

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 18 March 2013 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House Taunton.

Present: Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chair), Mrs J Bunn, Mrs E Drage, Mr M Edwards, Mr I Gould, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr R Middleton Mrs T Urquhart, Councillor Bowrah and Councillor Brooks.

Officers: Shari Hallett (Health and Housing Business Support Lead), Chris Hall (Commercial and Community Services Manager), Steve Esau (Property Manager; Maintenance), Phil Webb (Housing Manager; Property Services), Steven Clarke (Tenant Services Development Officer), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), James Barrah (Health and Housing Manager), Steve Major (Housing Development Project Lead) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

Others: Councillors Jane Warmington. Graham Vickery from Halcon North Tenants & Residents Association Nicholas Taylor

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

Mr K Hellier and Mr D Galpin

2. Public Question Time

Resident of Kilkenny Court expressed their concerns at the state of communal bathrooms as well as other communal areas that had clearly fallen into disrepair and the community feel that these areas need some attention. The guttering around the outside was also broken and along with the continual problems with the lift.

The Property Manager for Maintenance said that he would arrange for himself and a surveyor to set up a meeting and inspect these issues. Concerning the lift, the Council were aware of the continual problems and were investigating the financial aspect of replacing it.

Committee Member also a resident of Kilkenny Court enquired whether or not the Council had given out personal details of tenants or residents to private companies. This was in relation to difficulties had when trying to change energy suppliers after recently moving into the Court and also after being contacted by the current supplier of the flat with his knowledge.

The Health and Housing Manager suggested that they discuss this matter away the Board meeting.

3. Repairs Review 2012 – 2013 Report.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the response to repairs response rates being off target within the Health and Housing scorecard, the Health and Housing Manager requested a review of repairs.

Actions Taken to Date



- Flow chart produced to understand the repairs process.
- ALHCO separately had updated the Tenant Services Management Board on two occasions.
- Two meetings held with DLO to jointly discuss how to improve performance.
- There had been an 8% increase in DLO job tickets issued to beginning of Feb 2013 and 6% increase in overall contractor tickets which had increased pressure.
- A new report had been created to produce the completed jobs figures and we had reviewed all open tickets and closed those that were mistakenly left open.


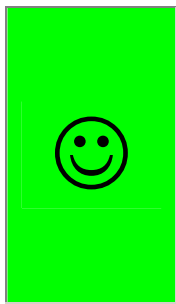
Other actions taken to date in relation to changes:-

- All DLO tradesmen now telephone each job before attending; Tenant's telephone number was flagged on the tickets.
- Outstanding job report produced for all contractors and results sent to the Property Manager (Maintenance).
- DLO produces weekly open ticket report to analyse outstanding jobs.
- The completed job report was created to allow monthly monitoring of the statistics.
- IBTSU (I have been to see you) process used when a tenant was out had changed, jobs were now closed on second aborted visit where there had been no one home and answering the telephone on two occasions.
- Discussions with DLO glazing contractor have begun and hope to be able to email tickets to them.
- The DLO was investigating capacity issues.
- Tickets which were complete and had remained unclosed and now had been closed.

The method of reporting statistics had been jointly reviewed and the data report was flawed. Firstly, the report included all DLO services for example ground maintenance; this had the effect of keeping tickets open and making statistics appear worse. Other refinements need to be made e.g. due to constraints between computer systems emergency or out of hour job tickets would show as not being completed on time. To rectify the effect of this in the performance figures to date, we were manually reviewing all of these job tickets. This problem would resolve itself when the "Cosy" computer software was replaced but in the meantime we would need to change the way we enter retrospective tickets to give a more accurate reflection of performance.

The improvement in statistics shown below: (figures are for Quarters 1 to 3 2012/13)

<p>10. Repairs & Maintenance Completion of repairs within priority target times: Emergency (within 24 hours) Target =98%</p>		<p>Was 92.01% Now 92.07% We are ranked 253 out of 272 for all providers and 36 out of 41 for all councils who own stock.</p>
<p>11. Repairs & Maintenance Completion of repairs within priority target times:</p>		<p>Was 65.52% Now 83.92% and we are ranked 245 out of 260 for all</p>

Urgent (within 3 working days) Target =94%		providers and 36 out of 41 for all councils who own stock.
12. Repairs & Maintenance Completion of repairs within priority target times: Non Urgent (up to 28 days) Target =85%		Was 80.62% Now 90.02% and we are ranked 231 out of 264 for all providers and 31 out of 40 for all councils who own stock. (Changed from Red to Green)

NB: The effect of not being able to demonstrate completion of retrospective tickets on time was still a factor within these figures.

There was still further work to do to understand and improve our repairs performance figures but work had begun and would continue.

The following points were covered during the brief update of the Commercial and Community Services Manager;

- There had been a new focus on priority reports, which could now be drawn from Academy instead of the COSY system.
- Reported problems with return around times for glaziers. This was originally completed by trained DLO workers during the days of single glazed windows but the current double glazed windows must be completed by contractor and was not possible to turn around within seven days. New timescales consist on temporary plastic pane within 24 hours and then 28 days to replace.
- Currently, there were nine vacancies at the DLO. With the first phase of internal advertisement completed only five applicants so far.
- With an increased level of work due to reduced number of staff, timescales had been affected.
- There had been successful tender for the new software including hand held computers. The completion timescale could be up to nine months for full installation. Contract had been awarded but not signed.

During the discussion of this item, board members and the public made the following comments and asked questions: - (*Responses shown in italics*)

- For clarification, do you they need to come and measure each window requiring replacing or could they not keep a template for roads or areas of houses? *Each window must be individually measured in case of movement within houses. Each window can be different by millimetres or centimetres.*
- A Committee Member had been notified of a requirement to change a single glazed window in the house but not date was given and this was months ago. *It depends whether it was a window refresh changing from single to double or a broken window replacement as to which department would be dealing with it but there was a contract for refresh windows as well as broken window replacement.*
- It used to be that the Council a policy that they didn't remove and change the window during the winter months (with exception to broken windows), what had happened to this?

The Council currently had a number of different contracts running all best to be done during the warmer months and not enough to months to complete all so some windows had to be refreshed during the colder months.

- Plastic Window Pane replacement over broken windows instead of wooden boarding was step in the right direction. Boarding makes estate and community look ugly.
- *The Procurement processes was lengthy and had limits so the Council were trying wherever possible to keep the work in-house.*
- After the Officer's review of the repairs figures, they appear to be more accurate and improving, which was re-assuring but the figures for emergency repairs still gives the Board concerns.

The Council were still getting problems with retrospective tickets being entered after emergency call-outs over the weekend. This was the next task on the list to sort out so they wouldn't effect the next quarter and would be more accurate.

- With the introduction of PDA's, how would that affect data transfer? Would it cause problems?

The Council had been told the data transfer between PDA's and back office would be seamless due to the company already providing the Council back office software.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

4. Gas and Other Heating Quarterly Monitoring Report

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the report and annex had been produced to give members monitoring information on the performance of the servicing and repair contract with ALHCO.

This report was for Quarter three showing performance data; in addition the report highlights issues with the contract and improvements being made. TDBC had a responsibility as a landlord to ensure that all rented properties had a valid Gas Safety Certificate; an annual gas safety check had to be carried out. In addition the contractor was responsible for the servicing of solid fuel and oil appliances together with checking electric storage heaters, servicing of extract fans, smoke detectors and breakdown repairs.

At the end of Quarter three we had 72 properties without a valid Cp12 Certificate, 50 properties attributed to being lost off the ALHCO's Aero mark IT System following the change over from Scotland to Bristol at the end of December. At the time 45 properties had been revisited, the 5 remaining properties which we had not been able to gain access. These properties had been included on the March Hit list to gain access. These visits take place from 26 to 28 March. The remaining 22 were late services all of which had valid certificates.

A summary of additional concerning Reactive Maintenance for Quarter Three:

- KPI figures were showing below target in all areas in Quarter Three
- One of the problems was the manual handling of data back from the contractor
- Also the number of different appliance types a total of 144 making it difficult for the contractor to achieve a first time fix
- The void levels had been above average for Quarter three.

- The work ALHCO had to do was been carried out on time but this had do with a number of installations where systems had not passed the gas safety inspection.
- A third party organisation called Quarter Gas to carry independent audit of ALHCO's work. They carried out audits in the last quarter, whilst there were no serious issues.

There were still a number of issues and problems that the Council and ALCHO were working together to resolve. Some of these can be resolved in the short term others would take longer particularly around data transfer, which cannot fully be resolved until we had automated links between academy and aero mark. Below were a number of actions and improvements that are being carried out:

- Weekly Operational meetings.
- Weekly monitoring information and data from Aero mark.
- Gas Officer attending Bristol Call Centre monthly to discuss and resolve issues with the Call Centre Manager.
- South West Audit Partnership was carrying out an audit of Gas Servicing and Maintenance Management. We were hoping to see the results in April. Any actions or recommendations would then be put into an action plan.
- Working with Alhco, Taunton Deane Borough Council's Finance and Information Technology to explore interfacing between the two systems.

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

Currently, the revenue surrounding Scrap Metal stands at £7,500 but there had been problems around transferring of money. But the estimated total at the End of Year looks to be around £10,000. This would be going to the HRA.

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

- Could the Council consider standardising system around the variety of appliances?
The initial work with ALCHO around the discontinuation of parts had helped with the current five year replacement program.
- The replacement of back to back boiler, could this include heaters?
The Council were still installing heaters but it required a letter from a Doctor stating they require instant heat in the form of electric fire.
- Was the Council considering Carbon Monoxide detectors for all open flu appliances?
The Council would be looking into this.
- Concerns rose over numbers of jobs cancelled (78), although percentages dropped off rapidly later in the Quarter four.
The Council would be working with ALCHO to bring them up.
- Council data about individual properties needs to be reviewed as Board Member had been contacted about having their Gas Boiler serviced but they had a Rayburn.
There problems around data for the Council and ALCHO. With the new Software and PDA system, the majority of these would be solved.
- Concerns rose over the remaining outstanding CP12 within Tenant houses. Couldn't the Council gain access with out permission?

The Council cannot just gain access to the property. We must give notice of a minimum of 24 hours but the entire process starts with plenty of time before the current certificate expires.

Access without permission would need to be an emergency. The Council had a strict procedure for all issues.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

5. Contracts Specifications Report

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the start new contracts for the replacement of timber fascias and soffits with UPVC, and new heating installations using air source heat pumps such as:

- Air source Heat Pumps and Cylinders
- White plastic rainwater installation
- Radiators and Valves

Members were previously briefed of the planned Capital workload for 2013/14 and budgets had now been confirmed; the Housing Capital budget being in the sum of £7.7 Million.

Fascias and Soffits

In order to be able to properly deliver the works necessary within the HRA 30 year Business Plan it was essential Housing Property Services prepare a number of contracts within the next six months. This would ensure that arrangements were in place to cover all the eventualities for planned and responsive work to be covered.

The first in this line of contracts was for the replacement of existing fascias and soffits to roofs with UPVC cladding. This work would originally been part of our planned external repairs and redecoration works but it had not been part of it for the last five years. Access to high level within those contracts was inordinately expensive for the volume of work that was to be done and as savings would be needed at the time to afford Decent Homes work. It was decided to postpone this work until such time as a full programme could be devised. In the meantime, if roofing work had been carried out then we would replace fascias and soffits as part of that work. We were now in a position where fascias and soffits would be programmed as a stand-alone contract.

This year's contract was a trial project on one type of gutter system (concealed) and was being part funded by budget slipping from 2012/13 into the New Year. We shall take what we learn from this one type of guttering and expand it into a longer term contract later in 2013/14.

Houses

The houses had been described in location and by type. Each house was a complete installation with components described for each roof slope or elevation. The "Total" figure was the number of that type of house in that location. Downpipes were replaced in the existing positions.

Flats

The blocks of flats had been described as a single installation to be replaced in totality, with downpipes replaced in the same position as existing.

Maintenance, defects liability and servicing

The air source heat pump equipment was supplied through the Advantage South-West procurement arrangement with a direct supply contract between the contractor and Daikin. The Daikin equipment was provided with a five year manufacturer's warranty.

The Contractor would accept a 12 months defects liability period under the minor works contract with Taunton Deane Borough Council

The Contractor would enter into a servicing Contract with Taunton Deane Borough Council as described herein for both previous installations and the works currently being tendered for.

Taunton Deane Borough Council Tenants

The Contractor would be required to liaise with the tenant in terms of the design and installation of the Daikin system and prior to the handover, instruct the tenant in the use of the equipment and provide the tenant with the operating hand book.

It was intended that the void properties would be added into this contract and the Contractor would be required to return to the property to instruct the new tenant in the use of the equipment as described above at no additional cost.

The individual property design was to be achieved with discussion with the resident and due regard to the resident's possessions and furniture layout.

Each individual property design was to be approved by the Supervising Officer before implementation.

The following design criteria were to be adopted in respect of each individual property. Where a property was presented when these design criteria were not met, the property was to be drawn to the attention of the Supervising Officer.

1. External walls to be insulated cavity walls with facing brick external skin and block work inner skin.
2. Windows to be UPVC double glazed
3. Roofs to be insulated to a minimum thickness of 200mm

Consideration was to be given to the resident's particular usage of the property.

Where necessary, consideration was to be given to the layout of the garden and access to the building, including both front and rear doors, and where re-design of the pathways to accommodate both the unit and its drip tray arrangements was required, this was to be implemented with the submitted design.

We had a current contract with Otter Heating Services who were continuing to install until such time as the new contract was in place; this was likely to be late spring time.

A consistent problem was that not all tenants that we offer it to actually welcome it and although the Council had a list of prospective addresses for installation, they were met

with fair amount of resistance. We were visiting tenants in advance of the works now in an attempt to convince them of the benefits available.

This work was necessary to be able to deliver the Medium-Term Capital Programme and the HRA 30 year Business Plan.

This work would feed into “Quality Sustainable Growth and Development” and in addition would help to deliver the HRA 30 year Business Plan.

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

- What would do about those Tenants who refuse the installation of new systems?
Installation plans based around life of heating systems. Tenants would refuse installation for many reasons but Council would have to accept and wait until property becomes available.
- Would the Council be tackling Night Storage Heaters?
The Council would be tackling this and easily programmable systems installed where no gas was available.
- Could the Council look into sustainable and alternative heating sources with increasing gas prices? And would be Tenants be allowed to choose what heating sources would be installed into the property?
*The Council were investigating and making sure the alternatives were future proof.
The Tenants preferences would be taken into account but there were many factors that the Council were required to take into account.*

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer’s report.

6. Welfare Reform Strategy Update Report

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the details of a new Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan that aims to help with mitigating the impact of welfare reform on Taunton Deane Borough Council’s housing service and its tenants.

The action plan had been developed alongside the strategy and pulls together into one plan objectives and activities on benefits and money advice, financial inclusion and affordable warmth.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 would be enacted on the 1st April 2013. The four major changes that were taking place:

- Under Occupation (bedroom tax)
- Benefit Cap
- Non Dependant Deductions
- Universal Credits

The key parts of the three year Housing Services Welfare Reform Strategy was:

- The strategic vision;
- The strategic objectives; and

- The priorities for action.

Details of Housing Services welfare Reform Strategy Action Plan were presented to the Board Members along with this report.

Of the 500 affected people within Taunton Deane 283 had been visited by Housing Officers so far. These visited were to establish their position and advise them of their options.

Feedback had been obtained from tenants and members of the Tenants' Forum.

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

- Concerns raised the use of direct debits within the Welfare Reform and Benefits if these benefits fail to make it into bank accounts on time, then bill direct debits would fail and people would be charged.
When Universal Credit starts everyone would go to electronic payment but Somerset Savings and Loan run a Jam Jar accounts but the Council would be giving them options but not forcing them.
- Had rent arrears increased? How would people cope from receiving money weekly to monthly? What about those people who was not IT savvy?
There had been an 11% increase in rent arrears. There would be a transitional grant to those changing from Benefits to Universal Credit. There would a post put into place to assist with this change.
- Had the Council contacted any Local Authorities that didn't retain any housing stock to see in regards to Welfare Reform?
The Council had contact other Local Authorities and were doing similar breakdown.
- Did the figures for downsizing and upsizing match? 516 people affected.
40 People wanting to downsize and these were encouraged to mutually exchange but there would enough one and two bedroom houses or stock.
- Did our plans for house building match our demographic need? What would happen to those wanting to downsize but there wasn't the stock to do so?
The new build size would be mix of house sizes. This would make for a better community. These would qualify for the discretionary housing payments to help.
- Advertise through 'Tenants Talk'. Pull on the heart strings around people needing to move due to over crowding and encourage those living in houses to big for them. Sort of Peer pressure.
- The Council need to help people under the pressures on Council Housing Stock.
Not all vacant or available properties were advertised on Homefinder, only the majority. There were some exclusions i.e. direct matches. These maybe families suffering or receiving violence towards them.

Resolved that the:-

1. The officer's report was noted.
2. The Board Members supported the recommendation for approving the new Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan to Executive Councillor Jean Adkins.

7. Report on Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day and Tenant Services Management Board Annual General Meeting.

The Tenant Services Development Officer gave a short verbal update confirming that the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day would be held on 15th April at Somerset County Cricket Ground starting 10:00am running until 5:00pm and also the Tenant Services Management Annual General Meeting would be on the same day in The Long Room at 3:30pm.

The Tenant Services Development Officer mentioned that the Open Day would require a number of meeters and greeters and the majority of the Member made known they would be available to help at some during the day.

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

- It was requested that a new batch of Board Member name badges be ordered for the event as some Members had them and some did not.
Officers said they would order those for on the day.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

8. Verbal Update on Creechbarrow Road Development Project.

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update on the Creechbarrow Road Development Project. Firstly, the Health and Housing Manager introduced the new Housing Development Project Lead to the Board Members.

The following points were covered during the brief verbal update of the Health and Housing Manager;

- The Council had received the first acceptants for moving from Creechbarrow Residents.
- The Buy Back process had now started.
- The Council had started a cycle of fortnightly meetings with at least 50 actions taken away for each meeting.
- There had been continual changes to the development project design. During the pre-planning meeting had brought up more changes. An up to date version would be brought to the Board Members soon.
- The Officers stated there was still a lot to do.
- There would be two consultation events:
 - 9 April 2013 from 4:00pm until 7:00pm at Baptist Church in Halcon.
 - 10 April 2013 from 4:00pm until 7:00pm at Deane House
- If the consultation dates were not convenient, individual session can be arranged.
- The Council was up to date with all its permissions in regards to the project. The next decision would be going to Full Council in July.

The officer detailed the project roles of officer within Taunton Deane for the development project:

- Financial Element – Lucy Clothier

- Liaison Element – Rosie Reed
- Communication & Consultation – James Barrah & Rosie Reed
- Open Space Element – Debbie Arscott
- Legal Element – Nicola Cooper

The Council was looking at its work stream around how the Council would let the properties on the new development:

- Looking wider for those overcrowded within the Halcon area.
- Effective letting for the development site.

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

- Board Member asked for clarification in relation to the consultation event on 9 April, was this open to all?
The consultation event was open to all, both residents of Creechbarrow Road as well as wider Halcon Community.
- What were the Council doing about the existing garages on the Creechbarrow Road Development?
The garages within the Knightstone section of development had been done already but those within the Taunton Deane section still to be done.
- What was the risk of RTB for the larger properties? Could the Council index them?
That is risk for all the houses but there were restrictions to this brought to the Board at a previous report. The officers would look into indexing the new houses. The government were actively encouraging RTB.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

(The meeting ended at 8.00pm)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 15 April 2013 at 3:30pm in The Long Room, Somerset County Cricket Ground, Taunton.

Present: Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chair),
Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Gaplin, Mr I Gould, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr R Middleton, Mrs T Urquhart, Councillor Bowrah and Councillor Brooks

Officers: James Barra (Health and Housing Manager), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Paul Hadley (Housing Manager; Lettings and Anti-social Behaviour), Phil Webb (Housing Manager; Property Services), Stephen Major (Housing Development Project Lead) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

Others: Councillors Jane Warmington.

(The meeting commenced at 3.30pm)

1. Introduction.

The Chair welcomed all Board Members and Tenants to the meeting, which was the third Annual General Meeting.

2. Apologies

Mr M Edwards, Mrs E Drage and Mr K Hellier

3. Public Question Time

A member of the public asked if the Board had a full complement of Members for the forthcoming year as there appeared to be several absences

Tenant Empowerment Manager confirmed that the Tenant Services Management Board had a full complement of Board Members. The absences of Members had been confirmed through their apologies.

4. Tenant Services Management Board 2012/13

The Chair of Tenant Services Management Board gave a verbal update welcoming those present to the third Annual General Meeting and reflected on some of the Board's work over the past year.

The board had seen a lot of change over the last 12 months which reflects not only its role but also the changes that were happening in the world of social housing as a whole and more specifically in Taunton Deane.

The following was a summary of the Chairman's reflection of the Board's activity over the past 12 months:

- 2012 marked the first election of the tenant board members, a historic event as for the first time every tenant in the borough had a vote and had the opportunity to choose who they wanted to represent them and represent their interests.
- This time last year, first discussions relating to the Council's plans to start building houses again after a gap of many years. Much had happened to move this forward over the last 12 months including the proposal to redevelop a large part of Halcon with approximately 200 properties being demolished.
- The board received monthly updates on the development of the project and after reviewing the results of the consultations from tenants of the area, the Board recommended that the project should not go ahead. The Board were pleased that the Executive, the leaders of the council, listened to us and had now decided to move forward with a smaller scale regeneration project.
- The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan was enforced in 2012. The board helped shape this plan and as agreed, had been part of the annual update process. It was also important that all tenants know what future plans were and where their money would be spent. The board was therefore pleased to see a summary of the plan published in the quarterly tenants' newsletter.
- The Board received on a quarterly basis a financial statement. This shows how much money had come in and what it had been spent on for that period. It was helpful that the Housing Accountant presents this and was able to answer any questions we may have.
- One of the main purposes of the board was to scrutinise how Housing Services was performing, making sure it delivers what it was supposed to.
- The board had received a report every three months that details the targets that had been set and the actual performance against them. These performance indicators clearly show whether the target had been met. From these we can see where there were areas for improvement and seek to raise quality of services tenants receive. From this the board had chosen the 'top ten' important performance indicators and had made sure these were available for all tenants to see by publishing them in tenants' newsletters.
- Tenants had consistently said that their priority was getting repairs done quickly and efficiently. Therefore the Board asked for a review of the repairs service and the managers of the DLO and Repairs Assistants attended the board to answer our questions.
- ALHCO had been appointed in the last year to be the new gas servicing and maintenance contractor for the Council.
- The Board had also looked at and approved the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy but also received two reports on Local Letting Plans that had been introduced into two separate areas of Taunton Deane. This would allocate the right properties to the right people showing a marked reduction in anti-social behaviour.
- The topics presented and discussed by the Board were many and varied. These sometimes were areas of concern, which prompted the board to ask for the relevant council staff to attend, provide clarification and more details.
- The Board had been partied to reviewing and commenting on a variety of new government policies, which Officers had brought before the Board. Examples this year include: Changes to Right to Buy policy and Welfare reform and Housing Benefit changes.
- The Board Members had reviewed and approved the council's Welfare Reform Strategy and approved other practical measures that were being put forward

such as the Transfer Removal Grant policy and leaflet that helps tenants move to smaller properties that still meet their needs.

- Thanks to Board Members and the Tenants' Forum who came together to help with the design and content of the Annual Report.

Thanks was given to the other Board Members for all their work over the past year as well as to the Council Officer's for their hard work and unbiased commitment to the board and those Councillors who come along to board meetings and add their valued input.

Resolved that the Board noted the Chairman's report.

5. The Year ahead for Housing Services

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update outlining the new issues facing the Board for the coming year. These included the following:

- Development Projects – Good progress had been made with all development projects including Phase One and Creechbarrow Road. The new development team was now in place. The Council was looking at other site for future developments. There were currently four Phase One sites but we may lose one. The relationship between the Council and the development partnership with Knightstone Housing was good and they were challenging each other with their development project processes.
- Welfare Reform – This was the other biggest challenge for the Housing Service. The Council had made good preparation for this including knowing who would be affected. These affects had now started to kick in but they impact would increase.
- Housing Issues – There were new budgets for property extensions. The Council would be looking at completing four extensions per year. The Council was currently investigating potential extensions on housing stock.
- Sustainability Grant – new grant available for sustainability developments. The Council needed to improve on the current level of stock data to enable a baseline figure before making any improvements. Council planning to engage communities and tenants to advise them on the things that they were able to do.
- Housing Property Services – There was an increase in the Housing Services Capital Programmes over the next year. The procurement process was under way for these contracts.
- Performance – The Council would be continually reviewing the performance of all areas of the Housing Services Department. It was believed that the department had performed well with some of the easier KPI's over the last 12 months but the next challenge was to sustain over the longer term and address some of the harder targets. Generally, good progress had been made. There were areas that would require long term effort in order to bring them up to standard.
- Tenancy Policy – This would run alongside the Council's Business Plan. This had unfortunately not got off the ground as planned in the last year. This was due to the busy schedule of the officers involved. Officers were hoping to make ground on this in coming months.

- Right to Buy – The last 12 months for Right to Buy had been very busy. The number of applicants had not slowed and continuously increased over the period. More than 30 properties sold, this would provide additional receipts towards new builds. Despite the high number of successful applications still several application fail for various reasons. There maybe a future move to reduce the eligibility from five year to three years.
- Leasehold – There currently had not been any continuity with this service but the programme was still in place through ongoing recruitment.
- Supported Housing – The Council was tracking the progress of funding reduction. Currently, a procurement exercise was in place for the contract of the support service. Also work on the Council's Extra Care Schemes.
- Business Plan Review – This would be continually reviewed. The Council would be starting to think about this in September.
- IT Services – In regards to the replacement IT system known as COSY system. There had been developed a programme of works planned for the next couple years as well as many other areas relating to Housing Management system, also the asset management system.

The officer thanked the Board Members for their support and work over the last year.

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

- Members requested an update on Downsizing.
- What pressure was the Council under to convert two bedroom properties into one bedroom properties to cope with the increase in demand?
The Council was not actively looking into this option at the moment. The Council was currently investigating and looking into the merits and issues of one bedroom properties as well as investigating possibilities around bedsit option on new developments.
- What's the service change?
This would be included in the Housing Newsletters both communal service and grounds maintenance service changes. Owner occupiers pay through Council Tax. The budget controlling programme of works for housing hadn't been cut. This was the service as previous year. This would be included in the Newsletter.
- General Grounds Maintenance work; there was a thorny bush requiring maintenance. Do I cut it myself or continue to report it? Stinging nettles over taking area around stream in Outer Circle. Could someone come and cut them.
These grounds maintenance issues needed to be reported either to Estate Officer or directly to Health and Housing Manager or Housing Services Lead.
- Does the Council know what our demographic dominance was through tenant information? Was it predominantly elderly? Also some other local authorities were building and selling their new builds.
*The Council continually completes status surveys, which provides plenty of information for demographic but work continues on Equality and Diversity information. Through the Homefinder Somerset website, the Council had access to tenant's needs and desires.
The Council had increased the number of one bed but there was currently a general coverage of housing types on the development.
Current demands cover types and areas of houses within Taunton Deane.*
- Could certain types of properties be changed to another type of property?

The need around Sheltered Schemes had changed. The Council had done this in the past but it's something the Council would need to look into i.e. de-commissioning housing schemes.

- Would the Council be planning to build bungalows within the new developments?

The Council had decided to go with Flats rather than Bungalows.

Resolved that the Board noted the Officer's report.

6. Creechbarrow Road Development Project Update

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update outlining the new issues facing the Board for the coming year. These included the following:

- Consultation Events held last week were a success.
- There was wide ranging support for the development scheme.
- The Council had been refining the details of the development scheme.
- The officers were putting together feedback from the consultation events.
- There were three developments options presented to the Public, Staff and Councillors at the events.
- The Officers were combining all three options to make a hybrid design.
- The general preferences raised during the consultation event were for traditional looking properties rather than contemporary.
- The planning application moved a little from May. The Council Officer had met with the Knightstone Internal Board this week for approval of the development.
- The Council is moving forward on the consultation for the Community Hub. The Community Development Officer for Halcon would be leading on this but the deadline had been relaxed.
- The Council need to confirm the use of the Community Hub building. This would include the development on the first floor into more flats.
- Support for Tenants and Residents affected was gathering speed and the support would individually tailored for each household.
- The officers would arrange a meeting or post design to the Members to discuss their thoughts on the combined preference design for the development prior to the planning application.
- A more detailed report would be coming to the Board prior to Full Council in July.

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

- Would the house design for the Housing Association houses be different to those of the Council?
It would be cost effective for the design of the all the houses to be the same including the layout inside. Knightstone Housing had at least 50 individual housing designs. The Council would be looking at the external design and appearance but no requirement for them all to be the same. This was being actively discussed at the moment.
- Could 'The Link Centre' move to 'The Community Hub'?
This was to be discussed with Community Development and 'The Link Centre'.
- It was felt that Flats above 'The Community Hub' would limit what evening activities could be run from the Hub.

The new Community Hub would have a larger ground floor than The Link Centre currently.

Resolved that the officer's report was noted.

7. Election of Tenant Services Management Board Chair for 2013/14

The Tenant Empowerment Manager requested for nominations of the position of Chair of Tenant Services Management Board for 2013/14.

Resolved that that **Mr Dustyn Etherington** be appointed Chair of the Tenant Services Management Board for the duration of 2013/14.

8. Election of Tenant Services Management Board Vice Chair for 2013/14

The Tenant Empowerment Manager requested for nominations of the position of Vice Chair of Tenant Services Management Board for 2013/14.

Resolved that that **Mrs Judith Hegarty** be appointed Vice Chair of the Tenant Services Management Board for the duration of 2013/14.

9. AOB

The next meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board would be on 21st May 2013 at 6:00pm in The John Meikle Room at The Deane House.

Notification for Board Member nominations would be this time next year with the election taking place end of April. Tenants would get two weeks to vote.

(The meeting ended at 4.45pm)