

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

**Present:** Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chairman), Mrs J Bunn, Mrs E Drage, Mr D Gaplin, Mr R Middleton, Councillor Bowrah and Councillor Miss F Smith.

**Officers:** Christian Trevelyan (Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership Manager), Caroline White (Housing Development Project Lead), Lucy Clothier (Housing Accountant), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Phil Webb (Housing Manager – Property Services), Steve Esau (Property Manager – Maintenance), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

**Others:** Councillors Mrs F Smith and Jane Warmington.

(The meeting commenced at 6.05pm)

**1. Apologies**

Mr K Hellier and Mrs J Hegarty

**2. Public Question Time**

No questions received for Public Question Time.

**3. Declarations of Interests**

Councillor Miss F Smith declared personal interest that several of her relatives were Taunton Deane Borough Council Tenants.

**4. Disabled Facilities Grants, Aids and Adaptions.**

The Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership (SWPSHP) Manager gave a verbal report on Disabled Facilities Grants, Aids and Adaptations concerning the performance of the partnership.

The partnership administers the Disabled Facilities Grant to both Owner Occupiers and Council Tenants covering the following areas West Somerset, Taunton Deane and Sedgemoor with this service.

Below was a summary of the partnership's performance:

- During 2012/13, there were 41 major adaptations costing between £10 - £30,000 as well as 31 wet floor bathrooms, three Stair Lifts and two extensions costing between £25 - £30,000.
- Looking at minor adaptations, during 2012/13 the partnership completed 429, in comparison to 2011/12 where 301 adaptations were completed.

- The current timescale for major works adaptations was 21 weeks. This had come down from 61 weeks.
- The partnership was hoping to reduce the timescale further by introducing 'fixed price quotes', this would mean no need for tendering. For example Sedgemoor District Council had reduced the timescale down to 15 weeks with 'Fixed Price Quotes'.
- 'Fixed Price Quotes' was hoping to be rolled out in Taunton Deane before the end of financial year.

The partnership was looking at becoming more 'savvy' with the housing stock instead installing adaptations then removing when the tenant moves out. The Partnership was looking to introduce a traffic light system for what adaptations could be down to each house and placing the right tenants in adapted properties. The traffic light coding system breakdown might work something like this:

- Red Properties – No adaptations
- Amber Properties – Some adaptations
- Green Properties – All adaptations.

The housing stock was currently sat at 6000 properties.

Along with the introduction of 'Fixed Price Quotes' and the Traffic Lights colour coding housing stock, the partnership and the Council was considering long term plans of remodelling the current housing stock. For example, if three of five bungalows had wet room adaptations then when those properties become available it would be considered if it was beneficial to adapt the rest of the properties to match.

The partnership was also looking at and working on the safe storage of adaptation instructions by Tenants and Owners. These instructions provide instructions on how to maintain all adaptations and the partnership were looking at ways to improvement this area with those who receive adaptations. The partnership and the officer would work with the TSMB to develop this.

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

- How would you put the traffic lights grading onto those who were currently on the waiting lists so to match them to the correct properties?  
*This was an element the partnership was working on. Looking into displaying floor plans of properties to help make people choices easier.*
- Would Creechbarrow development include wheelchair provision?  
*Yes, both the Council's and Knightstone's development had wheelchair provision.*
- Did the Partnership look at the whole property if Tenants or Owners request adaptations?  
*Firstly, OT would look at requested adaptation then afterwards the whole property.*
- Were the needs growing year on year?  
*Adaptations for children with disabilities were the most complicated and expensive to complete.*
- Could you use a similar approach to 'The One Team'?  
*There was a similar group set up owner occupiers with inter-linking communication and information exchange.*

- How much money would come from the General Fund if a Council Tenant was to get into Sheltered Housing or into a nursing/residential home?  
*Where there was need to move to extra care, the Housing Department would process that but where the tenant needed residential/nursing home this would come under Adult Social Care through SCC.*
- Kilkenny Court – Was the Council considering remodelling for this?  
*Some repair work had been triggered but the Council were looking into starting a review of the facilities at Kilkenny Court. Reference the report presented to the Board during the October 2013 meeting detailing the current of Sheltered Housing and Extra Care facilities.  
Communal areas and Communal Bathrooms were being looked at with a view to bringing them up to date and DDA compliant.  
The Council were also looking mobility scooter storage issues. The Council want to get the out of the communal areas and into propose built secure storage with charging facilities.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

## **5. Energy Efficiency and Development Update Report**

The Housing Development Project Lead gave a verbal update and PowerPoint presentations regarding Housing Development Projects.

The presentation detailed and identified a variety of processes relating to improvement, remodelling and development process for building new properties. This included:

- How the Council would identify which properties were hard to heat to improve.
- How would the Council sell the new approaches to all interested and involved parties.
- Identifying and explaining the Council Development Process.
- Explanations for refusal of potential Development Locations.
- Process when a suitable Location was located.
- Process leading up, during and after Planning application both refusal and permission granted.
- Showed Architect Sketches of the Developments
- External Wall Insulation (EWI) on existing Council stock.

The Council had 130 step process to work through prior to going ahead with Development Projects.

The Council was looking at Urban Regeneration and Refurbishment of Council stock.

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

- *The Council's new build developments would be built to Code Level Four.*
- How was EWI done to properties and could you drill into it?  
*The EWI was like a blanket. The property was completed in 300mm specialist insulations. The timescale for this type of installation was one week. There were currently to two sorts of EWI being used.*

*The type of EWI, the Council were using meant tenants could drill into it for installing such things as outside lights.*

- The Board would like to see more ECO friendly development in Taunton Deane.

*The Council was currently looking for suitable locations for passiv haus development but have been unsuccessful so far.*

- Was the Council looking at 'Future Proofing' their housing stock?
- *Officers enquired about the boards opinions on suggested new street name within the Creechbarrow Development.*
- The Board had previously put forward Pauline Kershaw name as an option for street name within the development. The chair explained that she had been an active Council Tenant as well as an active member of the Halcon Community for nearly 30 years contributing and supporting the residents and tenants of the estate as well as campaigning for facilities and services.
- The Board expressed their preference for the following names - Pauline Kershaw and John Seabrook for street name within the Creechbarrow development. This was for their local connection to the estate. It was also requested that officers contact their families and to enquire about permission to formally suggest using their names within the development.  
*Officers confirmed they would start this process.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

## **6. Financial Monitoring Quarter Two 2013/14**

Considering the financial figures table previously circulated, concerning the Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring for Quarter Two accompanied by a verbal update given by Housing Accountant. The spreadsheets detailed the breakdown of overall performance outturn of Quarter Two 2013/14 split between capital and revenue.

The Revenue Account Performance included such headings as Right to Buy, Income, Expenditure and HRA Revenue.

The following points were covered during the update on Housing Revenue Account Income, Expenditure and Revenue;

- Voids had a pressure of £289,478. This expenditure was much higher than previously and further investigations into this were under way.
- Non-Dwellings had a pressure of £11,250 due to low take up of garages.
- HRA Income had an overall under spend of £384,253.
- HRA Expenditure had an overall pressure of £249,903. This was due to higher Voids costs.
- Total HRA Revenue had an overall slight pressure of £5,184. This would change as the interest rates change.

Looking at Right to Buy's (RtB), there had been 10 sales so far in Quarter Two making 63 sales since 2012. Retainable receipts for Quarter two were £265.365, meaning £1,927,923 retainable receipts to be spent.

RtB receipts could be used against 30% of new builds and they had to be affordable homes. They could also be used for Council's 'Buy Back' scheme. The Council were proactively seeking ex-council properties on the open market to purchase.

The following points were covered during the update on Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes;

- Overall HRA Capital Programmes had under spend of £19,643.
- Roof Programme had a pressure of £8,000 but this was 'On Track'.
- New Doors programme had a pressure of £1,600. This was due to volume of new doors via repairs requests placed a pressure on the remaining budget.
- Fascias and Soffits programme had a pressure of £4,500.
- Aids and Adaptations had an under spend of £15,000
- Disabled Facilities Grants had an under spend of £4,941.
- Tenant Improvements programme was showing a pressure of £5,620.
- Development Programme; Sustainable Energy Fund budget (£227,000) was likely now to slip to 2014/15.
- Capital Budget was £20.3 million and the current spent to date was £2,378,904.

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

- When a Council tenant moves from one council property to another, what was the come back if they leave a property in bad state?  
*The Council complete a pre-assessment before the tenant leaves their existing property. Any repairs required in that property were re-chargeable to the tenant and would be chased by another housing department team.*
- What was cause of some of the boilers breaking down?  
*There were a huge variety of types of boilers throughout the Council's housing stock, which was a historical issue.  
The Council were looking into a replacement programme but it was only reactive programme. There were ongoing negotiations with ALHCO regarding boiler replacement programme costings.*
- Board members agreed with the buying back of ex-council properties with the RtB receipts, which would bring them back into the Council's stock.
- Could the Council purchase empty business properties in the town centre with the idea of renting them out to local businesses at a lower rent?

**Resolved** that officer's report was noted.

## **7. Performance Indicators Scorecard Quarter Two 2013/14**

Considering the scorecard and summary report previously circulated, concerning the Health and Housing KPI Performance Scorecard for the period covering Quarter two of 2013-14. The tables detailed the overall KPI performance scorecard for Quarter two and the Quarter two Performance Outturn.

Looking at each section of the performance scorecard for Quarter Two, the figures and percentages as follows:

- Managing Finances (Housing) – There was 9 measures of which 56% were Green, 33% were Red and 11% were N/A. There was an improvement since last Quarter.

- Service Delivery (Satisfaction) - There was 11 measures of which 55% were Green and 45% were Amber. There was no change from last Quarter.
- Service Delivery (Decent Homes) – There was 2 measures of which 100% were Red. There was deterioration from last Quarter.
- Service Delivery (Manage Housing Stock) – There was 18 measures of which 50% were Green, 5% were Amber and 28% were Red. There was deterioration from last Quarter.

Below was a summary of the planned actions that were off course:

- **2 Measures for Decent Homes** - Gas Safety Certificates 99.93% of dwellings had a valid gas safety certificate; this represents 3 properties which had not got certificates at the end of the quarter (now rectified).
- **Lettings Measure** - 0.74% of dwellings were vacant but unavailable to let, the target was 0.5%, and this was due to a high percentage of major works on void properties.
- **Housing Services Diversity Information** - the Council holds 56.2% of diversity information this was an increase since last quarter.
- **2 Repairs and Maintenance measures** - 93.92% of Emergency repairs were completed on time and also 86.45% of urgent repairs were completed on time.
- **Local Authority Major Aids and Adaptions, number of applications** - 24 applications were completed against a target of 84. This performance was ahead of that last year.

Below was a summary of the planned actions that had uncertainty in meeting them:

- **Housing Services - Estate Management** - Our arrears figures were higher than target (£360,000) at the end of the quarter £411,360.11.
- **Local Authority Major Aids and Adaptions, spend against budget** – £159,819 committed spend at end of Q2 against a £339,100 budget.
- **Local Authority Minor Aids and Adaptions, spend against budget** – £93,693 committed at end of Q2 against a £135,000 budget.
- **Housing Services – 4 Satisfaction measures** - Council national rankings showing in the quartile 2 for housing measures and lower quartiles for supported housing.
- **Repairs and Maintenance.** 96.97% of tenants were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.
- **Local Authority Major Aids and Adaptions, end to end completion time** - 34 week figure that was reported was due to 2 cases.

Below was a summary of the planned actions that were on course:

- **Housing Services, expenditure against budget** - current forecast was for the revenue account to be £99,580 overspent against a budget of £24,950,700 which was 0.4% overspend.
- **Housing Managing Finances** – 4 measures were better than target.
- **Lettings Team Measures** – 7 measures were better than target.
- **Gas Servicing** satisfaction measure better than target.
- **Supported Housing Satisfaction Measure** – was better than target.
- **Local Authority Major Aids and Adaptions** – 100% satisfaction.
- **Three Community Development** measures were on track.

- **Repairs and maintenance** – 92.19% of non urgent repairs were complete within priority time of 28 days.
- **Local Authority Minor Aids and Adaptions** – 179 end of Quarter two.

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

- Concerning page five, section two - Decent Homes Asset Management. Why the red face?  
*This would be covered in the ALHOC agenda item. If we look at the national average figures for this were high and if a Council drops a couple points then it had a large effect on our position.*
- Also page six, section three - Service Delivery Lettings Team. How were they illegally occupying and who were they?  
*There were not many of these at all, it was mainly squatters. The Council cannot just evict them. There was a procedure that we had to adhere to. It also relates to major works so when the property becomes a void the Council moves in to complete repairs etc and this means the property becomes unavailable for renting at that time.  
There had been a large number of voids properties in the last two quarters. The re-let time had been 30 days but was now only 12.33 days. This was looked into during the scrutiny lead review completed 18 months ago.*
- Page seven, section seven - Service Delivery Housing Services. Could you clarify the diversity information being collected?  
*This was new to Taunton Deane. This relates to collection of data from Council Tenants to help provide the Council with essential information about their Tenants including their needs and desires. This information helps the Council adjust their policies and strategies for the future.  
The Council was slowly building the information database about our tenants.*
- Page seven, section 10 – Service Delivery Repairs and Maintenance. Had this increased compared with this quarter last year?  
*Yes, it had improved compared with the same quarter last year. Weekly Completion Form had been introduced for job tickets. The new DLO electronic open system would hopefully improve this area when it was place. This would hopefully be during April 2014. The Council was looking at a Captia System as replacement for the existing COSY system.*

**Resolved** that the officer's report was noted.

## 8. **ALHCO Performance Quarter Two 2013/14**

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the monitoring information on the performance of the servicing and repair contract with ALHCO. This report shows the performance date for Quarter two as well as highlighting issues with the contract.

Below was a summary of the Quarter Two Performance:-

- At the end of Quarter two, CPI were at 99.3% with reported three properties overdue due. It can be confirmed that all three were serviced in the first week of Quarter three.

- There had been problems with ALHCO meeting our 10 month programme, this had caused pressures for both our property services and estates teams and feedback from tenants had confirmed problems, leading to a drop in service.
- Reactive Maintenance the KPI figures were showing below target in all areas in Quarter two, and there had been slight slippage from Quarter 1.
- There were a number of reasons behind this and the Council were working with ALHCO resolve these issues in order to improve the KPIs to move them towards the target.
- The void levels had been about normal in Quarter two. However, the Council were experiencing a high number of appliance failures both through gas checks on voids and the servicing programme.
- The Capital Programme team were working on the procurement of a long term boiler replacement programme which was due to commence in April 2014, this would overtime reduce the number of reactive failures.
- The Council had been carrying out the solid fuel servicing during this quarter and this had been successful. At the end of the quarter, there were still a few properties to visit, appointments being in place for this.
- The CO detector programme was progressing and would be completed by the end of the financial year. There had problems with detectors activating where there had not been a CO problem, this was due to a manufacturing fault and was being addressed.
- It was in the KPI report, there were two incidents related to asbestos. Both of which were resolved satisfactorily.
- This did highlight a number of issues and the Council had been working closely with ALHCO's Group Health and Safety Manager to put in place strengthened policies and procedures.
- The financial information included the cost of servicing and maintenance together with rechargeable works; the latter being works outside of the contract and includes works to voids. In addition the amount of scrap monies received was shown, these monies were paid back into the Housing Revenue Account.

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

- Was this the same as the MOT, did the new certificate start from its expiry date or the date of service?  
*In the respect of the timescale as it ran on a 10 month cycle but the new certificate started from the day of the service.  
The Council were addressing with ALHCO the ongoing issues with appointments.*
- There was general agreement that there had been a vast improvement on last year's figures and monitoring report.
- Did ALHCO and Taunton Deane have a contingency plan if multiple heating systems/boilers go down all at once?  
*The Council would provide electric heaters as part of the ALHCO contract.  
There were nine local engineers and 2/3 of these were 'on duty' at any one time but the Council had the ability to call extra staff if needed.  
The office now had two dedicated supervisors as well as regular officers in the gas office at the depot.*
- Asbestos – Could they it be left until the property becomes void and just add in a combi-boiler?



*The Council didn't always remove asbestos when it was found during repairs or other jobs. Normally, if it was found, the Council would look to seal it in and place a notice stating what was contained within the space, removal of Asbestos was a messy and tricky to deal with.*

- Referencing Public Question Time in the October 2013 meeting of the Board, when the Residents of Kilkenny Court raised issues with the Board. The Council needed to make the residents aware of all the work that had been done and would be taking place at Kilkenny Court.

*Officers would be attending the Kilkenny court residents meeting next week. It would be reported that:*

- *Lift Service review and repair would start spring 2014.*
- *Guttering work had been carried out.*
- *Communal Bathrooms were undergoing work.*
- *Council was looking into Scooter storage for mobility scooters. This would include charging facilities.*
- *Quotes for Electrical testing of the Communal Lighting*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

(The meeting ended at 8.20pm)