

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 26 October 2015 at 18:00.

Agenda

- 1 Welcome and Notices
- 2 Apologies.
- 3 Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 14 September 2015 and 13 October 2015 (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 Fees and Charges 2016/2017. Report of thre Business Support Lead (attached).
Reporting Officer: Shari Hallett
- 7 Any Day Direct Debits for Payment of Housing Rent. Report of the Business Support Lead (attached).
Reporting Officer: Shari Hallett
- 8 Tenant and Leaseholders Satisfaction Survey 2015. Report of the Housing Services Lead (attached).
Reporting Officer: Stephen Boland
- 9 Building Services Transformation. Report of the Assistant Director - Operational Delivery and Assistant Director - Property and Development (attached).
Reporting Officers: Terry May
Chris Hall
- 10 Dates of Tenant Services Management Board Meetings 2016. Report of the Tenant Empowerment Manager (attached).
Reporting Officer: Martin Price

Bruce Lang
Assistant Chief Executive

09 December 2015

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.

Full Council, Executive, Committees and Task and Finish Review agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.tauntondeane.gov.uk



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



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

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

If you would like an agenda, a report or the minutes of a meeting translated into another language or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please telephone us on 01823 356356 or e-mail us at: enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Tenant Services Management Board Members:-

Mr A Akhigbemen

Councillor C Appleby

Mr R Balman

Councillor R Bowrah, BEM

Mrs J Bunn

Ms M Davis

Mr D Galpin

Mrs J Hegarty

Mr K Hellier

Mr I Hussey

Mr R Middleton

Ms D Pierowicz

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 14 September 2015 at 6pm in JMR, Taunton.

Present: Mr R Balman (Chairman)
Ms M Davis (Vice-Chair)
Mr A Akhigbemen, Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr I Hussey, Mr K Hellier, Councillor Bowrah, and Councillor Appleby.

Officers: Jo Humble (Housing Development and Enabling Manager), Sam Muckett (Right to Buy Officer), Caroline White (Housing Development Project Lead), Jan Errington (Area Community Manager), James Barra (Director of Housing & Communities), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead – Housing Communities) Lucy Clothier (Accountant), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager) and Emma Hill (Democratic Services Officer).

Others: Councillor Bale and Councillor Mrs Smith

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

Mr R Middleton and Councillor Mrs Warmington

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 20 August 2015 were taken as read and were signed.

3. Public Question Time

No questions received for Public Question Time.

4. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Bowrah declared a personal interest as member of his family were Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants and declared a personal interest as family member had applied to the Council's Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund 'Homeownership' Cash Incentive Scheme.

Councillor Appleby declared a personal interest as Leaseholder of Taunton Deane Borough Council property.

Mr A Akhigbemen, Mr R Balman, Mrs J Bunn, Ms M Davis, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr K Hellier, Mr I Hussey declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

5. Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund

Consideration an update on the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund and the grant funding secured by Taunton Deane Borough Council.

£300,000 had been secured through the bid and the administrative process and proposed methods of promotion to undertake a 'Homeownership Cash Incentive' scheme are underway.

Taunton Deane Borough Council led a successful bid in partnership with Magna West Somerset and West Somerset District Council. The purpose of the Fund was to enable local authorities to provide a scheme for their eligible Right to Buy tenants to access a cash payment in the place of their Right to Buy discount on their current social property.

The funding must be spent by 31 March 2016 and the bid was for £300,000 which equated to a grant of £20,000 to a potential fifteen applicants. The bid required a breakdown of potential tenants priority categories, although the scheme was open to all those with an eligibility of Right to Buy or Right to Acquire.

Interested tenants would be required to complete an application form and provide supporting documents, which included a Mortgage in Principle certificate or savings statement as proof of ability to fund their purchase.

The application would be assessed on a 'first come first served' basis as advised by the DCLG. The assessment would confirm the applicant's eligibility for the scheme and would consider the current property occupied by the tenant and the tenant's circumstances against the priority groupings detailed in this scheme.

Successful applicants would be notified in writing and provided with an offer document setting out the terms of the grant and what was required in order to successfully complete a purchase under this scheme.

The grant would be paid direct to the applicants' solicitor's client account once evidence of signed contracts at exchange had been provided. The money would then be held by the applicants' solicitors until the date of completion. Neither the applicant nor their solicitor should be authorised to use the grant monies prior to the date of completion. Therefore, should the applicant wish to exchange contracts before the completion date, they would have to use alternative money for the purpose of a deposit.

The proposed promotion of this scheme included an advert in Tenants Talk, and leaflets within the Deane House reception area alongside promotion through Tenants Services Management Board and Tenants Forum

The Council had received the Grants termination letter from DCLG and this meant that the scheme was active and we were actively promoting the scheme. Officers had received one application already and the scheme details were taken to Tenants Open Day in Halcon last week.

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

- Cllr Bowrah declared a personal interest concerning that a family member who had applied to the Council's Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund. He stated he wouldn't take part in the discussion of the item.
Declaration of personal interest noted by the Democratic Services Officer.
- Felt that £20,000 wasn't an incentive or attractive enough for Tenants to take up the scheme to buy their properties.

- I suggest officers should request with all application to RtB Social Mobility Fund, the Council requests Income and Expenditure, along with a credit check. This would eliminate any time wasters.
This was a valid point. The Council would be asking applicants to provide a 'Mortgage in Principle' or proof of savings when applying for the scheme. The deadline for completing on the scheme was 31 March 2016. This was a joint project with Magna West.
- Did the officers think the grant would be used by the deadline and if not could the increase the size of the individual grants?
We had always spoken to the DCLG about extending the deadline so that we could start the committee sign out process for that extension. This was something we would have to consider but we were unsure at the moment.

Resolved that:

1. The Board note the report.
2. Approved the facilitation of the promotion of this homeownership cash incentive scheme.

6. The Weavers Arms Development Update

Consideration of an update on the Weavers Arms Development Project in Wellington.

Officers obtained planning permission on 12th August subject to conditions for 26 properties, a mix of 1 bed flats, houses and bungalows. Below was a list of the conditions imposed by the Planning Committee:

- Planning condition 5 – west boundary treatment to be approved by LPA (Local Planning Authority) in the interest of neighbouring residents. Keep foliage in place to soften boundary and provide foraging for bats.
- Planning condition 6 – works implemented in accordance with Bat surveys – bat resting places & accesses thereafter permanently maintained (walls, eaves).

The Council was required to obtain a Bat License from Natural England as bats were protected species could only be moved at certain times of year, this would impact scheme timings. This won't be going ahead until April 2016. The house in question would be demolished by hand.

The officers were currently putting the Project works contract out to tender to contractors using the West Works framework.

There two decanted properties at Oaken Ground waiting to move as well as one household awaiting void property in Wellington to be finished and ready for occupancy.

There was an estimated on site date beginning 2016 and the construction type (timber or masonry) was yet to be confirmed.

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

- Was there any completion date on those Tenants moving into the one house?
There was no date as yet as there were void works The Council had impressed on the contractor on the urgency of need for moving date for the tenants.

- Concerns were raised regarding the presence of Bats at the site. Where were the roosting in the houses or the tree? How many Bats had been found?
The Bats were found on site behind a window frame in one of the properties. There were only two male Bats but there was a set procedure when any number of Bats were found.

Resolved that the Board noted the report.

7. Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Panels Scheme Update

Consideration of an update on the Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Panels Scheme on the Council's Housing Stock.

The scheme to fit PV to 350 council owned houses is nearing completion, with the final installation due near the 7th October.

The two appointed installers were Glevum Heating and Prolectric. Glevum had already installed their target of 175 properties and had the final one to fit in October. Prolectric still had approximately 12 properties to install.

Western Power Distribution were to decide how many properties in an area could be connected to the grid, therefore some tenants had not had PV whereas their neighbours had. This had caused some complaints. All we could do was reiterated the fact we need permission from Western Power Distribution to install PV to their home and connect to the grid.

A recent Government announcement informed us that Feed In Tariffs (FIT) were dropping from 12p per kilowatt hour to 1.63p on the 31st December. Our installed properties would be secure on the 12p rate but any future ones would be on the much lower rate. Therefore it was unlikely future schemes would be financially viable as the cost of panels were unlikely to drop in price to match the drop in FITs. The investment TDBC had allocated for the PV scheme is £1.5m. The FITs we received would go towards paying off the cost of the panels, which was estimated to take 13 years. From year 13 – 20 TDBC would have paid off the investment figure and would be in a positive cash flow due to the FIT income.

Over the lifetime of the panels it was anticipated they would save 11,000 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Officers had stated that Tenants were delighted with the results and project had been successful so far. The only problem, the Council had found was we had problems connecting some of properties in the scheme.

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

- Members asked for a commitment from Officers that they would monitor the market to wait and see if was feasible to roll out a second phase in future.
Unless the government make a U-turn on the feed tariff, we won't be able to introduce a second phase. Officers had made provision to monitor the market in case, it meant the Council could commit to a second phase of the project on existing housing stock.

- This project had been successful so far, let hope that the market in future allowed for a second phase.
- Looking at the PV coating, was this a cheaper option the Council was monitoring or considering?
Unfortunately, the PV Coating was a new technology and was currently not a cheaper option, which was the same for the battery storage technology, which allowed energy to be stored. Currently, the tenants were having to use the energy produced when the sun was out.

Resolved that the Board noted the report.

8. External Wall Insulation Scheme Update

Consideration of an update on the External Wall Insulation Scheme to a selection of Cornish type non-traditional properties.

Solid External Wall Insulation to a selection of Cornish house types was well underway and due to complete in late October. The original cladding from the early 1990s had been removed and a new 150mm fibre board and render system had been applied.

This was to make the homes easier to heat as it would insulate the whole of the lower elevations. The installation had happened over the summer months so tenants would not feel the cold while the original cladding was removed.

There had been a slight delay in completing the project as materials had to come into the UK via Calais, which had encountered problems recently.

Below was a picture of the fibre boards being applied, two coats of render were then applied. Window cills were replaced, pipes were extended out to allow for the four inches of insulation and all external fixings were replaced. Tenants were informed not to affix anything to the EWl as it was not a hard material and puncturing it would lower the thermal efficiency.

The Council was currently looking at 38 properties on this contract but we were looking to increase where possible and feasible.

The properties were in much better condition than first thought and only 8 columns out of 800 were in need of replace.

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

- Committee Member informed the rest of the committee and officers that they lived a Council owned Non-traditional Cornish property and the work completed by this project was brilliant and the contractors left the property clean and tidy. They could already feel the insulation working and the property was warmer.

Resolved that the Board noted the report.

9. Extra Care Housing Services Review Project

The Supported Housing Review Project Manager gave a verbal report accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Extra Care Service Model Options Appraisal.

There were three main work streams to this review project, they were:

- Sheltered Housing Servicer Model Review
- Extra Care Service Model Review
- Sheltered and ECH Property Options Review

Officers defined what was meant by Extra Care housing (ECH). The Council had two schemes, they were Kilkenny Court and Lodge Close. We were also working in partnership with Magna Homes in West Somerset who had six flats.

Officers gave the following detailed information regarding the ECH review;

- Why there was a need to review, change and update the Extra Care facilities and services.
- The underlying factors driving the need for was funding cuts, need to create a sustainable service and an aging demographic population.
- The aims of the ECH review, looking at service delivery models and ECH properties.

The service review was in two phases. Currently, the review was at phase one options appraisal. The second phase was the implementation of the chosen and adopted new service option.

Officers had conducted consultation within the ECH service this included ECH Tenants. Below was a summary of the feedback from the consultations:

- Emphasised Staff Flexibility
- Seamless Integrated Service
- Only One Manager to contact
- Local and Small Service Provider
- Sense of Community
- Service needs tailored to Individuals

Officers had discovered differing views between the different ECH schemes of Lodge Close and Kilkenny Court;

- Tenants at Lodge Close were happy with the service they were receiving and wanted no or little change to the current service.
- Tenants at Kilkenny Court weren't worried who provided the service, just wanted a high quality and better service than the current one.

The ECH service at Lodge Close had recently the staff had changed, this was due to...

But ECH facilities had expressed a desire that the housing facility management (or landlord) should remain as Taunton Deane Borough Council.

Officers detailed the key risks to ECH review project and also presented a table of a shortlist of current service model options open to the council. This was constantly changing as additional options not previously thought of were suggested to officers.

The next steps for the officers with ECH service review;

- Seek feedback and approval for option to take forward from the following Tenant Forum, Supported Housing Development Group, Tenant Services Management Board, Community Scrutiny and Executive.
- Implement options decision – this would include procurement, staff restructure, TUPE process, consultation and informing.
- Post implementation, evaluate/review and organise lessons learned workshop.

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

- Suggested that Committee Members should leave any main questions to the Special meeting of the Committee where this item would be discussed on a single item agenda.
- Why were the view of Lodge Close and Kilkenny Court so different? Had we identified the reasons behind the great difference in views?
*The complaints and comments related to frontline staff.
The whole of the Extra Care service was undergoing change but at Lodge Close, they had new temporary staff team so this had improved the service at this location without the results of the Business Plan review.
The service at Kilkenny Court had problems with lots of long-term sickness and operational frontline issues had affected the service. This had meant changing temporary staff cover. This had led to these particular the views of the tenants at Kilkenny court.*
- Was the Extra Care service provider the same at both sites?
Yes, it was the same service provider at both sites.
- There was no mention about Shelter Housing Changes in the report?
This was a separate project under the Business Plan review completely and a consultation event was due to take place.
- How many tenants were part of the scheme and how many tenants had attended?
*There were 90 tenants part of the scheme of which 16 tenants from Lodge Close and 15 from Kilkenny Court.
These figures were a combination of the three consultation events that had taken place. There had been two consultation in conjunction with SCC prior to our events.
We were asking Extra Care service staff to encourage all tenants to keep feeding back information to the project officers.
The consultation events was really productive. If Tenants had a burning issue or problem, the approach staff regarding these issues and because these were Extra Care Tenants, the Council was in regular contact with them.
Lodge Close and Kilkenny Court had very strong Community Groups.*

Resolved that the Board noted the report.

10. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2012- 2042

Consideration of the latest review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2012-2042.

Since the last review process, a number of significant policy changes had arisen through the Government's Budget Statement highlighted changes to the Rent Policy and new Policy supporting Right to Buy around higher value properties. These changes had impacted on the Business Plan. The review of HRA Business Plan two phases covering two indicative time periods, they were:

- 1st Phase – September 2015 – November 2015
- 2nd Phase – November 2015 – February 2016

Within these two time periods a number of different areas would be looked at. During 1st phase, the following would be looked at;

- Establishment of baseline financial position
- Explore flexibilities and constraints
- Sensitivities and stress testing to model options for future decision making
- Health check of Codeman stock condition data
- Refresh business plan progress and priorities

During 2nd phase, the following would be looked at;

- Asset Performance and new Strategy
- Development strategy
- Supported housing review

Also there were some general area being review, these were;

- Assist in planning suitable resident and stakeholder consultation activities and events concerning BP priorities.
- Support key decision making therefore plan to present at four evening committee meetings.

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

- It was requested that the officer confirm a previous statement, that the Council couldn't afford our planned new build projects?
This was one of the many features around our expenditure, the Council would have to review. It maybe that the extent of our new build ambitions was might be unaffordable. Even within what the Council could afford to do, we would have to prioritise, where we absolutely need to spend money on regenerating the non-traditional estates rather than traditional new builds.
- Page three, investigating options for a Council owned special purchase vehicle. Could you please expand on this?
This was an option many Local Authorities were exploring and implementing. There were multiple benefits. There were lots of risk around building new properties in the HRA. The Council could invest lots in new property but they could be acquired through RtB. There was a level of protection with something called the cost floor. So this stated that for 15 years if someone

wanted to purchase the property through RtB it would cost them the full construction cost of that new build. There was an exemption from the normal discount from most other RtBs.

It was a risk for Councils with higher number of new builds than us and it's a risk they were looking to mitigate through other models. Equally, the general fund was looking for new sources of income, so could the Council by setting up an arm's length management company explore investing in affordable housing or also invest development of market housing/market rental housing as a source of income. This was a model other Councils were looking and a legal way to make income. There were equal benefits as well as cost to general fund.

- Was stock transfer an option open to the Council?

The Council had looked at this option and this had no particular incentives or benefits to the Council in doing that and we were not aware of any local authorities that we doing this. This wasn't something we were considering or looking at the moment. The Council was in a better position since we started Self-Financing and we were far stronger position than Housing Associations. It had flipped around completely.

Housing Associations were having real problems with the Rent Policy applied them as well and confidence had been knocked all areas.

- Options around change the tenure or use of around shelter housing stock mean. Was that around people want to change but still stay as Council Tenants but save money by not having the stock of the Pipeline service on top their rent? A lot residents where I live didn't use the service but pay for it This was an option open to the Council and any properties that had a change of use or tenure would fall back into circulation and we would let them as general needs properties. The whole issue of the service charge and the requirement to pay that charge was mandatory requirement and that was what the tenant signed up for when taking on a Shelter Housing property. This discussion would come with the piece of work was doing around the Sheltered Housing Review.

In order for the Council to provide that service for 50% of Sheltered Housing tenants, the Council had to guarantee a certain critical mass of staff and we needed an assurance of certain level of income. When officers had spoken to tenants in the past regarding this matter. We said it's an assurance scheme and that they might not need it now but in the future they may do. By paying the service charges means they would guaranteed to have access to it. It needs all Sheltered Housing tenants to pay into that service to maintain that critical mass of staff to provide the service to those who wish to take it. That's did limit choice and one of the things the Council would be exploring in the Service Review would be choice.

The Deane Helpline provide great service and takes a great burden off the Ambulance Service. To provide that required service required certain critical level of income for a 24hr service. So it's a balance between choice and mandatory requirements.

- Demolition of Housing Stock... Didn't want to come home and find my house had been demolished and gone?

With the Council's housing stock, this was unlikely from what I know of our stock but it had to be a considered.

It was more likely to be re-development of a small sheltered housing scheme that was on a really big plot of land and it had limited desirability and limited use as it was and so we would consider decommissioning it rather than changing the use and putting it back into general needs, the Council could put double density new builds on the site instead.

Resolved that the Board noted the report.

11. AOB

Members of the Committee asked the following questions of the officers present after the main agenda items had been discussed:

- UK's quota of Refugees – What or where would TDBC put the Refugees if we were to offer space for them?
*There had been no discussion as yet regarding this. There was potential around some void properties.
The government and LGA were currently pulling together more information on this subject for Local Authorities.*
- On behalf of the Committee, we would like to say congratulations to Lucy Clothier on her new appointment and welcome to Emma Hill after returning from maternity leave.
- The disabled bay in Parker Close. People had been parking there that weren't allowed or shouldn't be using the space. This meant the resident/s that it was meant for weren't able to use the space. Could officers help with this?
What action we could or would take, would depend on where the space was there for a specific person or general disabled space. After the meeting, could you provide with some more information and I would be happy to look into the matter.

(The meeting ended at 19.20pm)

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Tuesday 13 October 2015 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mr R Balman (Chairman)
Mr A Akhigbemen, Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr I Hussey, Mr K Hellier, Councillor Bowrah, and Councillor Appleby.

Officers: Jan Errington (Project Manager), Simon Lewis (Assistant Director – Housing and Community Development), Paul Grant (Building Services Manager) and Emma Hill (Democratic Services Officer).

(The meeting commenced at 6.05pm)

1. Apologies

Ms M Davis and Martin Price

2. Public Question Time

No questions received for Public Question Time.

3. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Bowrah declared a personal interest as member of his family were Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants and declared a personal interest as family member had applied to the Council's Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund 'Homeownership' Cash Incentive Scheme.

Councillor Appleby declared a personal interest as Leaseholder of Taunton Deane Borough Council property.

Mr A Akhigbemen, Mr R Balman, Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr K Hellier, Mr I Hussey, and Mr R Middleton declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

4. Extra Care Housing Services Review – Options Appraisal

Consideration of a more detailed update report, which outlined the findings of the options appraisal for the provision of Taunton Deane Borough Council's (TDBC) Extra Care Housing, which was to be re-commissioned as an integrated care and support service through a competitive tendering exercise due for release in December 2015. This external timescale was driving the initial options appraisal timetable and project milestones.

The Extra Care Service Model Review was responsible for the changing of strategic and operational challenges within the Extra Care service. The service review was in two phase, the first of which was the options appraisal and the second phase was the implementation of the agreed option.

The officers had received feedback so far from Council Tenants, Tenants Forum, Staff, Unison and Supported Housing Development Group.

There were two critical success factors:

- Fully Integrated Care and Support
- Responsibility for care and associated risks/care registration

The aims of the service review was to create and implement service models and properties that were:

- Viable and Sustainable
- Fit for Purpose
- Meet local needs and demand
- Attractive to our customers
- Achieve and maintain a high level of tenant satisfaction
- Support people to maintain their independence and social networks of family and friends
- Develop a tailored affordable service model that is right for extra care

The key risks that effected the service review were:

- Time Constraints
- Capacity
- Capability
- Extent to which option meets objectives and aligns with tenants' overall feedback
- Extent to which option could deliver CSF
- Cost
- Procurement risks
- Affordability/Value for Money

There were a number of uncertainties that effected the process and progress of this service review, these were:

- Confirmation of the tender specification details and service requirements
- Confirmation of the funding available (this would be subject to competition)
- TUPE Costs
- The future impact of welfare reform

The outcome of the options appraisal meant that eight of ten of the options were ruled out, also only three of the ten options would deliver a fully integrated Care Support service. The two remaining options were shortlisted after looking at the weighted score summary and were subject to a further assessment, which showed a clear front-runner, which was Option Four was the most realistic approach.

This was Option Four but further detailed modelling work would need to be completed on this preferred option in order to:

- Fully understand the costs of the new service delivery model

- Proposal of key preferred option to Commissioners and confirmation of the process, specification and funding available
- Complete a full Equalities Impact Assessment on the approved option
- Plan and enable a smooth transition to the new delivery arrangements
- Post implementation evaluation and lessons learned workshop

The next step of service review included seeking more feedback and providing updates to the tenants and relevant Groups, Boards and Committees. The Council were waiting for a number of uncertainties to be clarified by the County Council in order the service review to progress.

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

- When the review was completed, would the Extra Care and Sheltered Housing Tenants receive copies of the report?
*Throughout the hold review process Extra Care Tenants would be kept informed and up to date. Officers would provide with FAQ's (frequently asked questions) sheets as well as ensured we continually get their comments and opinions regarding every stage of the process.
For the moment, Board Members need to treat and think of the Sheltered Housing Service Review as a completely separate entity. This project would be finished and changed would be implemented by April 2016.*
- Looking at 3.7.4 of the covering report, indicated that Housing Benefit would end by 2020, if Tenants see this it would frighten them? Please could explain the meaning behind this?
What was meant by that statement was that Housing Benefit would be replaced by Universal Credit by 2020 but that was only if they keep to that timescale.
- It would appear that Options Four was the overall best option.
- Concerns were raised regarding monitoring the level of clear information tenants receive. Officers need to ensure that any feedback from tenants was passed back through the process.
- It also appeared the tenants at Lodge Close were being ignored, the Council needed to re-assure them that they weren't and have that conversation with the tenants to ensure they were re-assured their views had been heard by the officers.
The experiences and views of the Tenants of Lodge Close were difficult to implement as part of the service change as they were having a good experience with the current extra care staff. Their opinion had change to this over the course of the review due to recent changes in staffing. This was similar to the positive feedback from the WSC Magna Tenants had expressed since TDBC starting providing support and advice as well as introducing the Deane's Piperline service as well.
- I was much happier with the contents of the report after hearing the officer's explanation and extra detail regarding the service review.
- Well done to the officer and their team for the work done so far on this service review.
- Looking at the report, there was mention of review of service charges had this been mentioned to Tenants yet? Was there anyway Officers could give the Board and Tenants a rough outline or idea of any increase to charges and could this be communicated to Tenants?
Tenants were aware (slightly) that the Council would be reviewing its Service Charges and these may increase but it would have a lot to do with the new

service provider.

As TDBC would not potentially end up as the 'middle man', this would reduce management involved and so management costs. So there would be a reduction there.

Concerning changes to the service charges, these would need to be properly consulted on but officers felt that was a lot of potential to keep the increases to a minimum.

The Council was currently charging less for Extra Care service than other Housing Associations.

- It appeared that Option Four was the most sensible option open to the Council. The Council didn't have the budgets or the money to fund the setting up and providing of an Extra Care Service.
- Costs and Service Charges would need to increase with minimum wage increasing.

Because of the small size of Extra Care facility to become the provider would be a high risk to the Council. With additional pressures on the budgets as well as those budget were shrinking.

- The bottom line was that we needed to provide the best care with the money available.
- If the Council had no control or say over the tender process, SCC might go for the cheapest option not the best option.

The Council didn't know as yet if we have no input in the tender process. Normally with this type of service it was based on quality of service for the budget, not the cheapest option. Tender process would ask what the provider would include for the price. The Council would be looking for extras as well.

In general, all the comments and opinions related to the quality of service. The County Council wouldn't be driven by cost but by customer service.

Resolved that:

1. The Board note the report.
2. And commented on the officer report and supported the recommendation of the preferred option, which would be taken. Option Four was a partnership approach to service delivery.

5. Any Other Business

There was no other business to be discussed.

(The meeting ended at 18.57pm)

Declaration of Interests

Tenant Services Management Board

- Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants;
 - Mr R Balman
 - Mrs J Bunn
 - Mr M Davis
 - Mr D Galpin
 - Mrs J Hegarty
 - Mr K Hellier
 - Mr I Hussey
 - Mr R Middleton
 - Mr A Akhigbemen

- Family Member(s) are Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenant;
 - Councillor Bowrah

- Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Leaseholder;
 - Councillor Appleby

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 26th October 2015

Housing and Community Services Fees and Charges 2016/17

Report of the Business Support Lead – Shari Hallett

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Beale)

1. Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for Housing and Community Services in 2016/17.

The Tenant Services Management Board is invited to comment on the proposed fees and charges before Corporate Scrutiny considers them on the 19th November 2015.

2. Background

The housing service charges its service users for services that they use. These charges are set locally each year.

3. Proposed fees and charges increases for 2016/17

It is proposed to increase fees and charges by applying Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation as at September 2015 (September 2015 RPI inflation was 0.8%) as set out in Appendix A.

Council housing rents will be set early in the New Year.

4. Finance comments

This is a finance report and there are no further comments.

5. Legal comments

There are no legal implications of this report.

6. Links to corporate aims

There are no specific links within this report.

7. Environmental implications

There are no environmental implications of this report.

8. Community safety implications

There are no community safety implications of this report.

9. Equalities impact

An equality impact assessment is set out in Appendix B.

10. Risk management

Not appropriate to this report.

11. Partnership implications

There are no partnership implications of this report.

12. Recommendations

1. The Tenant Services Management Board is invited to comment on the proposed fees and charges for 2016/17 as set out in this report.

Contact: Shari Hallett – Business Support Lead
Direct Dial No: 01823 356440
[e-mail: s.hallett@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:s.hallett@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Appendix A

Housing					
				2015/16	2016/17
Service Charges					
Grounds maintenance				£0.60	£0.60
Communal areas				£0.78	£0.79
Heating charge (Broomfield House only)				£4.73	£4.77
Laundry charge (Broomfield House only)				£1.44	£1.45
Combined Service Charges					
Specialised (Extra Care) Sheltered Housing				£49.70	£50.05
Sheltered Housing (under review)				£18.05	TBC
Low Level Sheltered Support (under review)				£8.97	TBC
(A review of all sheltered housing charges is taking place and changes are planned for April 2016, actual amounts will be determined by the review. Extra Care charges will be increased in April 2016 in line with RPI but these charges will be reviewed in October 2016. Piper life line charges will not increase.)					
Garage Rents					
Council tenants				£5.78	£5.82
Private tenants and Owner Occupiers (exc. VAT)				£7.01	£7.07
Private tenants and Owner Occupiers (inc VAT)				£8.41	£8.48
Hire Charges for Sheltered Scheme Meeting Halls					
First hour				£10.20	£10.28
Each half hour thereafter				£4.10	£4.13
6 hours plus				£51.70	£52.11
Total charge for residents in a scheme and community organisations				£13.40	£13.51
Provision of Meals at Kilkenny Court (Extra Care)					
Cost per meal				TBC	TBC
* please note the provision of meal service contract is yet to be awarded.					
Hire Charges for Sheltered Scheme Guest Rooms					
No. of nights per person 1				£11.30	£11.39
No. of nights per person 2				£18.10	£18.24
No. of nights per person 3				£24.90	£25.10
No. of nights per person 4				£31.70	£31.95
No. of nights per person 5				£38.50	£38.81
No. of nights per person 6				£45.30	£45.66
No. of nights per person 7				£52.10	£52.52

Hostels (rent per day)	Gross Per Day 2015/16	Fee 2016/17	Service Charge 2016/17	Gross Per Day 2016/17
40 Humphreys Road	£9.81	£8.98	£0.91	£9.89
1 Gay Street	£9.81	£8.98	£0.91	£9.89
Outer Circle				
113 and 113a (studios - metered)	£8.26	£7.64	£0.69	£8.33
115 (3 bedroom)	£14.23	£9.95	£4.39	£14.34
115a (3 bedroom - metered)	£11.01	£9.95	£1.15	£11.10
119 (2 bedroom)	£11.14	£7.64	£3.59	£11.23
119a (2 bedroom - metered)	£8.26	£7.64	£0.69	£8.33
Snedden Grove				
Unit 1 (2 bedroom)	£9.81	£8.98	£0.91	£9.89
Unit 2 (2 bedroom)	£11.72	£8.23	£3.59	£11.81
Unit 3 (2 bedroom)	£11.72	£8.23	£3.59	£11.81
Unit 4 (3 bedroom)	£15.04	£10.77	£4.39	£15.16
Unit 5 (3 bedroom)	£15.04	£10.77	£4.39	£15.16
Unit 6 (2 bedroom)	£12.47	£8.98	£3.59	£12.57
Unit 7 (3 bedroom)	£15.04	£10.77	£4.39	£15.16
Unit 8 (2 bedroom)	£9.81	£8.98	£0.91	£9.89
Winckworth Way				
Unit 1 (2 bedroom)	£11.72	£8.23	£3.59	£11.81
Unit 2 (2 bedroom)	£11.72	£8.23	£3.59	£11.81
Unit 3 (3 bedroom)	£15.04	£10.77	£4.39	£15.16
Wheatley Crescent (4 studios)				
30 (1 bedroom)	£8.26	£7.64	£0.69	£8.33
32 (1 bedroom)	£8.26	£7.64	£0.69	£8.33
34 (1 bedroom)	£8.26	£7.64	£0.69	£8.33
36 (1 bedroom)	£8.26	£7.64	£0.69	£8.33

Note: Fees and Charges 2016/17 Increases:

In line with the approved HRA Business Plan the Fees and Charges for 2016/17 have been increased across the board by RPI 0.8% as at September 2015 with the following exceptions:

- Provision of meals at Kilkenny Court will be increased in accordance with the meal service contract.
- Charges for properties not on mains sewer will be increased in line with Wessex Water increases, once known (Wessex Water rates for sewer standing charge per annum and poundage charges are used in the system calculation).

Appendix B

Equality Impact Assessment – pro-forma

Responsible person	<i>Shari Hallett</i>	Job Title: Business Support Lead
Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)	Proposed new policy/service	
	Change to Policy/service	
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	√
	Part of timetable	
What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which, service, MTFP proposal)	Housing and Community Services Fees and Charges 2016/17	
Section One – Scope of the assessment		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proposal to increase the fees and charges from April 2016 for Housing and Community Services as detailed in the attached report.</i> • <i>The proposed increase to fees and charges will ensure sufficient financial resources are in place to deliver the services.</i> 	
Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service?	<i>1. Age; 2. Disability; 3. Gender Reassignment; 4. Pregnancy and Maturity; 5. Race; 6. Religion or belief; 7. Sex; 8. Sexual Orientation; 9. Marriage and civil partnership</i>	
What evidence has been used in the assessment - data, engagement undertaken – please list each source that has been used The information can be found on....	<p>1. Engagement Formal discussion on the proposed fees and charges to be held with the Tenant Services Management Board at its meeting on the 26th October 2015.</p> <p>(A verbal update on the Tenant Services Management Board comments and recommendation are to be presented to Corporate Scrutiny Committee in November 2015)</p>	

Section two – Conclusion drawn about the impact of service/policy/function/change on different groups highlighting negative impact, unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality

The proposed fees and charges increases will apply to all services users and as such no potential discrimination amongst the protected groups has been identified.

To help support service users on low incomes Housing and Community Services will continue to provide a number of initiatives to enable service users to manage their finances and maximise their income:

- *Publish clear information on all the fees and charges which helps service users to manage their own finances;*
- *Signpost service users to a relevant benefit agency to help ensure they are maximising their income to meet their living costs;*
- *Take action to raise the awareness of accessing a range of welfare benefits; and*
- *Provide the opportunity to access direct support for service users in checking they are in receipt of the welfare benefits they are entitled to claim*

I have concluded that there is/should be:

No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	No major change as no adverse 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 proposed increase in fees and charges will be applicable from April 2016	
Section Five – Sign off	
Responsible officer: Shari Hallett Date: 19 th October 2015	Management Team: Housing and Community Date: 19 th October 2015
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.

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

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 26 October 2015

Any Day Direct Debits for payment of Housing rent

Report of the Business Support Lead

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Beale)

1. Executive Summary

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) relies upon prompt payment of rental income due. Currently a number of payment methods including direct debit are offered to tenants to allow them to pay rent. With the introduction of universal credit, where tenants will receive all benefit monies including rent directly, it is imperative that Taunton Deane Borough Council can offer payment methods that will allow payment of rent as soon as funds become available to the tenant.

It is proposed that from the 1st November Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Department will be offering tenants the ability to pay rent by direct debit weekly (collected on a Friday), fortnightly (collected on Monday), or any day of the month between 1-28. Other methods of payment such as standing order, will remain but this allows us to offer more flexible payments and begin to respond to the changes that will result from Universal Credit.

The Tenant Services Management Board is recommended to note and comment on the report as well as consider recommending to the council the approval of the any day direct debits.

2. Background

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) relies upon prompt payment of rental income due. Currently rent can be paid using a number of payment methods including direct debit. Other methods of payment are, cash at post office, cash at TDBC offices, standing order or direct payment of Housing Benefit from the Benefit Office at Taunton Deane. With the introduction of Universal Credit, where tenants will receive all benefit monies including rent paid directly to themselves, it is imperative that Taunton Deane Borough Council can offer payment methods that will allow payment of rent as soon as funds become available to the tenant. To protect our vulnerable tenants we must be able to offer tenants a method to pay their rent promptly (as soon as they have funds); this ensures that they can secure their housing first.

3. Proposed Any Day Direct Debit Collections

At present only three methods of direct debit payment are offered to Taunton Deane Borough Council tenants, monthly payment on the 3rd of the month, monthly payment on the 20th of the month, fortnightly payments on the Monday of each fortnight. This does not allow for direct debit payments to be made on any day of the month. Benefit payments may be made on any day of the month with the introduction of Universal Credit.

It is proposed that from the 1st November Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Department will be offering tenants the ability to pay rent by direct debit weekly (collected on a Friday), fortnightly (collected on Monday), or any day of the month between 1-28. Other methods of payment such as standing order, will be available but this allows us to offer more flexible payments and begin to respond to the changes that will result from Universal Credit direct payment of rent to tenants.

Weekly direct debit collections, and direct debit collections on the 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28 of the month will be newly set up and available from 1st November 2015.

If the board supports our recommendations, we propose to publish an article in Deane Housing News which will be published 2nd December. We will also mail all tenants to offer them the opportunity to set up a new direct debit, as well as publishing details on the screens in reception.

4. Financial Implications

In order to set up the new collections it has been necessary to temporarily cover the direct debit functions with additional capacity at grade D (a second temporary Income Assistant) so that the Income Officer can undertake the set up work. This

has been funded from previous year underspends and funding ceases at the end of March 2016. It is hoped that the day to day running of the additional services can be accommodated through the existing Income Officer and Income Assistant posts but workloads will be continually assessed.

Each method of payment incurs banking costs for the council per transaction (excluding staff time). Current bank charging information indicates that Post Office payments cost 58p per transaction whilst direct debits cost less than 10p per transaction (both figures exclude any staffing time). Direct debits therefore ensure that the council pay less transaction charges and therefore more rental income is retained by the council.

5. Finance Comments

Every day Direct Debits are crucial to ensure tenants can pay their rent as soon as their Universal Credit, salary, or other source of income is available. It is hoped that this will limit an increase in arrears on the introduction of Universal Credit, but will also help tenants not receiving Universal Credit to manage their finances.

This proposal can be funded from existing resources and so will not have an impact on the overall position of the HRA.

6. Legal Comments

There are no legal implications identified as a result of information or actions contained or referred to within this report.

7. Links to Corporate Aims

The proposal within this report is linked to the following Corporate aim:

- Aim 3 – a vibrant social, cultural and leisure environment – working with tenants to ensure they have methods available to pay their rents and secure their homes.

8. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

There are no environmental implications identified as a result of information or actions contained or referred to within this report.

9. Equalities Impact

There are no equalities implications identified as a result of information or actions contained or referred to within this report. The report is offering additional rental payment methods and does not withdraw any.

10. Risk Management

There are no significant risks identified with the introduction of new direct debit collection dates. The direct debit payments are already running and this is an extension of that functionality. It is not anticipated that direct debit volumes will increase suddenly but that growth will be gradual.

11. Partnership Implications

There are no partnership implications identified as a result of introducing new direct debit collection dates.

12. Recommendations

1. The Tenant Services Management Board is asked to note and comment on the report.
2. To recommend the approval of the introduction of the any day direct debits.

Contact:	Officer Name	Shari Hallett – Business Support Lead
	Direct Dial No	01823 356 440
	e-mail address	s.hallett@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 26 October 2015

Housing and Communities – Tenant and Leaseholders Satisfaction Survey 2015

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Beale)

1. Executive Summary

The Tenant and Leaseholders Satisfaction Survey 2015 reported its findings in September 2015.

Tenant Services Management Board members are provided with a summary of the results of the survey.

Tenant Services Management Board members will be receiving a further report from managers, over the coming weeks and months, containing more details of the plan of activities in response to the key findings raised within the survey.

2. Background

Housing and Community Services has been working with an independent organisation since 2006 to measure and understand levels of tenant and leaseholder satisfaction with its housing and community services. The bi-annual survey helps to inform decision making and changes to service delivery by identifying key issues and actions for improvement. The satisfaction measurements also help to communicate and engage with tenants and leaseholders on performance.

3. Tenant and leaseholder satisfaction survey 2015

A total of 2851 surveys were sent out to tenants and leaseholders, achieving a 46% response rate (1300 surveys completed and returned).

The results of the survey are mixed with some parts of our services clearly on the right track and showing improvement (leaseholder management), whilst other parts showing relatively little change since the 2013 survey (management of supported housing) and then (general needs housing management) clearly pointing towards the need for much deeper analysis and action planning.

A 'tenant friendly' copy of the survey is attached at **Appendix 1** and all tenants and leaseholders will be receiving a copy alongside their quarterly newsletter later this year (circa. November 2015).

4. Next steps

Over the coming weeks and months managers within Housing and Communities will be meeting to assess, in more detail, the survey results and coming forward with a plan of activities in response to the key issues.

5. Finance Comments

There are no financial implications identified as a result of information contained within this report.

6. Legal Comments

There are no legal implications identified as a result of information contained within this report.

7. Links to Corporate Aims

The content of this report is linked to the following corporate aim:

- Aim 3 – a vibrant social, cultural and leisure environment – work with partners to improve the lives of our most vulnerable households.

8. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

There are no environmental implications identified as a result of information contained within this report.

9. Equalities Impact

There are no equalities impacts identified as a result of information contained within this report.

10. Risk Management

There are no significant risks identified within this information report.

11. Partnership Implications

There are no partnership implications identified as a result of information contained within this report.

12. Recommendations

The Tenant Services Management Board are requested to note this report and are invited to provide comment on the key results of the survey.

Contacts:	Officer Name	Stephen Boland – Housing Services Lead
	Direct Dial No	01823 356446
	e-mail address	s.boland@tauntondeane.gov.uk
	Officer Name	Martin Price – Tenant Empowerment Manager
	Direct Dial No	01823 356552
	e-mail address	m.price@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Your views

Taunton Deane Borough Council Tenant and Leaseholders Satisfaction Survey 2015

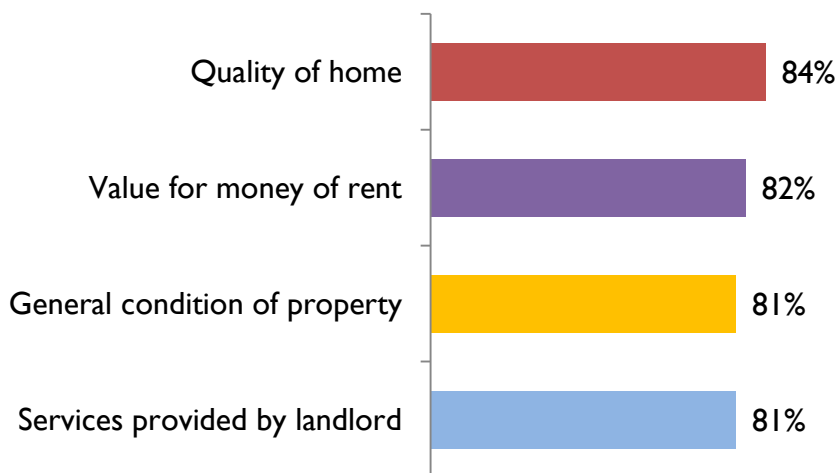
About the survey

Over the summer some of you took part in our bi-annual satisfaction survey. The survey focused on how happy you are with the way Taunton Deane Borough Council' Housing Services (Taunton Deane) delivers services and maintains your homes.

- The survey was sent to over 2,800 tenants and leaseholders and almost half of you responded (46%).
- The survey was out by an independent market research company – Acuity Research & Practice (Acuity).

Taunton Deane and Acuity would like to thank all those tenants who took part. This report contains the key results from the survey.

Satisfaction with home and landlord

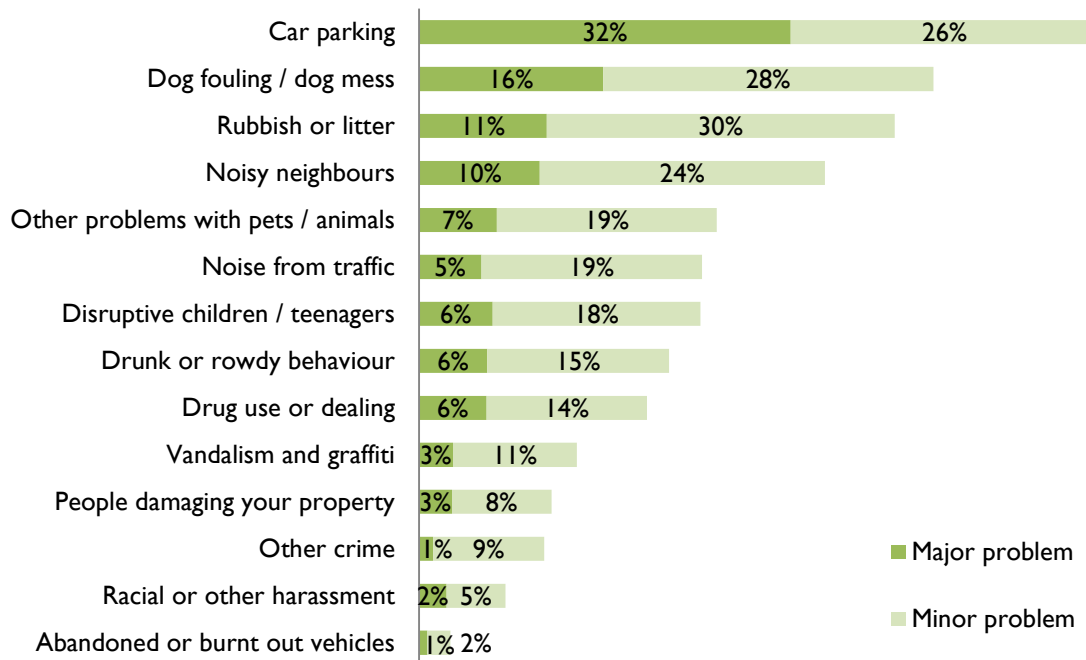


81%
of tenants
are satisfied
with services
overall

- The majority of tenants are happy with the overall service they receive from Taunton Deane (81%) and with the value for money for rent (82%).
- A high number of tenants are also satisfied with the quality of their home (84%) and with the condition of their property (81%).

Neighbourhood

- Six out of seven tenants are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (85%), a fall of 3% since the last survey in 2013.
- More tenants in sheltered accommodation (92%) are satisfied with their neighbourhood than general needs tenants (84%).
- Key issues within neighbourhoods are car parking, dog fouling and rubbish/litter.



- Around a quarter of tenants felt that their neighbourhood had improved over the last three years (23%), while more than half (54%) felt it had stayed the same (22% got worse).

Estate services

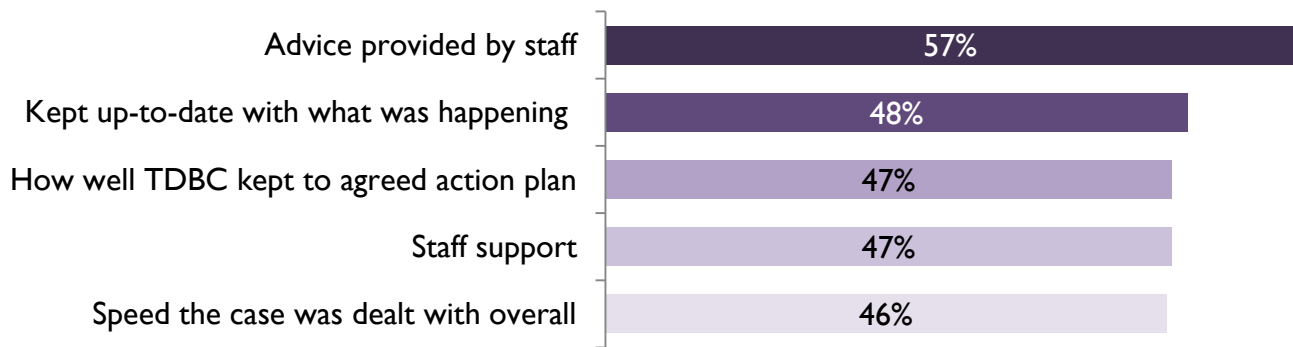
- 78% of tenants are satisfied with the appearance of their neighbourhood and 69% with the overall estate services provided by Taunton Deane.
- Far fewer tenants are satisfied with the grounds maintenance provided (63%), with 27% dissatisfied.



Anti-social behaviour

- 10% of all Taunton Deane tenants needed to make an anti-social behaviour complaint in the last 12 months.
- Three out of five tenants are satisfied with the advice provided by staff (57%) while around half of the tenants were satisfied with the other aspects of the complaint (46% to 48%).

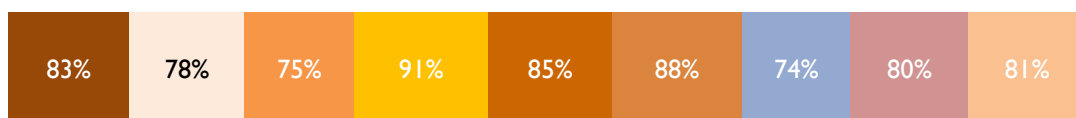
Satisfaction with handling of ASB complaint



Repairs & maintenance

- The majority of tenants are satisfied with Taunton Deane’s repairs and maintenance service (83%) and with the gas servicing arrangements (76%).
- Two thirds of all tenants had reported a repair in the 12 months prior to the survey and many of those were satisfied with the repair they received on that occasion (81%).
- Four out of five tenants (78%) said that their repairs appointment had been kept.
- 91% of tenants were satisfied with the attitude of the workers, and 85% were satisfied with the quality of the repair work.
- Not all tenants were satisfied that the repair was “right first time” (74%) or the time taken before the work started.

Satisfaction with last repair



- Being told when workers would call
- Time taken before work started
- Overall quality of work
- Right first time
- Repairs received on this occasion
- Being able to make an appointment
- Attitude of workers
- Minimising dirt and mess
- Contractors doing job expected

Customer services

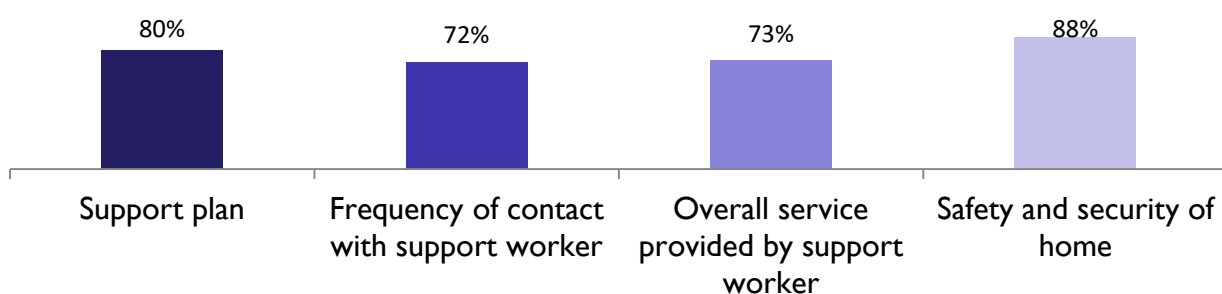
- Around two-thirds of tenants had contacted Taunton Deane with a query in the twelve months prior to the survey (63%).
- Helpfulness of staff was highly praised (83%) by many tenants – although this is a lower rating than in 2011 (89%).
- Similar satisfaction ratings were given for query being answered in a reasonable time (82%); dealing with the query quickly and efficiently (91%).
- Lower ratings were given for ease of contacting the right member of staff (72%) and the final outcome of query (76%).



- The vast majority of tenants are satisfied with the cost of contacting Taunton Deane by telephone (89% - 2% higher than in 2013).

Advice and support

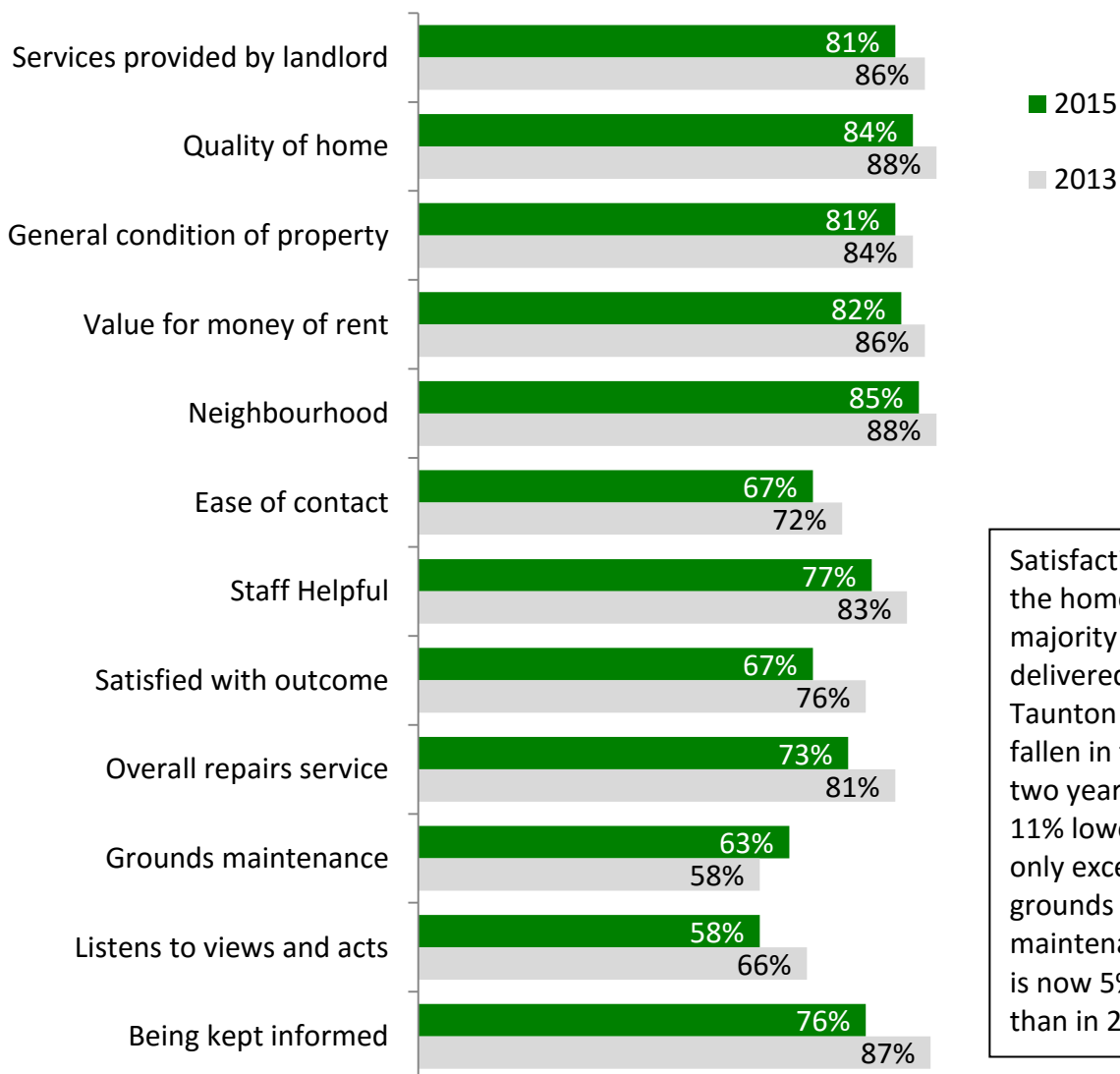
- The majority of tenants are satisfied with the advice and support given by Taunton Deane with regards to claiming the benefits to which they are entitled (77%) and managing finances generally (72%).
- Sheltered housing tenants are highly satisfied with the safety and security of their home (88%) and their support plan (80%).
- Lower ratings were awarded by sheltered housing tenants in respect of frequency of contact with their support worker (72%) and overall service provided by their support worker (73%).



Communication and information

- 76% of tenants felt that the Council is good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a tenant, while 58% of tenants are satisfied that Taunton Deane listens to their views and acts on them.
- Only two-fifths of tenants said that they are aware of Taunton Deane Borough Council's published housing service standards (39%), a fall of 10% since 2013 (49%).
- Over half of Taunton Deane's tenants have access to the internet (57%) – some 10% higher than two years ago.

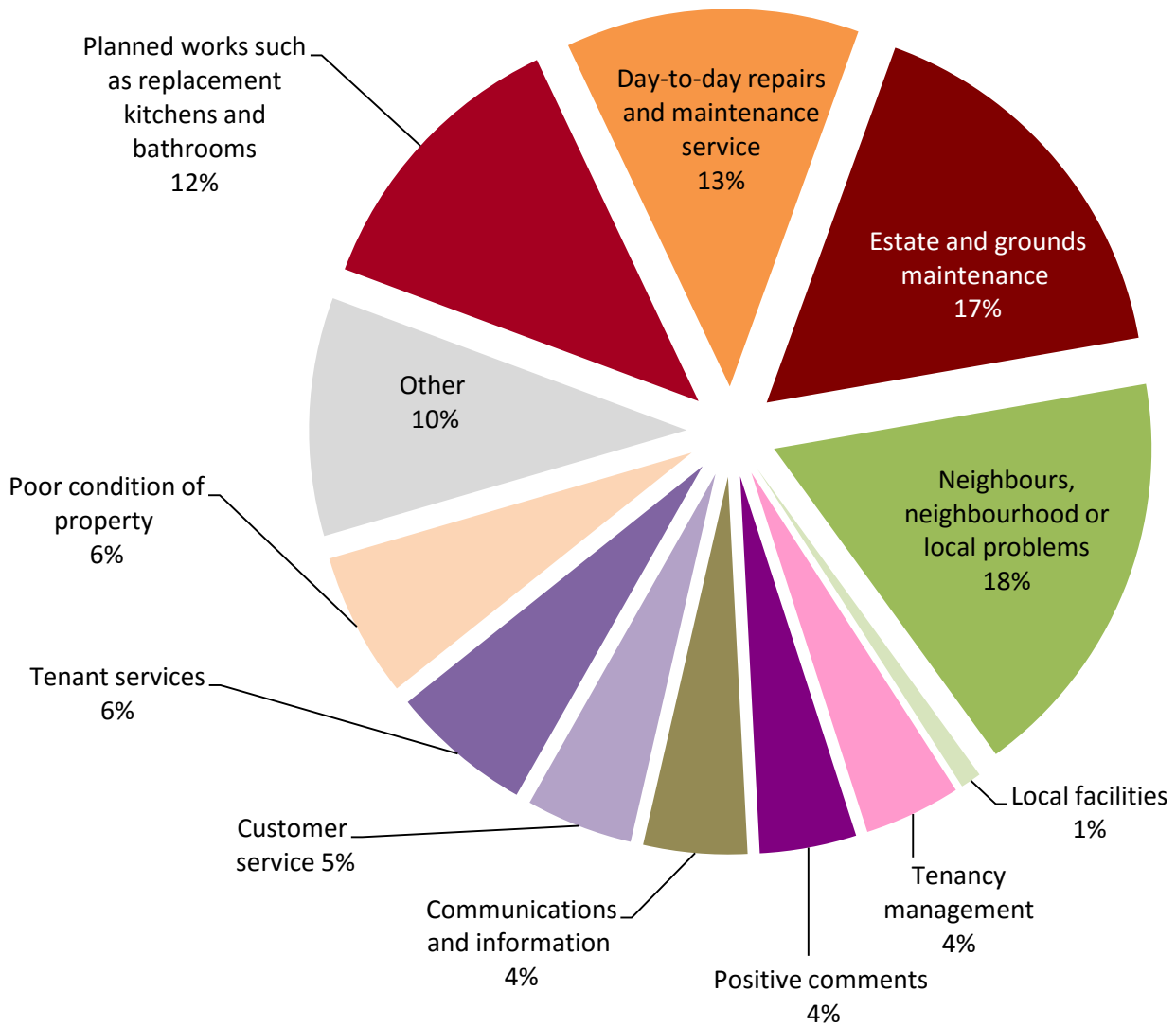
Changing satisfaction



Satisfaction with the home and the majority of services delivered by Taunton Deane has fallen in the last two years (3% to 11% lower). The only exception is grounds maintenance which is now 5% higher than in 2013).

Improving services

We asked “If there was one thing that Taunton Deane Borough Council’s Housing Services could improve, what would they like it to be?” Some 607 tenants wrote comments in the survey about the improvements they would like to see to Taunton Deane’s services.



You say – We do

Carrying out this survey is just part of the part of the work Taunton Deane Borough Council does to involve you in developing services. As well as publishing the results of the survey Taunton Deane plans to put the findings to good use by working with tenants to further improve the services they provide.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 26 October 2015

Building Services Transformation

Joint report of Chris Hall - Assistant Director Operational Delivery & Terry May – Assistant Director Property and Development.

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Beale)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report identifies further improvements being made against the transformation priorities for the Building Service by aligning the work of the Property Services Team and the Building Services DLO.

It is identified that a phased approach to bringing these functions together can make a number of key improvements and meets with the previous Member approvals from the DLO transformation plan.

This report identifies the two areas of Council operation that will combine to deliver a more resilient, transparent and effective service for tenants without any loss of emphasis on other internal areas of service provision.

The recommendations in this report will have no negative impact on the JMASS project and will compliment the work underway with the HRA business plan.

Closer working for these functions will provide a stronger service delivery and greater tenant focus. Phase one of this process is cost neutral to the Council and places no employees “at risk”.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update relevant staff, stakeholders, Tenant Services Management Board and members of a proposed operational change in line management of the DLO Building Service. The change proposed is transfer of the line management of the DLO Building service from the Assistant Director-Operational Delivery, to the Assistant Director-Property and Development.

2. Background

- 2.1 In July 2011 Full Council approved a transformation plan for the entire DLO, this was focused around a number of key priorities that a Member working group supported.
- 2.2 The agreed transformation priorities were:
 - A lean efficient and resilient service, able to respond flexibly to the changing demands of the Council and external clients

- A thriving business, focussed on commercial success
- Excellence in performance management
- Excellent Customer service and quality
- A committed and empowered workforce

2.3 In addition to the agreed priorities a further commitment was made to continuous improvement, this report sets out the latest in this line of improvements. This transfer of line management of the workforce service removes the client and contractor split from the management structure although retains it for the necessary financial accounting processes.

2.4 The combination of client and contractor functions was first trailed within the street and public toilet cleaning processes and has proved to be much more efficient and transparent, whilst these services started at different positions the principles are not dissimilar. In addition, within the wider Social Landlord housing sector there is very much a direction of travel to provide and enhance in house repairs and maintenance services as part of the wider “housing team”.

2.5 Currently the Property Services team act as the client / commissioning body for corporate and housing works. They instruct the DLO to perform works and assess this work upon completion. The Building Service deliver the work commissioned and are paid through a trading account. There are a number of key areas of duplication that provide an opportunity for service improvements to all internal clients. For the purposes of this report an internal client is another service or department of this Council where money paid does not leave the Authority's control.

2.6 With the current segregation of responsibilities, situations can arise where each team's delivery can be directly affected by the others, this can create additional work in seeking instructions or approvals rather than the necessary focus on delivering for the tenants and internal clients. A holistic view to delivering works, resolving issues where they occur, and improving performance measures is needed. Both areas of the business are constraining each other and improvements through a single management approach will improve delivery for our tenants and other clients.

2.6 The DLO often take the brunt of ill feeling when decisions to complete certain tasks are not under their control, equally Property Services frequently receive requests for information about planned or live works that they cannot robustly answer. This change places the decision making and delivery under the same management structure and is the first step to improving performance and knowledge.

2.7 This report is intended to be phase one of a change process that will set a direction of travel for the two services ultimately delivering the following outcomes:

- Ownership of the end to end process for work requests and delivery
- Streamlining the processes in place for commissioning, delivering and financially accounting for these works
- Transparency of responsibilities, performance indicators will no longer be shaded by process and approval difficulties
- Improved live financial costing information for more accurate year end predictions

- 2.8 For some time now the DLO have not been meeting with the key performance indicators set by Housing and TSMB, whilst recent improvements have been made and implementation issues with the Open Contractor system have delayed progression, a further review of these is needed to determine the priorities and if these are affordable.
- 2.9 A recent tenant satisfaction survey has identified a significant downturn in tenant satisfaction across the housing service, which includes services commissioned from the DLO and others, more time is needed to fully understand the cause of this but a single approach to service improvements is considered to be a necessary action to
- 2.10 Whilst the case for doing this is set out above there are a number of key drivers for doing it now, these being:
- To place services together ahead of the review of the HRA business plan and next transformation phase of JMASS
 - To provide opportunities to deliver savings
 - To provide opportunities to redistribute resources
 - To provide a greater customer focus
 - To have greater visibility of service data
 - To reduce complexity and deliver a seamless customer service
 - To have a joined up approach to managing the recent customer satisfaction survey
 - To support better co-ordination and management of statutory compliance matters.
 - One management response to the further development of the Open Contractor IT system.
 - Better opportunities to recruit and retain the right staff in key technical areas.
- 2.11 The DLO's current structure and operation has a number of interdependencies across the services, Appendix 1 identifies some of these larger dependencies and the suggested way forward as part of the first phase.

3. The Change

- 3.1 For phase one of this change the current Building Service structure (Appendix 2) will be placed under the Assistant Director, Property and Development. The new structure is shown at Appendix 3. No further changes in the Building Services or Housing Property teams are being identified at this stage.
- 3.2 All other elements of the business, the interdependencies, and financial controls will remain unchanged at this time.
- 3.3 Phase two or subsequent changes will be considered alongside the HRA Business Plan review, and or, as we head into the transformational stage of the JMASS project over the coming months.
- 3.4 There are no proposed changes to the Business Support Teams or the various cross service licences or contracts at this stage, any benefits that may come from further changes to these will be considered and if appropriate implemented as part of a separate phase.
- 3.5 Informal consultation is underway with the Building Services Manager and wider structure, this will conclude on 12th October. This gives time for any suggestions to

be considered before a transfer of responsibilities on 1st November '15.

4. Finance Comments

- 4.1 This change has no cost associated with it, and operational changes like this require no Members approval.
- 4.2 The Housing Revenue Account must be able to identify the costs associated with the delivery of housing stock repairs and maintenance, and there should be no cross subsidy between the HRA and the General Fund, the operational change identified in this report retains the financial separation of this accounting practice and therefore the proposed change can be supported from a financial perspective.

5. Legal Comments

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this change.

6. HR Implications

- 6.1 Whilst this moves the entire Building Services team it is only the manager of the service that has any line management change. This change will be considered by the UNISON Change Forum and the Tenant Services Management Board. Whilst formal consultation is not required an informal consultation process has been established for a 4 week period starting in 14th September.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

- 7.1 There are no direct links to corporate priorities.

8. Environmental Implications

- 8.1 There are no environmental implications of this change.

9. Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 Any change has inherent risks associated with it however phase one of this process is a simplistic alteration to line management with all other processes remaining in place, it is therefore considered that there are no risk management implications.

10. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 10.1 There are no equality impacts as a result of this change.

11 Recommendations

The Tenant Services Management Board are requested to note this report and are invited to provide comment on its content.

Contact

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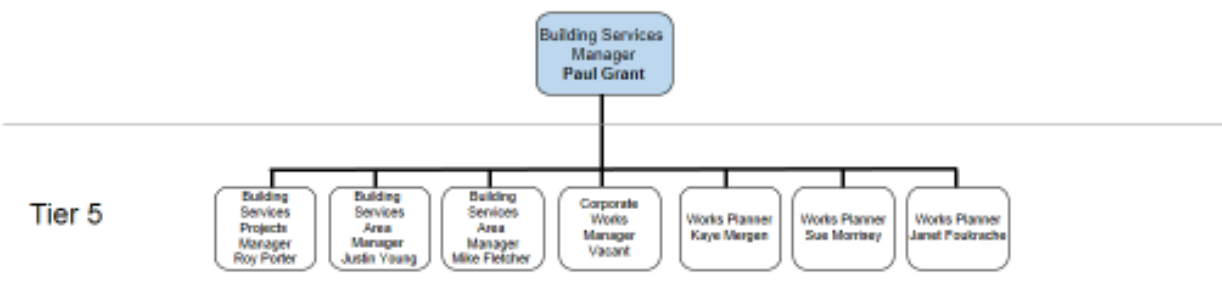
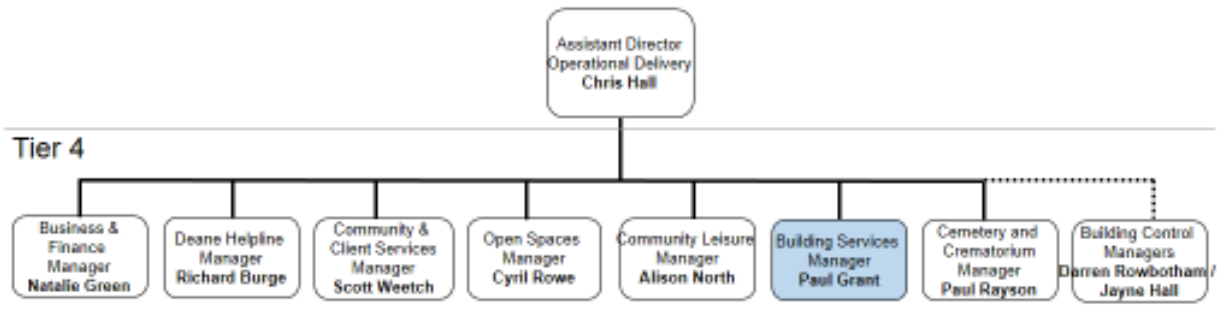
Appendix 1

Interdependencies for consideration

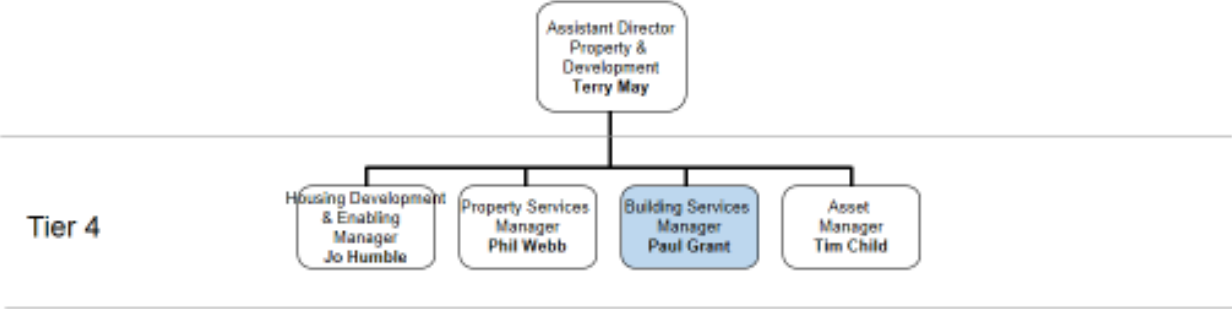
Item	Possible answer	Agreed process for phase 1
Business Support Team	Could leave as is due to the need for local support. Could divide BST employees and move those appropriate to the new structure.	Leave as is
Business and Finance Manager	Difficult to separate responsibilities and then fund from Open Spaces so should stay as a shared cost until transformation has been undertaken. Postholder to continue to report to AD Operational Delivery, but will be required to liaise with AD Property and Development	Leave as is
Payment of salaries – management and support	Move to an HRA cost centre.	Leave as is
Payment of salaries – workforce	Move to an HRA cost centre, or operate a trading account.	Leave in trading account
Accounting for HRA works costs	Fund directly by HRA or account through existing/new trading account.	Leave in trading account
Management of the trading account	Leave all delegations and accounting processes as they are, or hold a separate trading account control by property and development but will need to feed into the wider DLO due to shared functions and financial responsibilities.	Leave all delegations and accounting processes in place
External works income	External income to Building Services, depending on the answer above this could be managed by the HRA and surpluses delivered back to the GF (this is a direct reversal of the current situation but external work is a smaller proportion of work than HRA)	Leave as is
Fleet management	Stay as part of the wider fleet management process with costs apportioned to Building services	Leave as is
Transport Operations Licence	Stay as part of the wider fleet management process with costs apportioned to Building services – CH already looking at opportunities to remove the O-Licence responsibilities.	Leave as is
Accounting for stores stock	Assuming that a works order will still be managed through OC stock and time will be allocated to the client	Leave as is

	code entered in to the job.	
Ownership of OC	This is a shared system with Open Spaces, Stores and Building Services and BST, doesn't seem to matter who owns it so long as someone does.	Leave as is
Ownership of stores	Stores stock is charged with an overhead to cover all stores costs (employees, systems, forklift etc.) Could be moved to HRA as most of the use is by Building Services, could just as easily stay as it is and have stock charged to the individual jobs.	Leave as is
Hazardous waste producers notification	Currently 1 notification is made and paid for all DLO functions	Leave as is
Hazardous waste carriers licence (CBDL65464)	Currently 1 licence operated and paid for covering all TDBC functions	Leave as is
Virridor Waste disposal contract	One contract covering all DLO functions leave as is and continue to distribute the invoices according to the nature of the waste.	Leave as is

Appendix 2



Appendix 3



Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 26 October 2015

Dates of Tenant Services Management Board Meetings 2016

Report of the Tenant Empowerment Manager – Martin Price

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Beale)

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to agree the dates of the Tenant Services Management Board meetings for 2016.

2. Background

The Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) meets on a monthly basis. Members of the public are welcome to attend (although they may be asked to leave a meeting if confidential issues are being discussed). In order to give board members and members of the public plenty of notice it is prudent to set the dates for 2016 in advance. The dates will also be publicised to tenants and leaseholders.

3. Proposed dates for 2016

The proposed dates for 2016 are:

- Monday 25th January 2016
- Thursday 25th February 2016
- Monday 21st March 2016
- Monday 18th April 2016 – usually Annual General Meeting
- Tuesday 17th May 2016
- Monday 27th June 2016
- Monday 25th July 2016
- Monday 15th August 2016
- Tuesday 20th September 2016
- Monday 24th October 2016
- Monday 14th November 2016
- Wednesday 14th December 2016

4. Finance Comments

Not applicable.

5. Legal Comments

There are no legal implications of this report.

6. Links to Corporate Aims

There are no specific links within this report.

7. Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications of this report.

8. Community Safety Implications

There are no community safety implications of this report.

9. Risk Management

Not appropriate to this report.

10. Partnership Implications

There are no partnership implications of this report.

11. Recommendations

1. The Tenant Services Management Board is asked to consider and agree the proposed dates of meetings for 2016 as detailed in this report.

Contact: Martin Price– Tenant Empowerment Manager
Direct Dial No: 01823 356552
[e-mail: m.price@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:m.price@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 26 October 2015 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mr R Balman (Chairman)
Ms M Davis (Vice-Chair)
Mr A Akhigbemen, Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr I Hussey, Mr R Middleton, Ms D Pierowicz, Councillor Bowrah, and Councillor Appleby.

Officers: Shari Hallett (Business Support Lead), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead – Housing Communities), Terry May (Assistant Director – Property & Development), Sophie Trowbridge (Housing Income Officer), James Barrah (Director of Housing & Communities), and Emma Hill (Democratic Services Officer).

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Ms Dorota Pierowicz as the new member of the Tenant Services Management Board.

2. Apologies

Mr K Hellier
Councillor Beale and Warmington.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 14 September 2015 and 13 October 2015 were taken as read and were signed.

4. Public Question Time

No questions received for Public Question Time.

5. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Bowrah declared a personal interest as member of his family were Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants and declared a personal interest as family member had applied to the Council's Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund 'Homeownership' Cash Incentive Scheme.

Councillor Appleby declared a personal interest as Leaseholder of Taunton Deane Borough Council property.

Mr A Akhigbemen, Mr R Balman, Mrs J Bunn, Ms M Davis, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr I Hussey, Ms D Pierowicz, Mr R Middleton declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

6. Report on Fees and Charges 2016/2017

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed fees and charges for Housing and Community Services in 2016/17.

The housing service charged its service users for the services that they used. These charges were set locally each year.

It was proposed to increase fees and charges by applying Retail Price Index (RPI) inflation as at September 2015. The individual fees and charges had been set out in a separate document which accompanied this covering report.

In line with the approved HRA Business Plan, the Fees and Charges for 2016/17 had been increased across the board by 0.8% with the following exceptions:

- Provision of meals at Kilkenny Court would be increased in accordance with the meal service contract.
- Charges for properties not on mains sewer would be increased in line with Wessex Water increases, once known (Wessex Water rates for sewer standing charge per annum and poundage charges were used in the system calculation).

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

- The report mentions 'No exceptions' to the increase but the Grounds Maintenance charges had remained the same?
There were no exceptions to the increase by if you applied 0.8% to the Grounds Maintenance charges (60p), the increase did not make it up to 61p so with rounding up the charge stayed the same.
- Why was RPI being used and not CPI? Was this included in the Business Plan?
The decision to use RPI when calculating service charges came from the Business Plan. The officer said they would investigate why the Council uses RPI and not CPI but CPI was much lower and if the Council used CPI, then the calculations and predictions may not stack up concerning affordability for the Council in the long term.
Currently, it stated in the Business Plan that Service Charges would be calculated using RPI and rent would be calculated using CPI +1% but this had now been overridden but new government policy which stated there would need to be 1% decrease in rents. This would be looked at by the Council later in the year.
- It would be helpful to Members and Tenants an explanation as why the service charge increase and what they were paying for?
Officers could review the letter that would go out to Tenants and see if this could be included if not it could be included in more detail in the Frequently Asked Questions information sheet that went out with the letter.
- Was the 0.8% increase on service charges adequate to cover the Council additional costs?
Probably not and I am unable to give the Board details regarding each individual service charge but this was what the Council was tied into for the moment. This would be looked in detail during the Business Plan review project.
- Who decided that the Council should use the 0.8%?
The percentage was published by the government on monthly basis. This figure was verified by the Council's accountants.
- Looking at the increases to properties not on mains sewer now being brought in

line with Wessex Water Charges. Please could you explain what this means?
This meant any Council properties that were not on mains sewer and therefore pay service charges to the Council not Wessex Water would see an increase in charges to come in line with Wessex Water charges. The Council had a specific calculation done by our computer systems at the same rate as Wessex Water.

Resolved that the Officer's report be noted and made comment on the proposed fees and charges for 2016/17 as set out in this report.

7. Report on Any Day Direct Debits for Payment of Housing Rent

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed alterations to the available dates the Council could offer Tenants to pay their rent via Direct Debit.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) relied upon prompt payment of rental income due. Currently a number of payment methods included direct debit were offered to tenants to allow them to pay rent. With the introduction of universal credit, where tenants would receive all benefit monies, which included rent directly, it was imperative that Taunton Deane Borough Council could offer payment methods that would allow payment of rent as soon as funds become available to the tenant.

It was proposed that from the 1 November, Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) Housing Department would be offering tenants the ability to pay rent by direct debit weekly (collected on a Friday), fortnightly (collected on Monday), or any day of the month between 1-28. Other methods of payment such as standing order, would remain but this allowed the Council to offer more flexible payments and begin to respond to the changes that would result from Universal Credit.

At present, only three methods of direct debit payment were offered to TDBC tenants, monthly payment on the 3rd of the month, monthly payment on the 20th of the month, fortnightly payments on the Monday of each fortnight. This did not allow for direct debit payments to be made on any day of the month. Benefit payments might be made on any day of the month with the introduction of Universal Credit.

Weekly direct debit collections, and direct debit collections on the 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9, 10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28 of the month would be newly set up and available from 1st November 2015.

If the board supported officer's recommendations, the Council proposed to publish an article in the tenants' newsletter. The Council would also mail all tenants to offer them the opportunity to set up a new direct debit, as well as publishing details on the screens in reception.

In order to set up the new collections it had been necessary to temporarily cover the direct debit functions with additional capacity at grade D (a second temporary Income Assistant) so that the Income Officer could undertake the set up work. This had been funded from previous year underspends and funding ceases at the end of March 2016. It was hoped that the day to day running of the additional services could be accommodated through the existing Income Officer and Income Assistant posts but workloads would be continually assessed.

Each method of payment incurs banking costs for the council per transaction (excluding staff time). Current bank charging information indicated that Post Office

payments cost 58p per transaction whilst direct debits cost less than 10p per transaction (both figures exclude any staffing time). Direct debits therefore ensured that the council pay less transaction charges and therefore more rental income was retained by the council.

Every day Direct Debits were crucial to ensure tenants could pay their rent as soon as their Universal Credit, salary, or other source of income was available. It was hoped that this would limit an increase in arrears on the introduction of Universal Credit, but would also help tenants not receiving Universal Credit to manage their finances.

This proposal could be funded from existing resources and so would not have an impact on the overall position of the HRA.

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

- Looking at 3.3 of the report, what was special about 20th as it was missing from the list of dates?
The list of dates at 3.3 of the reports was those dates which would include in the available dates the Council could offer. The excluded dates from the list were the current available dates, which would remain available to Tenants.
- Had officer thought about including Bank Transfer through the use of app on their phones as a way for Tenants to pay their rent and this was quicker method and the cost for each payment would be negligible?
Tenants can pay by standing order and pay over the phone. If tenants set the Council up as Payee on their bill payment with their account, they can complete Bank Transfers like that. The Council had looked into having their app to allow Tenants to pay their rent etc via their phones but this would require some major IT improvements and at the moment it was a case of prioritising those improvements.
- I would welcome this improvement allowing the public to have more control over what day of the month their payments need to be made. Not everyone's wages were paid into their accounts on 30th or 31st of the month.
- Looking at 4.1 regarding the temporary Income Assistant, what was meant by temporary three, six or twelve months?
Temporary Income Assistant since February. There was a limited pot of money for this and the Housing Income department had been watching the budget carefully and after being reviewed this member of staff had since agreed to go part time going forward. This was dependant on demand for changing of direct debits.
- Could the officer, come back to the Board and provide members with an update report on if there was any increase in the number of payments by direct debit and how much money we had saved because of any increase?
Officer were happy to do this.
- I pay my rent to the Council by Direct Debit and every some many months I receive a paper statement from the Council, why can't this be emailed to Tenants as well or instead?
Officer was going to take this suggestion and look into it. This was a perfectly reasonable request but officers needed to check to see if the computer software which produces the statements could understand the difference between the two requests and still produce paper statements as well as emailing tenants. The officer would report back to the Board after doing some investigation into this.

Resolved that:-

1. The Board noted the Officer's Report.
2. To recommend the approval of the introduction of the any day direct debits.

8. Tenant and Leaseholders Satisfaction Survey 2015

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the Tenant and Leaseholders Satisfaction Survey 2015 reported its findings in September 2015.

Tenant Services Management Board members were provided with a summary of the results of the survey.

Tenant Services Management Board members would be receiving a further report from managers, over the coming months, containing more details of the plan of activities in response to the key findings raised within the survey.

Housing and Community Services had been working with an independent organisation since 2006 to measure and understand levels of tenant and leaseholder satisfaction with its housing and community services. The bi-annual survey helped to inform decision making and changes to service delivery by identified key issues and actions for improvement. The satisfaction measurements also help to communicate and engage with tenants and leaseholders on performance.

A total of 2851 surveys were sent out to tenants and leaseholders, achieving a 46% response rate (1300 surveys completed and returned).

The results of the survey were mixed with some parts of our services clearly on the right track and showing improvement, whilst other parts showing relatively little change since the 2013 survey and then clearly pointing towards the need for much deeper analysis and action planning.

Over the coming weeks and months managers within Housing and Communities would be meeting to assess, in more detail, the survey results and coming forward with a plan of activities in response to the key issues.

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

- Members thanked officer for a good report. Tenants were reporting to Board Members that things had improved since the introduction of the new computer system and the underlying issues had been resolved. The feedback being received was positive.
- Asked if Officers could provide Board Members with information regarding Tenants on new housing estates and what their satisfaction was regarding parking and any issues they were reporting?
There were planning conditions included in the planning applications process regarding the provision of car parking for properties but officers would get back to Members on this topic.
- The underlying feature of any business was its workforce. Looking at the survey results for Staff Helpfulness, this appeared to have dipped considerably? What would Managers and the Council going to do to improve this?

Concerning the new Open Contractor IT system, had moved the officers from paper to electronic. A temporary Manager had been appointed to monitor its performance and improve that performance.

Regarding the concerns over the results of Staff Helpfulness. This had to be taken in a wider context, the Council and officer had been through challenges and busy period regarding the introduction of One Team working and the merging of Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council. Looking much further afield, the ever increasing of work load and pressure of budgets. This combination of factors had effected staff morale. Also there were further modernisations to services and more pressure in the Councils future with shrinking budgets.

- The data and figures from this survey were bad and the Council needed to stop making excuses and look at making real improvements to the problem areas.
- This had been requested before but with Grounds Maintenance, could the cut grass be collected afterwards. It looks very untidy and gets everywhere.
- Where the Council still having problems with Open Contractor or had they been resolved?

There had been problem with OC, the product didn't sit together as should with existing systems.

Recently, there had been less failure and with an increased number of PDAs and staff trained to use them. The Council had recently run another training session on the use of PDAs.

The Council had initially received increased pressure to 'Go Live' with Open Contractor before we felt we should.

Capita would be returning to look at the ongoing issues concerning OC and see them for themselves.

The TD Housing department had contacted other Local Authority Housing departments and we had discovered they had similar issues with OC to TDBC.

- A Boards Member had completed some research into other Local Authorities using Open Contractor (OC) and there Tenant Satisfaction had increased and improved after only six months.
- Board raised concerns and issues regarding the parking situation on their street. Previously there had been no issue but since the arrival of the newest residents with four vehicles, parking for all residents had become difficult.

Resolved that the Officer's report be noted and made comment on the key results of the survey.

9. Report on Building Services Transformation

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the identified further improvements being made against the transformation priorities for the Building Service by aligning the work of the Property Services Team and the Building Services DLO.

It was identified that a phased approach to bringing these functions together could make a number of key improvements and meets with the previous Member approvals from the DLO transformation plan.

This report identified the two areas of Council operation that would combine to deliver a more resilient, transparent and effective service for tenants without any loss of emphasis on other internal areas of service provision.

Closer working for these functions would provide a stronger service delivery and greater tenant focus. Phase one of this process was cost neutral to the Council and placed no employees “at risk”.

The purpose of the report was to update relevant staff, stakeholders, Tenant Services Management Board and members of a proposed operational change in line management of the DLO Building Service. The change proposed was transfer of the line management of the DLO Building service from the Assistant Director-Operational Delivery, to the Assistant Director-Property and Development.

In addition to the agreed priorities a further commitment was made to continuous improvement, this report sets out the latest in this line of improvements. This transfer of line management of the workforce service removed the client and contractor split from the management structure although retains it for the necessary financial accounting processes.

The combination of client and contractor functions was first trailed within the street and public toilet cleaning processes and had proved to be much more efficient and transparent, whilst these services started at different positions the principles were not dissimilar. In addition, within the wider Social Landlord housing sector there is very much a direction of travel to provide and enhance in house repairs and maintenance services as part of the wider “housing team”.

The Building Service deliver the work commissioned and were paid through a trading account. There were a number of key areas of duplication that provide an opportunity for service improvements to all internal clients. For the purposes of this report an internal client was another service or department of this Council where money paid did not leave the Authority’s control.

With the current segregation of responsibilities, situations could arise where each team’s delivery could be directly affected by the others, this could create additional work in seeking instructions or approvals rather than the necessary focus on delivering for the tenants and internal clients. A holistic view to delivering works, resolving issues where they occur, and improving performance measures was needed.

For some time now the DLO had not been meeting with the key performance indicators set by Housing and TSMB, whilst recent improvements had been made and implementation issues with the Open Contractor system had delayed progression, a further review of these was needed to determine the priorities and if these were affordable.

For phase one of this change the current Building Service structure would be placed under the Assistant Director, Property and Development. No further changes in the Building Services or Housing Property teams were being identified at this stage. All other elements of the business, the interdependencies, and financial controls would remain unchanged at this time

Phase two or subsequent changes would be considered alongside the HRA Business Plan review, and or, as we head into the transformational stage of the JMASS project over the coming months.

There were no proposed changes to the Business Support Teams or the various cross service licences or contracts at this stage, any benefits that may come from further

changes to these would be considered and if appropriate implemented as part of a separate phase.

Informal consultation was underway with the Building Services Manager and wider structure, this would conclude on 12th October. This gave time for any suggestions to be considered before a transfer of responsibilities on 1st November '15.

Resolved that the Officer's report be noted and made comment on the proposed Building Services Transformation.

10. Report on Dates of Tenant Services Management Board Meetings 2016

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the dates of the Tenant Services Management Board meetings for 2016.

The proposed meeting dates for 2016 were as follows:

- Monday 25th January 2016
- Thursday 25th February 2016
- Monday 21st March 2016
- Monday 18th April 2016 – usually Annual General Meeting
- Tuesday 17th May 2016
- Monday 27th June 2016
- Monday 25th July 2016
- Monday 15th August 2016
- Tuesday 20th September 2016
- Monday 24th October 2016
- Monday 14th November 2016
- Wednesday 14th December 2016

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

- Two Board Members stated that they would be unable to attend meeting if they were on a Tuesday and or Wednesday.

Resolved to agree the proposed dates of meetings for 2016 as detailed in the officer's report.

11. AOB

Members of the Committee asked the following question of the officers present after the main agenda items had been discussed:

- Members enquired about officers progress in organising a date for Board Members to visit SCC regarding the Council relocation project to County Hall. *Tenant Empowerment Manager informed the Board that the Relocation Project Manager was awaiting more information and dates from Somerset County Council (SCC).*
- Members raised concerns of the progress and increasing delay of the Creechbarrow Road Development? Could the officer provide a brief update?

Director for Housing and Communities informed the Board that officers were doing work to find out the causes and reasons for the increasing delay on the site.

(The meeting ended at 19.20pm)