

Minutes of the Meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 25 June 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), Richard Burge (Open Spaces Manager), Neil Anderson (Strategy and Partnership Officer) and Clare Rendell (Democratic Services Officer).

(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 21 May 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. Grounds Maintenance Update

The Open Spaces Manager and Strategy and Partnership Officer presented an update on the Grounds Maintenance Department.

Since their last update in September 2017, where the officers had made several recommendations about the grounds maintenance contract, the team had implemented the following:-

- The service charge had been increased from £0.81 to £1.84 per week;
- The specification was changed, which took into account certain complaints that had been made about works on trees, shrubs and grass;
- A service specification had been set based on standard rather than the amount of times tasks should be done;
- A budget was set aside to tackle the backlog of work, which commenced in September 2017. The teams had worked hard to catch up on the work load; and
- A panel had been set up to monitor the work, which was comprised of tenants and officers, who worked together to ensure the specification was maintained.

The Grounds Maintenance update had three sections:-

- Ongoing Improvement Project;
- New Grounds Maintenance Standard; and
- Progress.

The Ongoing Improvement Project had seen the team working hard over the winter months to catch up on the areas that needed the most attention.

New Grounds Maintenance Standard included three looks, what it should look like before the team arrived, what it should look like after the work was done and what it should never look like.

Progress had been made within the team, who had been given specific priority to focus on housing projects rather being pulled away to carry out works in other areas.

The team had procured new machinery which included a grass mulcher and a power scrubber. The new machinery had proved very popular and had improved the team's time management. The grass mulcher was very manoeuvrable and cut back on the need for another officer to attend the area and use a strimmer to tidy up. The power scrubber could also be used for other functions, for example, a snow plough in the winter months. The Board was shown several before and after photos of the work that had been carried out.

A customer survey was due to be sent out over the next month which would collate results for the last quarter, however, the officers were not expecting it to show any improved results based on the new machines only being in operation since April 2018. Officers had expressed what a positive project it was and hoped to see improved results in the next customer survey.

During the discussion, the Board Members made the following points:-

- Board Members queried how the grass clippings were disposed of.
The grass clippings were taken to the local waste depot and the grass mulcher put the grass back into the ground which acted as a fertiliser.
- Board Members had queried what savings had been made with the new machinery.
The equipment had not been used long enough to collate the figures. The officers would return in September 2018 with an update on the service and a business case which would show the figures for the use of the new machinery.

Resolved that the Board noted the officer's update.

(The meeting ended at 6.30pm)