

Minutes of the Meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 21 May 2018 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room C in Flook House at The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr K Hellier, Mr I Hussey, Councillor B Bowrah and Councillor H Prior-Sankey.

Officers: Simon Lewis (Assistant Director for Homes and Community Development), Rich Prewer (Property Services Manager), Steven Clarke (Tenant Services Development Officer) and Clare Rendell (Democratic Services Officer).

Others: Julia Williamson.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

An apology was received from Mr A Akhigbemen.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 23 April 2018 were signed and taken as read.

3. Public Question Time

No questions were received for Public Question Time.

4. Declarations of Interests

Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr K Hellier and Mr I Hussey declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.
Councillor Bowrah declared a personal interest as a Member of Wellington Town Council.
Councillor H Prior-Sankey declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset County Council.

5. Annual General Meeting Update

The Vice Chairman distributed the Chairman's update to the Board Members.

During the year, the Board had presided over and deliberated on a number of key initiatives and projects. The following were highlighted in the update:-

- The review of Grounds Maintenance Services; to ensure an improved service across the Borough, the Board had agreed to the increase of the weekly service charge to £1.84;
- The ongoing Transformation Project;
- The ongoing redevelopment of Weaver's Arms in Rockwell Green, Wellington, which would see the Council's first Shared Ownership units;
- The North Taunton Woolaway Regeneration Scheme; and
- The pending plan for the creation of One Council which would join Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council together.

The Tenant Services Development Officer advised the Board that he would publish the Chairman's update in the Tenant Magazine.

Resolved that the Board noted the Chairman's update.

6. Quarterly Performance Update

The Property Services Manager presented their report which gave the Board an update on the performance levels for Property Services and Housing and Communities.

There were three ambers highlighted, which included:-

HC3.1 – Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate;
HC4.2 – Completion of repairs within priority target times; and
HC4.8 – Percentage of tenants that had received annual review of Support Plans or reviews of needs and risks.

During the discussion of this item, Board Members raised the following question (Responses shown in italics):-

- How did the department monitor the completion times for works on properties. *The timescales were included in another update that was reported to the Board. There was a property in question that had taken a long time to complete but that was due to special works that had to be carried out for the needs of the family that was due to occupy the property.*

Resolved that the Board noted the officer's update.

7. Maintenance Standard

The Property Services Manager presented the update on the Maintenance Standard. He distributed information on the Considerate Constructors scheme.

The Property Services Department had been put up for three awards and the Property Services Manager was delighted that they had been awarded all three. The awards were given by the Association of Gas Safety Managers and the Institute of Gas Safety Engineers for innovation and compliance.

The Property Services Manager thanked the Board for their continued support.

During the discussion of this item, Board Members made the following comment (Responses shown in italics):-

- The Board Members confirmed that they would like to attend the tour of the Depot in Wellington. The tour was scheduled for 30 May 2018 at 10.30am.

Resolved that the Board noted the officer's update.

8. Safeguarding

The Assistant Director for Homes and Community Development presented his update on Safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation.

The Assistant Director explained that Safeguarding covered the following:-

- Safeguarding (children and adults at risk);
- Domestic Abuse;
- Suicide Threats; and
- Child Sexual Exploitation.

The reasons why the Council needed to safeguard were:-

- The support and protection of children could not be achieved by a single agency. Every Service had to play its part. All staff must have placed upon them the clear expectation that their primary responsibility was to the child and his or her family.
- High profile cases, Victoria Climbié, Baby P and Elsie Scully Hicks.
- Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council had a legal duty of care to ensure that children and adults at risk were protected within the facilities, services and activities under the direct remit and control of the Councils.

Domestic Abuse

When staff were told of domestic abuse, they should ask for consent to share the information to help them access help. This would then be referred to Knightstone Domestic Abuse Services. When a child was present for domestic abuse, this would always be a child's safeguarding issue because they had experienced emotional abuse.

Suicide Threats

The Councils staff would always take suicide attempts and threats seriously. Managers had developed a five point plan for managing the risk of suicide.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation was when people used the power they had over young people to sexually abuse them. Their power might be a result from a difference in age, gender, intellect, strength, money and other resources. The exploitation might involve informal exchanges of sex or non-contact abuse for something the child wanted or needed. For example, accommodation, gifts, cigarettes, affection or attention.

All of the Councils staff and Members who came into contact with children and families had a role to play. It was not their responsibility to decide whether the abuse had taken place, but it was their responsibility to report it.

If you saw something, say something.

During the discussion of this item, Board Members made the following comments and asked questions (Responses shown in italics):-

- Board Members queried whether the Council had a Safeguarding Policy. *Yes and staff were made aware of the policy. Property Services, who worked out in the local areas, had been trained to be vigilant.*
- Concern was raised on what might have happened in the past and that it was a sad sign of the times.

Resolved that the Board noted the officer's update.

9. Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Conference

The Tenant Services Development Officer updated the Board Members on the upcoming TPAS Conference due to be held on 11 and 12 July 2018.

During the discussion of this item, Board Members made the following comments and asked questions (Responses shown in italics):-

- Board Members queried who was due to attend the conference.
The Tenant Services Development Officer confirmed who was due to attend. He also confirmed that the conference was due to be held in the same location as last year and advised the Board Members to logon to the website to register for the sessions that they wanted to attend.

Resolved that the Board noted the officer's update.

(The meeting ended at 6.40pm)