

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 20 April 2015 at 6pm in JMR, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mr D Etherington (Chairman)
Mrs J Hegarty, Mr R Balman, Mrs J Bunn, Ms M Davis, Mr D Galpin, Mr I Hussey, Mr R Middleton, Councillor Bowrah.

Officers: James Barrah (Director Housing & Communities), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Lucy Clothier (Housing Accountant), Phil Webb (Housing Manager – Property Services), Tim Haynes (Property Manager – Contracts), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Chris Hall (Assistant Director – Operational Delivery), Paul Grant (Building Services Manager),

Others: Councillor Warmington

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

Mr M Edwards, Mr K Hellier and Councillor Miss Smith

2. Public Question Time

No questions received for Public Question Time.

3. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Bowrah declared personal interest as members of his family were Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

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

4. Responsive Repairs Performance

Considered the report previously circulated concerning the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) management system and the methods being employed to resolve any outstanding issues.

The DLO Building Services section and TDBC Property Services team are jointly working to deliver a comprehensive responsive repairs service for the benefit of TDBC tenants. Externally this would include repairs to or replacement of leaking roofs, windows, doors and frames, fencing and walls, drainage, and paving in dangerous condition. Internally it would include items such as repairs to or replacement of kitchen and bathroom sanitary fixtures and fittings, doors, frames, and ironmongery, light fittings and socket outlets, floor, wall or ceiling finishes, and leaks on internal water supply. In addition to this, other external contractors would deliver

repairs to metal windows and doors, built-up felt roofing, gas servicing and maintenance, and communal aerial systems.

In order for the DLO to achieve their part in this, it was essential to review the existing data management system being used to handle the tenant repair/contractor information and in doing so, it was established that a new software platform was required. Following an extensive procurement exercise and evaluation on sites using the system, it was decided to adopt Open Contractor as a management system. This was installed and went live on the 3rd September 2014. The original software platform, "Cosy", was no longer fit-for-purpose, was out-dated and future enhancements and support were no longer available.

The Building Services Manager explained that the original IT systems did not produce accurate data and were disjointed. The report highlighted the system and organisational based challenges and solutions.

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

- The performance figures for February 2015 are very encouraging.
- Abbreviations in the report need explaining, e.g. PDA, OC, VPN
- When is it anticipated that the system will work correctly?
Another 6 months, with the system evolving after this
- There are references to DLO staff being unsettled throughout the report
- Tenants comment that DLO staff seem to take long breaks when out on jobs
Job times in the new system are aimed at reducing travel times, more efficient than driving back to Depot and then travelling out again to next job. The system can analyse how long jobs take.
- Can tradesmen do other different jobs while at the property?
The workforce is not multi skilled in total, but is encouraged to try and complete jobs. They have spare kit and disposable overalls with them.
- The report states that TDBC is paying staff a lower wage than they can get elsewhere. Are we paying the staff enough?
It is difficult to retain staff, especially with more building work taking place and Hinkley Point to start. This will also have an impact on the performance indicators.
- The organisational solutions do not have any timescales attached to them. The board would like to see timescales to make sure everything is on track.
- Are Councillors aware of these issues and solutions? Under the Regulatory Standards Councillors are responsible for where the standards are not being met. The Chair quoted the Home Standard.
- 100% of emergency repairs are not being met – is this a health and safety issue?
No, some jobs are raised against the wrong category and are therefore not an emergency.
- The board has seen that the repairs response time's targets have not been met for a long time and now have reached target – is this better monitoring or better systems?
A combination of both

Resolved that the Board supported the recommendation:

That the Tenant Services Management Board continues to support the Building Services team in continuing to evolve, making the necessary changes within Open Contractor and associated systems to improve resilience and develop a fully integrated system suitable for ongoing future service delivery.

The board also recommended that:

- Timescales are added against actions
- Councillors are made aware of the solutions and actions

5. Capital Works Contracts

Considered the report previously circulated identifying the works carried out within the HRA Capital programme detailing both the physical volume and related financial spend in each quarter of the financial year 2014-2015, together with a projected out-turn summary.

The Property Manager – Contracts explained that:

- Appendix B Quarter 4 – last column should read Annual Budget
- Heating – there has been a time lag in posting expenditure. Expenditure is now allocated to the correct code and postings are completed more regularly.
- Some work is paid on valuation and there can be a delay on agreeing final figures with contractors.
- There is a 3 year contract in place (with option to extend) in relation to door entry systems
- Replacement windows – 99.9% are pvc double glazed. The plan is to replace windows sooner than originally planned. The current plan concentrates on replacing communal windows.

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

- There has been slippage in the budget again. Was too much budget allocated?
Are there enough contractors/officers?
HRA self financing has allowed TDBC to enter into longer term contracts and this has led to a transition period to adapt to this. Internal resources have been an issue but this will be resolved in the next year. TDBC has changed the contractor for doors and the service has improved.
- Are there penalty clauses in contracts?
Generally contractors will not be paid until we are satisfied with work and on occasions we retain some payment. Ultimately if there is a substantial problem we can cancel the contract.
- Looking at the quarterly information in the appendices the programme seems stop/start, especially in relation to kitchens and bathrooms.
- When replacing doors is the whole street completed or just part?
When possible attempt to complete the whole street
- Are fascias being replaced?

A new contract is being assessed that will replace timber fascias with pvc. Many have been done already, especially when work on the roof is being undertaken.

- There seems to have been complaints about guttering, especially issues with moss and grass blocking guttering.
Guttering is being flushed through on a regular basis with high pressure wash – Suggested that this is done just before winter.
- If contracts cannot be completed during the year can the money be spent elsewhere – paying off loan, building properties, one off items such as car parking and extensions
The asset database states where the work should be done based on need. If the work is not done there will be problems with large backlogs.
- The report states that 8 out of 33 tenants (24%) declined a new kitchen. Why is this? What is being done to rectify this?
Some elderly tenants do not want the disruption, some tenants change their mind. Contractors are explaining the improvements to tenants
- Would it be a good idea to have tenant champions to explain the work to fellow tenants?
Yes, this has been used for air source heat pumps
- Have some tenants upgraded their own kitchens?
Yes, and if the kitchen is sub standard TDBC has to replace it.
- When a property becomes void would it not be better to ask DLO to do the work instead of contractor?
It is more efficient to use one contractor
- The Home Standard of the Regulatory standards was highlighted, especially that work should be done in a planned way
If the board requires the format of reports to be changed they should make requests to the Property Manager – Contracts.

Resolved that the Board noted the contents of the report and that similar suitable and relevant information will be provided with future quarterly score card information. The board expressed the view that slippage of budgets should be monitored closely.

6. Tenant Services Management Board 2014/15

The Chair of the board reflected on the work of the board in 2014/15. Items highlighted included:

- The building of new council properties
- Energy efficient projects including pv panels and external wall insulation
- The election of a new board
- Halcon One Team
- Welfare reform
- Housing Revenue Account 2012-2042
- Complaints process

- Tenancy policy
- Tenant groups working together

7. The Year Ahead for Housing and Communities

Considered verbal update and presentation from the Director of Housing & Communities in relation to the year ahead for Housing and Communities.

Items highlighted included:

- Economic pressures on the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund
- Demographic pressures
- Local and national elections
- Partnership working – sharing resources across the public sector
- Health and social care – an ageing population
- Transforming how TDBC delivers services to meet General Fund budget gap
- Location of TDBC – Deane House and the Depot
- Better use of IT to meet customers' expectations
- SouthWest One – plan for contract ending in 2017
- Review of HRA Business Plan 2012-2042
- Property and Development
- Housing Management

The Director of Housing & Communities thanked the board for their hard work.

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

- More tenant involvement is to be welcomed, tenants need to help shape where the money is spent
- Need to look at apprentices in IT

8. Election of Tenant Services Management Board Chairperson for 2015/16

Richard Balman was elected Chairperson for 2015/16

9. Election of Tenant Services Management Board Vice Chairperson for 2015/16

Marion Davis was elected Vice Chairperson for 2015/16

(The meeting ended at 8:20pm)