported Housing
- Housing Options
- Digital Inclusion
- Development Section
- Welfare Reform
- Anti-social behaviour
- Right to buy
- Community Development

#### Other TDBC Sections

- Revenue and Benefits
- DLO
- Deane Helpline
- Environmental Health
- Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership
- Tone Leisure
- Parks

#### Non TDBC Organisations

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Energy saving organisation
- Avon and Somerset Police
- Age UK
- Credit Union
- Devon and Somerset Fire Service
- ALHCO
- Somerset County Council Children's Services
- Community Centres

The group felt that the Repairs section stall should have had plenty of room to allow tenants and leaseholders to access staff and have their queries answered. Owing to the number of queries dealt with at this stall in previous years the Repairs section should also ensure that there was sufficient staff available throughout the day.

#### **Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 - Publicity**

Each tenant and leaseholder would be sent an invitation to the event, detailing time, venue, stall holders and guest speakers. Other methods of advertising the event identified were:

- Tenant and Leaseholder newsletters
- Taunton Deane Borough Council website
- Notice boards across the borough
- Somerset County Gazette and local newspapers
- Posters
- Banner
- TV Screens in reception of Deane House
- Family centres/Children Centres

- Shops/supermarkets
- Post offices
- Local radio stations
- Tenants' Forum notice board in reception of Deane House
- Satellite offices
- Front line staff
- Councillors
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Large sign on the front of the cricket ground

There were other methods of publicity that would be investigated:

- On buses
- At schools
- Quarterly rent statement that is sent to tenants
- Annual rent level letter that is sent to tenants
- At village halls
- In libraries
- At GP surgeries
- In hospitals
- On DLO vans
- On ALHCO vans
- In church halls and in church magazines

Media and Public Relations Officer at Taunton Deane Borough Council would offer advice and useful contacts to ensure the publicity was as effective as possible.

### **Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day 2014 – Guest Speakers**

The group agreed that having guest speakers would be a welcome addition to the event. It was decided that there should be two guest speakers, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The topics and times would be widely advertised and the talks would be held in another part of the cricket ground. There would also be an opportunity to had a question and answer session at the end of the talk. The group decided that the two guest speakers to be invited were:

- James Barra, Director – Housing and Communities. To discuss future plans for Housing Services.
- Phil Webb, Housing Manager – Property Services. To discuss future plans for improving the housing stock.

### **Tenant Services Management Board AGM – Timing and Venue**

The Terms of Reference of the TSMB state that:

“An Annual General Meeting will be held in April each year or within 15 months of the previous AGM”

Last year the AGM of the TSMB formed part of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day, with the formal meeting held at 3.30pm.

It had already been agreed that the AGM would be held on the 28th April 2014. This date had been publicised in the Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders calendar that was sent out in December 2013.

As well as the date detailed in the Annual Report to Tenants and Leaseholders calendar if the TSMB agreed to hold the AGM on the same date as the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day information could form part of the invitation letter sent out to all tenants and leaseholders.

There was no set format to the AGM. However, it was customary to include agenda items such as:

- Reports from the outgoing Chairperson on the board's activities during the year
- Reports on issues that face the TSMB and Housing Services in the coming year
- Consider and vote on any resolutions put forward by tenants
- Elect the TSMB's Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. This was not applicable this year as the TSMB election would be held in May 2014.

### **Finance Comments**

The cost of hiring a function room at the Somerset County Cricket Ground was free up to 5pm, with an additional charge to keep the venue open until 7pm. There would also be a cost to provide lunch for stall holders and teas/coffees/water throughout the day.

There would also be a cost of sending invitation letters to each tenant and leaseholder and other forms of publicity.

The main costs of the AGM would be the hire of the venue and publicity. However, if the TSMB agreed that the AGM would be held at the same venue of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day the expenditure would be included in the cost of this event.

The event could contribute positively to the aims of the council as whole and in particular housing services' aims of:

- Securing a long term future for our housing service
- Tackling deprivation and sustainable community development
- Investing in our housing stock, regeneration and affordable housing.

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

- Could the Council consider adding advert for the Open Day on Twitter and Facebook pages?  
*The Council's PR officer was happy to advertise the event on the Council's Tweeter account but the Council didn't have a Facebook account.*
- The Council could try contacting the owners of multiple 'Taunton, Somerset' Facebook pages and ask them if they would advertise the event.
- Were there anymore charities, which covered more of the demographic range of the people of Taunton Deane?

- Could you include Community Halls as well for advertising as some of the rural areas don't have Parish or Church Halls?
- Would an advert be going into Tenants and Leaseholders newsletter?  
*The vast majority had requested individually addressed letters rather than adverts or receiving the newsletter.*
- There was also free forthcoming events section in the Wellington Weekly.
- Could we include adverts in local doctor surgeries?

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

## 9. Creechbarrow Road Development Project

The Director for Housing and Communities gave a brief verbal update on the Creechbarrow Road Development project, below was a summary of the recent project developments:

- Galliford Try was selected as the contractor and took possession of the site on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013.
- KHA portion of land was transferred to their ownership on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2013.
- On site at the moment were employees of Galliford Try, undertaking asbestos surveys in preparation of demolition. Utility companies were also removing the gas and electricity meters.
- Following 24<sup>th</sup> January, the sites appearance would change to more of a 'building site' as works begin on the demolition.
- Residents were been updated regularly by TDBC via letter, one sent in Dec and one in Jan. They would also receive additional letters from the contractor at keys stages where additional information was required e.g. start of demolition phase.
- A letter was sent to local businesses today, to provide an update on progress i.e. Asda, Lavender Court etc.
- The project team had the first site meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January – this meeting would be used to clarify issues such as use of apprenticeships, local labour, community liaison and the build programme.
- An event in the Halcon Community was planned to introduce residents to employees of Galliford Try, KHA and TDBC. Dates for this would be established at the project meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January and then advertised.
- Development Team were attending Halcon MAG and Halcon One Team to provide updates on the project.
- Naming of Creechbarrow, this would be finalised in early February when the Street Naming and Numbering Officer finishes his phased return to work. The Officer had indicated that he was happy with the TSMB suggestions of Kershaw and Seabrook for road names.

Concerning the other phase one sites, the developments were underway for bungalows as well as ongoing projects at Normandy Drive, Bacon Drive and West Bagborough. The tenders for these schemes had already gone out and possible start date onsite would be looking at April 2014.

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's update report.

(The meeting ended at 7.35pm)