

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

Present: Mr Etherington (Chairman)
Mr Edwards (Vice- Chairman)
Councillor Bowrah, Councillor Brooks, Mrs Drage, Mrs Hegarty, Mr Hellier, Mrs Marshall and Mr Watkin.

Officers: James Barra (Community Services Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Brendan Cleere (Strategic Director), Chris Hall (Highways and Cleansing Manager), Martin Price (Acting Tenant Empowerment Manager), Tracey Vernon (Tenant Services Development Officer) and Natasha Williams (Administrative Officer).

Others: Councillor Prior-Sankey.

(The meeting commenced at 6pm)

41. Apologies

Mr Galpin
Mr Pearson

42. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 5 August 2010 were taken as read and were signed.

43. Declaration of Interests

The following members declared a personal interest as a Council house tenant:

- Mrs Drage
- Mr Edwards
- Mr Etherington
- Mrs Hegarty
- Mr Hellier
- Mrs Marshall
- Mr Watkin
- Councillor Brooks

Councillor Brooks also declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset County Council.

44. Direct Labour Organisation Current Service Level Specification.

Brendan Cleere outlined the aims of the Core Council Review to members of the board. With regard to the Direct labour Organisation (DLO), a twin-track approach was currently being investigated, with the view of adopting

either the out-sourcing or internal transformation route, once the review had been completed.

Chris Hall outlined the report and the statutory and non-statutory services. The key principals behind the review were to improve services and generate possible savings. No defined cuts were planned at present with regard to kitchen and bathroom replacements.

Board members queried whether job losses would occur at the DLO. They were advised that if the outsourcing route was chosen, there was no guarantee that job losses would not occur. However, if the outsourcing route was successful, one criterion for companies to be shortlisted would be to include a good reputation for looking after its staff.

Board members agreed that the Tenant Management Services Board should be included under the Stakeholders heading on page 11 of the report.

Brendan Cleere requested that the DLO Current Service Level Specification be included on future Tenant Services Management Board agendas, in order for board members to be updated.

45. Direct Labour Organisation General Updates for Internal transformation and Outsource.

Chris Hall updated board members with regard to the current position of the internal transformation. Members were reassured that the DLO staff were kept informed and had received letters which detailed the current position.

Pre-qualification questionnaires had initially been sent out and 13 bids had been returned. 6 bids would be shortlisted and each of the bidders would need to produce 3 case studies, in order to be evaluated.

The DLO would bid as part of the internal transformation path. Members were advised that the DLO was good at delivering services, yet lacked the experience of dealing with bids. A business case would be made for the internal transformation route.

Board members were informed that they would be consulted with regard to the final bids; however Councillors would have the final decision on whether to follow the outsourcing or internal transformation route. If the outsourcing route was successful, Councillors would also choose the preferred bidder. A client team would also be set up to monitor the outsourcing route. The decision would be made after the Election due to held in May 2011.

46. Update on Annual Report to Tenants and Tenant Services Authority.

Martin Price advised board members that a working group of board and Tenants Forum members met on 26 August, with the content of the report and local offers the two main discussion points.

Tenants were to be involved in the process and 'mystery shoppers' would be appointed. A number of scenarios would be 'played out' which would help to establish how long Housing Services take to respond to certain situations.

Martin Price also outlined a number of other ideas, which included;

- Suggestion cards;
- Financial incentives;
- Involving all age groups – Family fun days, speaking at schools;
- Implementing a Tenant Champion; and
- Administering closer working with Somerset County Council Highways.

Mr Edwards advised the board, that he would be happy to be a Tenant Champion.

Councillor Brooks raised the issue that tenants were unable to speak to Estate Officers on weekends.

47. Tenant Participation Advisory Service Membership

Martin Price outlined the figures with regard to Tenant Participation Advisory Service Membership. Landlord membership would cost £1,550 per year whilst the Tenant membership fee is £125. Board members were informed that the Tenants Forum had already renewed its membership and this covers all tenant groups in Taunton Deane.

The Tenant Services Management Board asked that the Tenants Forum be approached to ask if it may be possible to attain membership under the existing Tenants' membership and in return reimburse them half of what they had already paid.

It was confirmed that the use of the website would be included in the membership.

48. Housing Property Services Review

James Barraah advised board members that it was the aim of the review to achieve separation between the DLO and Housing Services. The service required modernisation and more resource back into the service. The structural proposals as well as the Housing Property Services Responsibilities were outlined to board members. James Barraah would return to the next meeting to note any comments that they had.

Board members asked whether visual aids could be used at the next meeting to demonstrate how the new structure could improve service, by using specific examples.

Steve Boland confirmed that board members would receive name badges.

(The meeting ended at 8:29pm)