

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 14 July 2014 at 18:00.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 16 June 2014 (attached).
- 3 Public Question Time.
- 4 Declaration of Interests
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- 5 Requested Information Update on Grass Cutting and Grounds Maintenance Update (verbal).
- 6 Housing Revenue Account Financial Outturn 2013/14. Report of the Housing Accountant (attached).
Reporting Officer: Lucy Clothier
- 7 Housing Property Services - Capital Works. Report of the Housing Manager - Property Services (attached).
Reporting Officer: Phil Webb
- 8 Gas and other Heating Quarterly Monitoring Report. Report of the Housing Manager - Maintenance (attached).
Reporting Officer: Steve Esau

Bruce Lang
Assistant Chief Executive

22 August 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

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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	
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 June 2014 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chairman),
Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mr K Hellier, Mr R Middleton, Councillor Bowrah
and Councillor Miss Smith.

Officers: Paul Hadley (Housing Manager - Lettings), Michaela Mullen (Welfare Reform Project Officer), Steve Clarke (Tenant Services Development Officer), Mark Antonelli (Principal Benefits Officer), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Phil Webb (Housing Manager – Property Services), Kene Ibezi (Assistant Director Property and Development), James Barra (Director Housing & Communities), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

Others: Councillors Mrs Smith and Jane Warmington.
Sgt Andy Murphy - Halcon One Team and Avon & Somerset Police

(The meeting commenced at 6.05pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies: Councillor J Adkins, Mr M Edwards and Mrs J Hegarty

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 members of their families were Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenant. Mr Etherington, Mrs Bunn, Mr Galpin, Mr Hellier and Mr Middleton declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

4. Halcon One Team Update

The Sgt Murphy gave a verbal update with PowerPoint presentation updating the Board Members on the progress made by the multi-agency group the 'Halcon One Team'.

The Multi-agency working group the 'Halcon One Team' met three mornings per week and had a set agenda based against the families they were supporting. Their process during these meetings was review, assess, action and ensure outcomes.

This involved the following with the Team Co-ordinator at the centre:

- Families
- Family Focus
- TDBC
- Police

- Mental Health
- Schools
- Health
- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Somerset Drug & Alcohol Service (SDAS)
- Education

What had started to change was the living environment on the estate through the invention of the Halcon One Team.

There had been a variety of outcomes as a direct result of the work of multi-agency group known as 'The One Team' and invention and new procedures put into place to challenge and support the Community. There had been reductions in recorded crime and Anti-social behaviour when comparing the figures from 2012/13 to 2013/14 as well as comparing the estates/areas with Taunton, some of which had seen increases.

There had been continually year on year reductions with tenant evictions with 2011/12 having ten, then 2012/13 only five and 2013/14 only three. This created a saving of £164,000 for the Council.

The new approaches had challenged the Council. There had been a great need for a change in the way the Council and other agencies operated in order to help support and make real change in this community.

The next challenge for 'The One Team' and the Council was to challenge, encourage and get on board those agencies who were still a little reluctant to support Halcon One Team.

Tenant and Community programmes include such things as:

- Link Power
- Chill and Chat
- Newsletter
- Youth Projects
- Supporting Healthy Living
- Adult Education Programme

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

- Board Members gave thanks to Sgt Murphy for achievement and ongoing efforts in Halcon and the Halcon One Team.
- Why did officers think that some agencies and partnerships were refusing to be involved with the Halcon One Team and what could Taunton Deane do to get them involved?
- Would Sgt Murphy consider attending Full Council to provide an update to Taunton Deane Councillors?

Yes, it was a good time for Halcon One Team to update Taunton Deane Councillors with our progress as we have some good data now.

Agencies concerns and priorities were different to the concerns, priorities and desires of the community.

Our early invention/prevention had started to show outward signs of success as a result of our improvements.

Young people had found that not only were they being ignored by their parents but agencies as well. The One Team had set up a number of projects and schemes to help young people access the things they need and desire.

We needed to change perceptions not just the processes.

The One Team was also challenging agencies who receive grants on the back of the Halcon estate's community to actually deliver services in the area not just receive the grants.

- What would happen if Sgt Murphy were to leave the Halcon One Team? What would happen to the current level of support to the community and the success?

The One Team Co-ordinator was a huge part of the process and the project/pilot would go on without me.

I had made recommendations to the Halcon One Team group that if this pilot extended to other deprived areas that local police officers should take a role within that team.

Resolved that the Sgt Murphy's update would be noted.

5. Welfare Reform 2013-14 End of Year Report

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the details of work undertaken by the Welfare Reform Project Officer (WRPO) during 2013-14 and outlines the progress housing services had made in helping tenants to mitigate the impact of the welfare reform benefit changes. It also compares Housing Services actions and responses with other housing providers nationally.

In April 2013, when the Welfare Reform Act 2012 became law, welfare reforms had reduced the level of benefit that applicants could receive if they had a spare bedroom in their council home. The changes only apply to housing benefit claimants of working age, and were referred to as the 'Under Occupancy Penalty' or more commonly the 'Bedroom Tax'.

The reduction was a fixed percentage of the eligible rent. The reduction was 14% for one spare bedroom and 25% for two or more spare bedrooms.

The criteria for non-dependent deductions had also been adjusted for social housing tenants to bring this in line with the private rented sector. Disability Living Allowance had been replaced by the Personal Independence Payment which uses more robust medical assessment criteria in an attempt to get more people into work.

Council Tax Benefit was now called Council Tax Support and all working age residents now had to contribute to their council tax payments. This was a direct result of the government localising council tax schemes.

The latest information available from central government was that universal credit would be rolled out in Taunton Deane in January 2015. The nearest universal credit project currently running was in Bath and North East Somerset, which began in February 2014.

More than half of our tenants were currently claiming benefit in one form or another. Universal credit would only affect working age tenants; they would be paid a monthly

payment direct into a bank account and this amount would include their housing costs. People over working age would receive pension credit and their housing benefit would still be paid directly to the council. This would continue until 2020 when housing credit was expected to be introduced to replace housing benefit, this would then also be paid direct to the applicant.

Below was a summary of Welfare Reform Project progress within Taunton Deane:

- There had been a decrease in the number of arrears from 1923 in 2012/13 to 188 in 2013/14. Rent arrears stands at £37,037.00
- The Council had reached a steady state with rent arrears.
- In April 2013 there were 477 tenants affected by the under occupancy penalty, this had reduced over the year.
- It was identified that there were 15 affected tenants living in TDBC housing stock.
- Taunton Deane's early intervention, included the appointment of a Welfare Reform Project Officer (WRPO). This officer had written to all affected tenants and followed this up with personal visits.
- As a result of this targeted early intervention since December 2012, housing services had identified 102 affected households that want to downsize.
- The WRPO had assisted 57 tenants to down size and supported the majority of them through the Transfer Removal Grant procedure and the moving process.
- One of the issues highlighted during the early intervention had been the lack of one bedroom accommodation within TDBC housing stock to meet the increased demand as a result of the welfare changes.
- This means that 45 households who wish to downsize had not been able to do so from the initial 102. Despite the fact that most TDBC one bedroom vacancies were advertised giving priority to Under Occupancy Penalty affected households that wish to downsize.
- 122 TDBC tenants were successfully awarded DHP's this amounts to approximately 40% of the total DHP fund granted to the council by central government. The majority of successful applications were completed by or with the assistance of the WRPO.
- Introduction of the under occupancy charge in April 2013, there were 477 TDBC tenants who were affected.
- In May 2013, 288 of these households were in rent arrears amounting to a total of £41,680.08. Under Occupancy Penalty related rent arrears peaked in July 2013 at a total of £51,881.25.
- As a result of the hard work completed by staff and the continuing availability of DHP rent arrears had reduced from the July peak to £37,370.07 in March 2014.
- TDBC (6,000 stock) had moved 57 tenants to more suitable accommodation.
- In comparison TDBC initially had 7.9% of our 477 tenants in rent arrears and in March 2014 it stood at 3%.
- TDBC had achieved this decrease in rent arrears through the good work of officers and improved partnership working.
- TDBC was given a budget of £132,000 for DHP's of which £52,896.52 was allocated to TDBC tenants (40% of the overall budget). Each tenant getting on average £551.98 for the year.
- Officers were already working to ensure this happens by broadening the regular Benefit meetings that take place between the housing service and the Revenues & Benefits Department to include other partners.

- Officers were already reviewing the current arrears recovery protocol to ensure that it is fit for purpose once Universal Credit is implemented.

Following the completion of the Star Survey and with the introduction of Universal Credit in January 2015, it was becoming more important for our tenants to have access to the internet. So as part of the Council's digital inclusion project, the Council had identified a number of locations across the borough to install computer equipment to enable tenants to get online access. The initial phase would see five kiosks placed in the following location:

- Deane House x 2
- Wellington Community Office
- Priorswood Resource Centre
- Milverton Community Hall

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

- Could Councillors have some training in relation to Universal Credit to make sure when we were asked questions we were giving the correct information out?
The Council could organise some training for Members in regards to Universal Credit before this kicks in.
- Some of the questions needed to split down to get more specific data from the results.
The officers did split down the options further and had the data. This gave them more specific target areas. The information was a summarised version for the Board.
- What were the percentage of Voids?
Housing Manager for Lettings and ASB would put together some statistic and come back to the Board and provide an update to the Members on Voids.
- Single Bed Properties – the Council needed to increase their stock of this type of property.
*There were a number of ongoing 'Phase One' developments being undertaken within the Taunton Deane area. All of these developments would include one bedroom properties to increase our stock.
The Council was using our RtB receipts to purchase back ex-council properties to put back into our stock, some of which were one bedroom properties.*
- Board Member suggested that Members keep their eyes open for pieces of land for Taunton Deane to look into for possible development opportunities.
Development Team were investigating a long list of Council owned and non-council owned land for development. If Members see anything, please contact Development Team.
- Was there a pressure on RSL's (Housing Associations) to build one bedroom properties?
Officers couldn't be sure if private sector housing association were being pressured to build more one bedroom properties. This isn't something they would be aware of.
- Those receiving Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) were they receiving it because they expressed an interest to move or because they were affected by the Welfare Reform?
- Would there always be DHP?

The Council had always had DHP and it had increased year on year. But there was no information from central government as to how long DHP would be available.

- Were the Council getting funds to implement Universal Credit?
*There was no extra funding for Council in the implementing of Universal Credit.
Department for Work and Pensions would be administering Universal Credit.*
- There were concerns that the Council may not have the staffing levels to implement Universal Credit and with that staff would not be tackling other important tasks.
This relates to Shared Services Structure. The Director and Assistant Director were evolving the structure to deal with the work loads.
- Thinking of the current and future demographic make-up of the Taunton Deane area, had any work been done on future proofing our housing stock based on the number of one bed properties and matching it with our need?
*Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership had statistical report and data relating to demographics. SWPSHP annual report should be out in July for the Board to read through.
There were roughly 3,500 people on the waiting list and there was still a demand for one bedroom properties.*
- Cost of digital inclusion project?
*Over the next two years for five kiosks the cost was £13,000. The Council was going to rent the kiosks as the technology changes so rapidly they would be out of date if we were to purchase them, also renting meant the Council could increase or decrease the number of kiosks depending on our situation.
This digital inclusion and access to online services and payments would have long term benefits for our tenants and their communities.*
- How confidential were the kiosks screens for people using them?
They kiosks would have privacy screens.
- If a tenant was to ask about the Council purchasing a tablet or laptop as part of digital inclusion would the Council provide one?
This would depend on demand and funds. This would be something for the Council to consider in the future of the project.
- Would there be someone to assist people with working the kiosks facility?
*There would be overseers or IT champions at each kiosk to provide support, advice and training for users.
The Council were currently looking into using work experience as well as volunteers and there would also be phone support access at each kiosk.*

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

6. Council Tax Support Scheme Proposals for 2015/16.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the Council Tax Support Scheme for Local Authorities for 2015/16.

The Government gave Councils funding for local schemes that was 10% less than was previously paid for CTB. While the Council kept our CTS the same for 2014/15, Government funding reduced and in 2015/16 they expect a cut of a further 14.3%. Therefore, the Council had to consider our options from 1 April 2015 as, the funding to assist people of working age through CTS would have reduced by £1.71m since 1 April 2013.

The Council were not allowed complete freedom on our Council Tax Support scheme.

The Government say the Council must fully protect pensioners under the same rules that applied to Council Tax Benefit.

As pensioners make up 48% of those entitled to Council Tax Support in Taunton Deane, this meant any cut in the help they could give, falls on the remaining 52% of working age people. The Council must also consider the impact on “Vulnerable” groups when they decide our Council Tax Support scheme. The Government had not defined which groups were “vulnerable”, but people with disabilities and those with responsibility for young children fall into this category.

These changes would affect around 5,300 customers of working age only.

In March 2014, the Council wrote to all our Council Tax charge payers with a copy of the consultation document asking for views and responses by 23 May 2014.

The Council had received a satisfactory response from individuals but welcome further feedback from our partners.

The scheme for 2013/14 and 2014/15

With the funds available, the Council decided to limit the maximum help and give to working age people through Council Tax Support to 80%. This meant all working age people had to pay at least 20% towards their Council Tax bill.

- Increase the amount of earned income.
- Increase non-dependant deductions.
- Treat child maintenance as income when working out Council Tax Support.
- Abolish Second Adult Rebate.
- Create a Discretionary Council Tax Assistance Fund, to protect the most vulnerable.

The Council expected the funding it had for Council Tax Support to be cut by 15.4% in 2015/16. This would mean a shortfall of over £900k. There were three options open to the Council, they were:

- Option 1 – No change to Council Tax Support limiting the maximum help for working age people to 80%
- Option 2 – Pass on the full grant cut
- Option 3 – Pass on some of the cut

Below were listed were the proposals for changing Council Tax Support from 1 April 2015:

- Proposal 1 – Reduce the maximum support
- Proposal 2 – Protecting people with disabilities
- Proposal 3 – Extra help for people with disabilities
- Proposal 4 – Protecting lone parents with children under 5 years old
- Proposal 5 – Extra help for lone parents with children under 5 years old
- Proposal 6 – Non dependants
- Proposal 7 – No longer treat Child Maintenance as income

- Proposal 8 – Protecting people with caring responsibilities

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

- The Board Members would need more time to read and comment on this report than just tonight.
- If people were in arrears, would the Council consider an incentive or discount to the arrears if people to encourage to pay them off?
The Council had cleared some of tenant arrears if they had made an effort to pay them off.
The Council had tried a similar scheme, at Christmas the Council had run a prize draw for all those who paid their debts off before Christmas and stayed debt free over the period.
The bottom line was if the tenant was in debt, the Council would take action to cover that debt and that meant in some cases taking people to court.
The Council had looked at incentives but this was something we had consider implementing.
Our total rent arrears was a small percentage to our overall income.
- The Council collect 19 million in rent and our arrears was only £346,000. This was only 1.7% of our income. This would indicate that the Council was successful at collecting rent and arrears already.
- The Council needed to look at supporting Tenants to help them manage their debts and pay them off sensibly.
- If you gave an incentive to those who pay off their debt, it's a real kick in the teeth to those who pay on time.
- There was a clear difference between those who won't pay and those can't pay.
There was already a very robust process and procedure for dealing with rent arrears. Cases officers were required to complete the process and build a case before any action would be taken.
Work was done in advance to prevent rent arrears i.e. early invention.
- Would the Council consider an increase in the number of Council Tax Bands and consider an increase in the difference of costs between bands.
This could be included in your suggestions reply to the consultation.
Proposals could also depend on demographic make-up of the area as well.
- Increase in the cost of Band A houses would give relief to those at the other end of the banding.

Resolved that the:-

1. Officer's report was to be noted.
2. Member of Board would read the report provided by the Principal Benefits Officers and provide feedback at the meeting of the Board on 30 June 2014.

7. Request for Information – Rent Arrears by Area.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the requested information update at Tenant Services Management Board meeting of 20 May 2014 regarding Rent Arrears for Taunton Deane detailed by area

This update report contained Taunton Deane's Rent Arrears policy, which detailed the approach followed by Managers and Officers in collecting rent and arrears.

Board Members were presented with the current rent arrears performance as from 6 June 2014. The presented data showed the rent arrears across Taunton Deane's nine patches/areas (see below) as well as the target rent arrears figure for each area.

- Round 1 – Arrears £20,467.85 – Target £26,000.00
- Round 2 – Arrears £46,115.85 – Target £45,000.00
- Round 3 – Arrears £20,778.06 – Target £21,000.00
- Round 4 – Arrears £22,968.75 – Target £40,000.00
- Round 5 – Arrears £53,699.94 – Target £49,000.00
- Round 6 – Arrears £41,527.66 – Target £35,000.00
- Round 7 – Arrears £28,999.54 – Target £48,000.00
- Round 8 – Arrears £49,609.75 – Target £44,000.00
- All Rounds – Arrears £327,978.70 – Target £360,000.00

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

- Board Members requested an update on Rent Arrears by Area be brought to the meeting in September. Of the report, pages one and ten was the only information needed.
- Looking at page ten of the update, the repayment agreements with those in arrears it appears that Round Eight was not hitting their target by a considerable way.
The repayment procedures and the repayment amounts could differ depending on the area the officer was responsible for. Some the areas make higher repayments so the targets were higher. There were many other factors involved in the repayments which can affect those in arrears paying back the money they owe.
Some officers were better at encouraging people to stick to their repayment plans and pay on regular basis.
- Did the Council rotate the officer's patches/areas on regular basis?
The Council did rotate officers to different patches/areas on a regular basis but it was a fine balance between getting to know your tenants and not getting too close or involved with them. Officers had to build and work their rapport with tenants.
- Board Members agreed with Cllr Bowrah that the information on pages one and ten was adequate to update them about Rent Arrears.
This was something the Council needed to think about as part of the restructure. Management may need to narrow the officers work area. Officers were used to hand holding to retrieve unpaid debts.
The review of the estates officers would need to be looked at over the next couple months.
- With Universal Credit was there a process to apply to the courts to receive people's payments directly?
Yes, there was a process to receive payments directly from their employers as well as getting a lump sum from the employer and then the employer would claim it back over a number of weeks or months from their employee.
- How did the Council calculate the targets and could they change?
A lot of it was grounded in how the Council had performed over the past.

Managers had good knowledge of the data as well as knowledge of the areas and performance comparison between us and them.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

8. Taunton Deane Borough Council's Accommodation Project.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the proposed new structure for Housing and Community Development had been developed to meet the requirements for the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) project. The JMASS project focussed on identifying savings for the General Fund (GF) and gained approval through Full Council for use of General Fund reserves to cover redundancy costs.

Approval was now sought for use of HRA reserves to cover one-off redundancy costs to put in place the HRA element of the new structures. The biggest proportion of these costs relates to the Housing and Community Development structure, however some cost also related to other redundancies across the Council where a proportion of an officer's time was attributed to HRA work. This paper additionally seeks approval for an earmarked provision for further redundancy costs that may be required for Tier 6 redundancies across the Council once these proposals had been developed. This was an estimated figure provided by Finance based on modelling which was applied for earlier JMASS work.

The opportunity was taken to review the HRA structure as part of the JMASS project as it was sensible to consider both GF and HRA at the same time to provide the optimum structure to best meet the needs of tenants. Whereas with General Fund services, a significant focus was on making financial savings, the approach taken for the HRA services was very different with emphasis placed on having the right structure to invest in better outcomes for tenants, rather than to make savings for the HRA.

Although the redundancy costs borne by the HRA were fairly significant, the structure would deliver significant benefits to tenants through providing joined-up partnership working on the ground that would deliver far more effectively than the current piecemeal (silo) public sector model currently in place. The Community Area Working model proposed in the new structure uses the Halcon One Team model as an exemplar and the anticipated outcomes clearly justify this one-off cost over the HRA Business Plan lifetime.

Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

Resolved that the:-

1. Officer's report be noted.
2. Board Members recommended to Full Council the approval of a Supplementary Estimate from HRA General Reserves to fund the estimated one-off costs to the HRA of the JMASS restructure to provide the necessary structure to deliver improved outcomes for tenants over the lifetime of the HRA Business Plan.
3. Board Members also recommended for approval by Full Council the following:
 - a. £199k toward the Tier 4 and 5 Housing and Community Development structure
 - b. £28k to allow the JMASS project to proceed in other parts of the Council for Tier 4 and 5, and
 - c. £120k as a supplementary estimate of potential future Tier 6 redundancy costs across Housing and Community Development and other Council areas, with any underspends being returned to reserves.

(The meeting ended at 8.50pm)

Declaration of Interests

Tenant Services Management Board

- Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants;
 - Mrs J Bunn
 - 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

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Monitoring Outturn Scorecard 2013/14

Income	Target Budget (£)	Outturn (£)	% Spend	Variance (£)	Change in Variation to M11 (£)	RAG Status	Comments
General Dwelling Rents	-19,968,700	-20,469,718	102.5%	-501,018	-101,918	RED	Provision for Bad Debt has been increased for 2 years by £423k to £503k in the HRA Business Plan to allow for the expected reduction in rent income expected due to Welfare Reform. However as Welfare reform has not yet been fully implemented, with Universal Credit currently anticipated to start in 2015, this additional budget was not needed in 2013/14 and the Business Plan Review in 2013 has been amended reflect this. In addition to this the collection of arrears have been prioritised by the Estates Team further increasing the income received from rents and reducing the Provision for Bad Debt required. Lastly a recommendation from audit to change the calculation method further reduced the provision needed. Together these have led to an overall underspend of £507k.
Non Dwelling Rents (Garages, Shops and Land)	-587,900	-574,476	97.7%	13,424	1,224	GREEN	
Supported, Sheltered & Extra Care	-4,502,800	-4,453,479	98.9%	49,321	-2,279	GREEN	
Other Income (Service Charges, Rechargeable Repairs, Leaseholder Charges and GF Contribution)	-352,100	-367,565	104.4%	-15,465	-4,685	GREEN	
Total Income	-25,411,500	-25,865,238	101.8%	-453,738	-107,658		

Expenditure	Target Budget (£)	Outturn (£)	% Spend	Variance (£)	Change in Variation to M11 (£)	RAG Status	Comments
Supervision & Management	4,854,460	4,898,177	100.9%	43,717	56,312	GREEN	A one-off additional week of rental income (there were 53 rent payments due on weekly rents in 2013/14) allowed an increase in budget of £456k to be allocated to Maintenance budgets which in addition to the existing budget was ultimately not needed.
Repairs & Maintenance - Planned	1,239,100	1,250,694	100.9%	11,594	39,958	GREEN	
Repairs & Maintenance - Responsive	3,103,550	2,704,824	87.2%	-398,726	-295,580	RED	
Voids	1,755,300	1,787,333	101.8%	32,033	-302,667	GREEN	
Supported, Sheltered & Extra Care	823,400	837,695	101.7%	14,295	10,816	GREEN	Additional consultancy work on non-traditional dwelling construction types, and the utilisation of underspends elsewhere to fund an earlier start than budgeted for some compliance works such as legionella testing and emergency lighting, have led to an overspend of £110k in Specialist Works.
Other Expenditure (Communal and Rechargeable Costs, Insurance Excess, Tenants Forum and Debt Management Costs)	869,600	928,983	106.8%	59,383	39,078	GREEN	
Total Expenditure	12,645,410	12,407,706	98.1%	-237,704	-452,084		

HRA Revenue	Target Budget (£)	Outturn (£)	% Spend	Variance (£)	Change in Variation to M11 (£)	RAG Status	Comments
Social Housing Development Fund	1,503,810	1,503,812	100.0%	2	2	GREEN	
Funding of Capital Programme (Depreciation and Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay)	6,841,800	6,826,389	99.8%	-15,411	-15,411	GREEN	RCCO of £15.4k not needed as capital underspent.
Contribution to TDBC for Repayment of Transformation Project Loan (Funded through Procurement Savings)	419,400	418,730	99.8%	-670	-670	GREEN	
Net Interest (Interest payable on loans less interest received on HRA balance)	2,902,000	2,892,258	99.7%	-9,742	3,633	GREEN	Small variations in interest rates payable and receivable.
Provision for Repayment of Debt	1,851,430	1,851,430	100.0%	0	0	GREEN	
Other Movement in Reserves	-752,350	-895,751	119.1%	-143,401	-143,401	GREEN	Includes Accounting Adjustments within Supervision and Management.
Total Other Expenditure	12,766,090	12,596,868	98.7%	-169,222	-155,847		

HRA Revenue	Target Budget Q2 (£)	Outturn (£)	% Variation	Variance (£)	Change in Variation to M11 (£)	RAG Status	Comments
Total HRA	0	-860,664	3.3%	-860,664	-715,589		The HRA has an Outturn position of an £860k surplus, a variation of 3.3% of gross budget. The major elements of this underspend position are an additional week of rental income of £456k (there are 53 rent payments due on weekly rents in 2013/14) and a budget for an increase in Provision for Bad Debt of £503k which has not been needed as Welfare Reform has not yet been fully implemented (for which there was additional budget added for 2013/14 of £423k). It should be noted however that Welfare Reform is still expected to impact on the HRA with the implementation of Universal Credit currently due for Q4 of 2014/15. Without these two one-off variances, the HRA would be showing a minor overspend of £19k. The large change in variation of £620k from Q3 is largely due to a greater than expected return of over recovered costs from the DLO. This is due to the amount of work requested by the DLO being higher than budgeted and so the hourly rate was higher than needed as overheads were apportioned over a lower number of hours. At Q3 this figure was expected by the HRA to be £138k, but at outturn a total of £786k was returned, a change of £648k.

Right to Buy	Sales	Total Receipts	Retainable Receipts	Cumulative Total	Spend Needed Within 3 Years	
Total 2012/13	37	2,330,345	1,233,655	1,233,655	4,112,184	During 2013/14 there were 47 RTB sales completed (37 in 2012/13, 11 in 2011/12), with total capital receipts of £2,705k. Of this £1,292k is retained for 'one for one' replacement. This brings the total amount of additional receipts retained since April 2012 to £2,526k, of which £496k has already been allocated towards funding new affordable housing in the development capital programme and the remaining on track to be fully utilised within the timescales with a combination of buy backs and new build development schemes.
Q1 2013/14	16	898,908	428,903	1,662,558	5,541,861	
Q2 2013/14	10	573,910	265,365	1,927,923	6,426,410	
Q3 2013/14	13	797,365	431,836	2,359,759	7,865,863	
Q4 2013/14	8	434,675	166,353	2,526,112	8,420,374	
Total to date	84	5,035,203	2,526,112	2,526,112	8,420,374	

Capital Programmes	Target Budget (£)	Outturn (£)	% Spend	Slippage (£)	Variance (£)	Change in Variation to M11 (£)	RAG Status	Comments
Major Works								
HRA Kitchens	460,000	411,802	89.5%	48,100	-98	-42,287	GREEN	Capital works on existing dwellings have increased significantly since the introduction of self-financing with spend of £6,561k in 2013/14, an increase of £1,866k (41%) from 2012/13. There is also £869k to fund works which have been re-profiled into 2014/15. This has been due to a number of reasons such as change of contractor and works being delayed due to extreme winter weather, with these works now planned in 2014/15 on top of the existing budgeted works.
HRA Bathrooms	1,035,400	826,897	79.9%	208,500	-3	-3,530	GREEN	
HRA Roofing	1,400,000	1,333,850	95.3%	66,100	-50	58,960	GREEN	
HRA Windows	305,700	254,796	83.3%	50,900	-4	14,706	GREEN	
HRA Heating Improvements	1,180,000	904,538	76.7%	275,400	-62	-28,361	GREEN	
HRA Doors	350,000	296,475	84.7%	53,500	-25	10,147	GREEN	
HRA Fire Safety Works in Communal Areas	250,000	156,160	62.5%	93,800	-40	-4,838	GREEN	
HRA Cladding	0	0		0	0	0	GREEN	
HRA Fascias and Soffits	855,000	817,258	95.6%	37,700	-42	-1,466	GREEN	
HRA Air Source Heat Pumps	615,000	601,651	97.8%	13,300	-49	2,721	GREEN	
HRA Door Entry Systems	245,000	223,501	91.2%	21,400	-99	-7,373	GREEN	
HRA Soundproofing	5,000	4,211	84.2%	0	-789	-4,109	GREEN	
HRA Meeting Halls	25,000	23,916	95.7%	0	-1,084	13,916	GREEN	
HRA Tenants Improvements	6,000	5,670	94.5%	0	-330	-1,000	GREEN	
Other External Insulations	1,500	600	40.0%	0	-900	4,200	GREEN	
Garages	0	0		0	0	0	GREEN	
Sewerage Treatment Plants	0	0		0	0	0	GREEN	
Revise Bathroom Location	11,200	10,909	97.4%	0	-291	22,909	GREEN	
HRA Asbestos Works	218,800	218,477	99.9%	0	-323	83,477	GREEN	
HRA Capital Works on Sold Flats	0	0		0	0	-70,200	GREEN	
Total Major Works	6,963,600	6,090,711	87.5%	868,700	-4,189	47,872		
Development Team								
Sustainable Energy Fund	227,700	0	0.0%	227,700	0	0	GREEN	Budget slipped into 2014/15 to allow works to be completed
Environmental Improvements	155,300	9,261	6.0%	146,000	-39	-39	GREEN	Works under investigation but start on sites now planned for 2014/15
Extensions	0	0		0	0	0	GREEN	Programme to start 2014/15 with funding moving to other areas in 2013/14
Total Development Team	383,000	9,261	2.4%	373,700	-39	-39		
IT Development								
HRA IT Development	100,000	58,056	58.1%	41,900	-44	-44	GREEN	Programme ongoing
Total IT Development	100,000	58,056	58.1%	41,900	-44	-44		
Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership								
HRA Aids and Adaptations	135,000	103,256	76.5%	0	-31,744	-9,944	RED	£31k slippage for Stock Modelling Project
HRA DFGs	339,100	282,092	83.2%	31,000	-26,008	5,182	RED	
Total SWPSHP	474,100	385,348	81.3%	31,000	-57,752	-4,762		
Deane Helpline								
HRA Community Alarms	100,000	17,372	17.4%	82,600	-28	-28	GREEN	Works ongoing
Total Deane Helpline	100,000	17,372	17.4%	82,600	0	0		
Total 2013/14 Capital Programme	8,020,700	6,560,748	81.8%	1,397,900	-62,024	43,027		
Development - New Build								
HRA Creechbarrow Road	8,143,000	1,226,838	15.1%	6,916,100	-62	-62	GREEN	Works started on site and due to complete Q2 2015/16
Phase 1 Sites	3,482,800	147,407	4.2%	3,335,300	-93	-93	GREEN	Works due to complete 2014/15
Buy Backs	717,200	712,009	99.3%	5,100	-91	-91	GREEN	7 dwellings purchased. Slippage relates to remaining works on buybacks
Total New Build	12,343,000	2,086,254	16.9%	10,256,500	-246	-246		
Total Capital Programmes	20,363,700	8,647,002	42.5%	11,654,400	-62,270	42,781		

HOUSING PROPERTY SERVICES - CAPITAL WORKS

PERFORMANCE - 2013/14 and Q1 2014/15

ACTIVITY / WORKS	VOLUME COMPLETED 2013/14	SLIPPAGE FROM 2013/14 COMPLETED	TOTAL COMPLETED IN Q1 2014/15 (incl slippage)	COMMENTS
External Repairs and Decs	828 properties	0	202	Non-leasehold properties. Not Capital funded but operated on a contract basis
Roofing	146	7	16	Currently delivered by Mi-Space
Doors	997	29	75	Slippage due to change of installer
Windows	120 properties	0	24	Currently delivered by Wrekin through Advantage South West
Kitchens	98	6	6	Currently delivered by Mi-Space
Bathrooms	249	60	151	Currently delivered by Mi-Space
Boilers	309	0	34	Currently delivered by ALHCO and DLO
Air Source Heat Pump Heating Installations	94	0	23	Access problems and slow progress on external insulation have affected the number of installations
Door entry	158 properties	0	0	Current contract now complete
Fascias	637 properties	5	58	Currently delivered by DR Jones Ltd
Smoke alarms	2600	0	112	4 year programme finishes this year
Fire Doors	240	81	81	Slippage due to change of installer

PROCUREMENT - Contracts awarded or to be awarded in 2014/15

ACTIVITY/WORKS	CONTRACTOR	PERIOD	TENDER	START ON SITE	COMMENTS
ELECTRICAL SAFETY	N/A	4 YEARS	EARLY JULY	01/10/2014	TESTING AND ESSENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS
ASBESTOS ANALYSIS	TERSUS	5 YEARS	COMPLETED	01/07/2014	SAMPLING CARRIED OUT BY TDBC STAFF
ASBESTOS REMOVAL	N/A	5 YEARS	EARLY JULY	01/10/2014	BEING DELIVERED CURRENTLY BY AMS LTD
EXTERNAL REPAIRS, DECS and FASCIAS	N/A	5 YEARS	LATE JULY	01/11/2014	BEING DELIVERED CURRENTLY BY DLO AND DR JONES LTD
WATER QUALITY	CHURCHILL	5 YEARS	COMPLETED	01/04/2014	ALREADY IN PLACE AND WORKING WELL
HEATING IMPROVEMENTS	N/A	5 YEARS	MID JULY	01/11/2014	HELD UP BY ALHCO CLAIM ON RIGHTS TO THE WORK FOLLOWING PRIOR TUPE TRIBUNAL OUTCOME
BATHROOM REFURBISHMENT	MI-SPACE	5 YEARS	COMPLETED	01/09/2014	CURRENTLY DELAYED AWAITING ASSURANCES RE STAFFING
DOOR ENTRY SYSTEMS	N/A	3 YEARS	MID JULY	01/09/2014	APPROX 20 BLOCKS INCLUDING DOORS AND SCREENS TO HIGHER SECURITY AND MAINTENANCE FREE PRODUCT

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 14th July 2014

Gas and Other Heating Quarterly Monitoring Report

Report of Property Manager- Maintenance- Steve Esau

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

1. Executive Summary

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

This report is for quarter 4 showing performance data; in addition the report highlights issues with the contract and improvements being made. Comments from members would be welcomed on how the information is being presented and any changes required for future reporting.

2. Background

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

In addition the contractor is responsible for servicing of solid fuel and oil appliance's together with checking electric storage heaters, servicing of extract fans, smoke detectors and breakdown repairs. Whilst there is no legislative requirement to carry out checks to solid fuel and oil appliances every 12 months it is considered good practice we follow a 10 month cycle as happens with the gas servicing programme. With regards to solid fuel we are gradually moving all servicing into the summer months at which point the systems are either not in use or have low use, as the boilers need to be cold in order to carry out the service.

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

3. Report

Whilst we had problems in Quarter 1 and 2 with overdue certificates there has been significant improvements resulting in 100% compliance at the end quarter 4.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of properties where Alhco have not gained access through their part of the process requiring our part of the process which we call the gas hit. This part is extremely time consuming and expensive. There are still improvements that we want to make to reduce even further and we are working with Alhco and Taunton Deane Estate Management to achieve this.

Reactive Maintenance the KPI figures are showing below target in all areas in Q4 are still showing below target however there have been improvements as can be seen in the figures. We have identified only recently an issue with our computer systems not recognising data from the contractors system, we believe work in the background will result in these figures looking better As I can only publish what our system reports, I will be in a position to report on this when I present the Quarter 1- 2014-15 KPI data.

We have noticed a number of issues with poor diagnosis on breakdowns this we are addressing with Alhco, this has resulted in training for engineers and changes in their headquarters giving engineers in the field access to technical help when they are trying identify faults. In addition Alhco have reviewed what is carried on the engineers vans and these will be stocked with parts that they frequently have to replace. We see these initiatives reducing the number of repeat calls and so reduce inconvenience for the tenant.

The void levels has been above average for the whole year, one of the factors that have influenced this is the decanting programme from Creechbarrow Road and Parmin Close. Scrap values are reducing this is due to a reduction of reactive rather than programmed installs we have had to carry out.

We have reported at previous meetings that there was a programme for the installation of CO detectors to properties with open flued appliances. This programme did not start until June 2013, these detectors are installed at the time of the service. I am pleased to inform apart from a few properties where we have access problems all properties concerned now have CO detectors fitted.

We have included financial information; this includes the cost of servicing and maintenance together with rechargeable works, the latter being works outside of the contract and includes works to voids. In addition the amount of scrap monies received is shown, these monies are paid back into the Housing Revenue Account.

4. Finance Comments

There are no financial issues arising from this report.

5. Legal Comments

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

6. Links to Corporate Aims

To ensure we meet our legislative responsibilities.

7. Environmental Implications

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

8. Community Safety Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

9. Equalities Impact

This is not applicable.

9. Risk Management

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

10. Partnership Implications

There are no implications arising from this report.

11. Recommendations

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

Contact: Officer Name Steve Esau- Property Manager – Maintenance
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 [e-mail](mailto:s.esau@tauntondeane.gov.uk) address s.esau@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Servicing	Target	Q1- Q3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Cumulative for year	Comments
Nr of gas services (CP12) that are planned for this calendar month.		3225	479	338	414	4456	
Nr of services for solid fuel that are planned for this month.		63	5	10	9	87	
Nr of services for oil that are planned for this month.		4	1	1	1	7	
Nr of services for electric that are planned for this month.		1099	27	206	36	1368	
total number of services for month (all fuel types)		4391	512	555	460	5918	
Number of properties not covered by a current CP12		70	3	2	0	19	
% of Properties Overdue (No valid Certificate)	0	1.570	0.00067	0.00044	0.00	0.393	
% of gas Services completed on 1st visit attempt		83	92	89	90	88	
% of gas Services completed on TDBC arranged visit		17	8	11	10	12	
% of gas Services completed on TDBC arranged forced entry		0.0051	0.0041	0.0088	0.0048	0.01	
Reactive Maintenance							
Nr of reactive jobs received		3169	542	437	371	4519	
Priority 1 - emergency % (attend within 2 hours and repair within 24 Hours)	100%	88	95	96	98	94	
Priority 2 - Urgent % (Complete within 3 working days)	98.40%	86	85.42	91.57	92.07	89	
Priority 3 - Routine % (Complete within 7 working days)	98.60%	93	86.74	94.21	96.5	93	
Nr of hot water systems out of action overnight	0 per month	10	2	1	4	17	
Nr of hot water systems out of action for longer than 24 hours	0 per month	1	0	0	0	1	
Nr of reactive maintenance appointments made		3169	542	437	371	4519	
Nr of Out of Hours calls		445	89	98	77	709	
Voids							
Nr of Voids this month		374	47	28	43	492	
% of voids completed within time (14 days)	100%	100	100	100	100	100	
Request for Service							
		0	0	0	0		
Health and Safety							
Major reportable accidents		0	0	0	0		
Minor Accidents		0	0	0	0		
Instances of where Asbestos found		2	0	0	0		
Finance							
Invoice for Servicing		167762.08	£19,155.00	£19,363.64	£18,834.76	£225,115.48	
Invoice for Maintenance		194038.86	£17,998.54	£17,798.54	£17,798.54	£247,634.48	
Invoice for Chargeable works		92117.9	£20,023.06	£16,503.02	£18,112.00	£146,755.98	
Scrap money raised.		8101.62	£525.62	£280.02	£240.36	£9,147.62	

**Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday
Monday 14 July 2014 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, Belvedere Road, Taunton.**

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

Officers: Cyril Rowe (Open Spaces Manager), Chris Hall (Assistant Director Operational
Delivery), Lucy Clothier (Housing Accountant), Stephen Boland (Housing
Services Lead), Phil Webb (Housing Manager – Property Services), Steve
Esau (Housing Manager – Maintenance), Kene Ibezi (Assistant Director
Property & Development), James Barraah (Director Housing & Communities),
Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager) and Emma Hill (Corporate
Support Officer).

Others: Councillors Adkins, Mrs Hebert, Miss James, Mrs Smith, Mrs Warmington and
Cllr Williams.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

Mr R Middleton and Councillor Bowrah

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 Tenant. Mr Etherington, Mrs Hegarty, Mrs Bunn, Mr Edwards, Mr Galpin, Mr Gould, Mr Hellier and Mr Middleton declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

4. Housing Revenue Account Financial Outturn 2013-14

Considering the financial figures table previously circulated, concerning the Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring End of Year position for 2013-14 accompanied by a verbal update given by Housing Accountant. The spreadsheets detailed the breakdown of overall financial position at the end of year for 2013/14 split between capital and revenue.

The Revenue Account Performance included such headings as Right to Buy, Income, Expenditure and HRA Revenue.

The following points were covered during the update on Housing Revenue Account Income, Expenditure and Revenue;

- Income was showing an overall under spend of £860,664. This was due to an increase in the Council's bad debt provision.
- Voids had a pressure of £32,033.
- Expenditure was showing an overall underspend of £237,704.
- HRA Revenue was showing an overall under spend of £169,222.
- Planned Repairs and Maintenance were showing an overall pressure of £11,594.

Looking at Right to Buy's (RtB), there had been 47 sales in 2013/2014. Add this to 2012/2013 total and this means 84 sales to date.

The following points were covered during the update on Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes;

- Overall HRA Capital Programmes had an under spend of £62,024.
- Capital works on existing dwellings had increased significantly since the introduction of self-financing with spend of £6,561K in 2013/14, an increase of £1,866K (41%) from 2012/13.
- SWPSHP HRA Aids and Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) programmes were showing an overall underspend of £57,752.
- The SWPSHP Aids and Adaptations underspend was due to Stock Modelling Project.
- There was a £1,397,900 slippage in Capital works programmes.
- There had been 7 property Buyback's in 2013/14. There was some slippage related to this. This was due to a delay in bring purchased properties back up to lettable standard.

The Council was looking at £2.2 million budget for development within Taunton Deane. This included Buybacks of ex-Council properties to return to the Council's housing stock.

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

- Would the underspend from HRA revenue account affect the 30 year business plan?
No, it would not affect Business Plan and the underspend would be returned to General Fund.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

5. Requested Information Update on Grass Cutting and Grounds Maintenance

The Chairman of the Board gave a verbal presentation concerning the questions

1. Could TDBC and SCC put budgets together to provide one service?
2. Was there a plan available that shows who owns TDBC and SCC land, the number of cuts it had and who pays what for the cuts?
3. Were there areas of the borough that receive a better/worse service?
4. Why aren't whole areas cut at the same time as opposed to leaving adjoining areas uncut?

5. Why was the grass left so long that the mowers cannot cut it properly, and then the work taking 4 times as long with strimmer's making it look unsightly?
6. Many were not happy with the service, what was an acceptable service and how much would it cost?
7. Were there other councils who had an excellent standard that we could learn from both locally and nationally?
8. By not collecting the cut grass it not only leaves a mess but it clogs up drains, adding further cost as the drains had to be unblocked. Could the grass therefore be collected after cutting?
9. By paying a service charge as part of rents and Council Tax are tenants paying twice for the same service, they being usually most affected?
10. Why do some housing areas get more cuts and collect than others, for instance flats etc?
11. Were there particular issues that were causing problems? Cost? A lack of trained staff? Lack of correct equipment?
12. Would there be less confusion and criticism if a schedule of grass cutting was published on TDBC and SCC websites – people would then know when the grass by them would be cut. This can obviously be updated if adverse weather conditions mean cuts cannot be done.
13. Can litter and other obstructions be removed before the cut? Less damage to the equipment, better appearance of area (no shredded litter) and safer afterwards (glass etc)
14. Paths could not have any grass cuttings on them – become slippery if it rains. The edges should also be neat and obstruction free to assist people with poor eyesight
15. Hedges must be cut back to make sure that they were not a hazard or obstruction to pedestrians, cyclists or motorists. Schedule/frequency to be agreed

Below the TDBC officer response to the question asked of them prior to this meeting of the Board:

- The Council cut the grass verges on behalf of Somerset County Council and we hold their entire budget for this.
- The Council used to subsidise this budget to complete extra budget, but due to a reduction in our budgets we were no longer able to subsidise their budget and pay for an extra cut.
- The Council had no current issues regarding training staff or issues regarding incorrect or lack equipment for the work being completed by TDBC.
- SCC do not cut hedges anymore unless they have reached a certain level which was deemed to be obstruction and dangerous.
- Council Housing Tenants were not paying twice for the same service i.e. grass cutting and maintenance costs. From your Council Tax, a portion went to SCC which included paying for the grass verge cutting and a portion went to TDBC to pay for maintenance for all Open Space and TDBC land maintenance then for Council Tenants paid a service charge to TDBC Housing Department for the maintenance of TDBC housing land.
- The maintenance schedules for the various different owned land as well as the various different types of land, all had different maintenance schedule, which decided by the individual responsible areas.
- It took six weeks to completely cut the SCC grass verges contract that TDBC were currently responsible for. To simply cut the each individual area all at the same time would mean TDBC was subsidising additional cuts on the SCC owned land.

- The TDBC land had a range cuts from 8 times per year to 21 times per year.
- To provide a cut and collect service cost three times the cost of a fly cut service.
- The Council had planted certain areas with Meadow/Wild flower seeds with fewer cuts but ultimately it was down to the number of cuts per year that were budgeted for.
- The Council had previously approached the County Council regarding the ongoing issues with drains and altering the grass cutting schedule which prevent some of the re-occurring issues but so far there had been no change. SCC were responsible for the maintenance of the drains and highways.

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

- Could the Council consider doing a cut and collect service near the bungalows where I live? After the grass, the pathways to people's bungalows were covered in cuttings and most residents were not able to clear them and they can become slippery.
The decision not to collect grass cutting is down to the Housing officers in the instance.
The Council had lost half of its revenue support from central government and as from 2016, the Council would have another reduction of £3.5million.
The Council had contacted SCC and asked them to increase their grass cutting budget to allow us to complete more cuts but they have said if they increase the grass cutting budget another budget would have to suffer i.e. social care.
- Had TDBC and SCC got plans to ask for volunteers to assist with grass cutting etc?
It's not something, the Council have considered yet but we can take the idea on board.
It would be down to finding the right group of volunteers and the Council could work through any Health and safety issues.
- Could the RtB receipts contribute to housing land maintenance costs?
General Fund contributes to HRA from RtB receipts.
- I am rural Council Tenant, we cut and collect the grass verges near our properties and within the village ourselves because if we didn't do it, nobody would and it would become unsafe.
- Grounds Maintenance on Housing Land were so good that they make other areas look worse. Short of reducing the number of cuts to Housing Land to balance it out, I am not sure what else the Council could do.
- The Land Responsibility Maps and Grass Cutting schedule was very helpful for councillors as well as Tenants and the Public, could these be available online for people to look at?
- It was suggested that this subject may need to go before the Community Scrutiny Committee for discussion. This would also require SCC representatives to be present, not just TDBC.
- TDBC were not the only the Council suffering with overgrown grass verges. On visits to other Local Authorities, it appeared that they were suffering with lack of budgets as much as TDBC with little money for grass verge maintenance.
- More complaints needed to be made to force SCC to take action on this issue.

- Executive Councillor was shocked by the picture of the steps and how bad the condition of the steps had become and would be looking into that particular issue.
The presence of representative from SCC would have been helpful regarding the discussions. I would encourage the Board Members to chase this issues with SCC and take up the officers offer to attend another meeting at a later date.
- Could sections of Meadow/Wild Flowers areas be included in the Blenheim Road? Similar to areas on the roundabout near Wickes.
This something that would need to be discussed with SCC as it was there land.
- This was a good suggestions to reduce the number of cuts required in certain by the inclusion of wildflower and meadow flowers areas.
With the permission of SCC for their land, could sponsorship of grass verges be considered as way to increase maintenance on these areas?
This was something the Council could consider and look into but unfortunately we didn't have a waiting list of sponsors but we can take this on board.
- Could the Council review the schedule of grass cutting and increase in some areas, to reduce the need for collection?
TSMB could review the Grounds Maintenance Contract and schedule. This could be done through a Tenant led Scrutiny review. After the review, it could come back to Board for discussion.
Concerning the Service Charge for Housing Tenants, this was spread over all equally, even those who do not have grass area near to their properties as all tenants enjoy the grass area in way or another.
Housing Property Service were co-ordinating with the DLO on a regular basis to keep records and area knowledge up to date.
The maps presented tonight need to be reviewed and altered and then we could bring an update version back to the board.
- Could the Council consider forcing new owners of RtB to contribute to Housing Land Maintenance costs rather than it being spread between the remaining tenants? Were the Council able to do this?
The Council had already considered this and consulted our legal service regarding this. It's not that couldn't do this, but enforcing it would be the issue but it's something we can do more investigation into.
- Please could the officers give numbers for the individual budgets concerning Grounds Maintenance and Grass Cutting?
The Housing Budget was £370,000, the total budget for TDBC was £750,00 and the SCC budget was £22,000.
- Would the Council and SCC consider combining all three budgets?
To a degree the budgets were already combined but if the Council was to combine the budgets and increase the cuts in areas, this would mean the HRA would subsidising the maintenance on non-Housing land.
I believe that the HRA money was a ring fenced budget so the Council was not able to do this.
- As the DLO were completing the all work for both Housing and SCC, more information needed to put out there to let them know who was responsible for what. This would prevent, the DLO and the Council taking flack for things that they weren't responsible for.
- Could the DLO consider including signage on their vehicles, stating that TDBC was cutting grass verges for SCC?
The DLO could look into publicising the responsibility maps but this would need looking into as it was part of larger system.

We would also look into advertising our work for SCC regarding grass cutting and putting onto our vehicles.

Resolved that the:

1. Officers to set up a Tenant led Scrutiny review of the Housing Grounds Maintenance Contract and Schedule with the DLO.
2. Once review was complete for an update report to be brought back to Tenant Services Management Board.

6. Housing Property Services – Capital Works

Considering the financial figures table previously circulated, concerning the Housing Property Services Capital Works Programme performance monitoring from 2013/14 and Quarter one 2014/15.

Generally slippage from 2013/14 had been accommodated within the first Quarter's activity barring the odd few. In the case of Fire Doors, the installations started last year had been completed but no new installations started.

Below was a summary of the Capital Works Programme performance update:

- External Repairs and Dec's - 828 completed properties in 2013/14 and in Quarter one of 2014/15, 202 completed properties, this included slippage from 2013/14.
- Roofing – 146 completed properties in 2013/14 as well as 7 slippage properties with 16 properties completed in Quarter one of 2014/15
- Doors – 997 completed properties in 2013/14 as well as 29 slippage properties completed and 75 completed properties in quarter one of 2014/15.
- Windows – 120 completed properties with no slippage properties completed and 24 completed properties in quarter one of 2014/15.
- Kitchens – 98 completed properties in 2013/14 as well as 6 slippage properties completed and 6 completed properties in quarter one of 2014/15.
- Bathrooms – 249 completed properties in 2013/14 as well as 60 slippage properties completed and 151 completed properties in quarter one of 2014/15.
- Boilers – 309 completed properties in 2013/14 and 34 completed properties in quarter one of 2014/15.
- ASHP installations – 94 completed installations in 2013/14 and 23 completed installations in quarter one of 2014/15.
- Door Entry – 158 completed properties in 2013/14 and no completed properties in quarter one of 2014/15 as the contract was now complete.
- Fascias – 637 completed properties in 2013/14 as well as 5 slippage properties completed and 58 completed properties in quarter one of 2014/15.
- Smoke Alarms – 2600 completed installations in 2013/14 and 112 completed installations in quarter one of 2014/15.
- Fire Doors – 240 completed installations in 2013/14 as well as 81 slippages properties completed and 81 completed properties in quarter one of 2014/15.

Below was the procurement for capital works contracts:

- Electrical Safety programme had slipped to mid/late July.
- Asbestos Removal programme had also slipped to mid/late July.

- Heating Improvement programme had slipped to late July but was to go but legal decision.
- Door entry systems programme was fitting in with the other three programme but not all at once.

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

- How many properties had been identified for the installation of ASHP?
Last year the Council installed 100 ASHP, it looks like this figure for the coming was set to continue if not increase.
- Smoke Alarms – concerning the lack of notification to tenants regarding appointments for installation, servicing or updating of alarms. Only notification received was to say the engineer had tried to gain access but nobody was home.
This issues had been raised previously. The Council now had a list of addresses for those tenants and properties on particular programme of works and we can contact and notify the individuals concerned.
- Tenants hadn't received any information prior to appointments to inform them of who would be completing what work as a contractor on behalf of the Council. Sending a letter out to all tenants to inform them a certain company would contacting them regarding a particular programme of works who allow tenants to know if the contractors were genuine or not.
- Those who received information letters prior to appointments expressed concerns that the letters didn't genuine i.e. they weren't on proper Council headed letter paper.
The Council can inform and publish the capital works programmes and their appointed contractors.
- It would definitely be a positive thing to publish or advertise the maintenance schedules and any planned capital works programmes.
Executive Councillors had strong with MI-Space regarding the slippage of works at the end of last quarter.
The Executive Councillor did have strong words with the contractor, this was related to the lack of skilled teams working on the programme of work so two of five teams were removed from site. This was at no cost to the Council.

Resolved that the officer's report was noted.

7. Gas and Other Heating Services Quarterly Monitoring Report

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the monitoring information on the performance of the servicing and repair contract with ALHCO. This report shows the performance date for Quarter four as well as highlighting issues with the contract.

- Despite previous problems with overdue certificates there had been significant improvements resulting in 100% compliance at the end quarter 4.
- There had been a significant reduction in the number of properties where ALHCO had not gained access through their part of the process requiring our part of the process which the Council called the gas hit.

- There were still improvements that the Council wanted to make to reduce even further and the Council were working with ALHCO and Taunton Deane Estate Management to achieve this.
- Reactive Maintenance the KPI figures were showing below target in all areas in Q4 were still showing below target. There had been improvements as can be seen in the figures.
- The Council had identified recently an issue with our computer systems not recognising data from the contractors system, the Council believes work in the background would result in these figures looking better.
- As officers could only publish what our system reports, there would be in a position to report on this when Quarter one for 2014-15 KPI data was presented to the Board.

The Council had noticed a number of issues with poor diagnosis on breakdowns this we were addressing with ALHCO, this had resulted in training for engineers and changes in their headquarters gave engineers in the field access to technical help when they were trying identify faults. In addition ALHCO had reviewed what was carried on the engineers vans and these would be stocked with parts that they frequently had to replace. The Council saw these initiatives reducing the number of repeat calls and so reduce inconvenience for the tenant.

- The void levels had been above average for the whole year. One of the factors that had influenced this was the decanting programme from Creechbarrow Road and Parmin Close.
- Scrap values were reducing, this was due to a reduction of reactive rather than programmed installs, and the Council had to carry out.
- The programme for the installation of CO detectors to properties with open flued appliances. This programme did not start until June 2013, these detectors were installed at the time of the service.
- The Council had now fitted CO detectors to vast majority of the properties apart from a few properties where we had access problem with.

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

- Were de-cants raising the number of VOIDS within the figures? As I am confused at the levels of VOIDS.
*De-canting of properties were included as a VOID figure because the Council had to return to the property before maintenance work got underway to shut of the gas supply.
But the Council could separate the figures for the next monitoring report.*
- What was the scrap receipts used for once received?
The receipts from the sale of scrap, just go back into the HRA account.

Resolved that the officer's report was noted.

(The meeting ended at 8.15pm)