

Maintenance Standards

Making sure your home is sustainably maintained



Agreed Version V.3 October 2017 – Following consultation with Tenants' Forum

Taunton Deane HRA Housing Portfolio Maintenance Standards

This document, developed collaboratively with tenant representatives, sets out Taunton Deane Borough Council's Maintenance Standards for its housing portfolio, so all stakeholders and those delivering the standards have a clear understanding of expectations, supported by the Councils 'Customer Promises':-

- Taunton Deane Borough Council are committed to putting our Customers first.
- Whatever your enquiry you can expect our staff to be professional and fair.
- We will deal with your enquiry as soon as possible and keep you updated.
- If you would like to see a copy of our customer promise, known as our 'People First Customer Promise' please ask.

Asset management and planned maintenance

We will:

- Maintain all homes to legal safety standards and keep them in good repair.
- Improve/maintain all properties to, or beyond, the Decent Homes Standard, moving to the new Taunton Deane Homes Standard.
- Provide you with information giving details of any improvements which we propose to make, so that you know what will be done, when, and what to expect during the works.
- Give you a choice of works where possible/practical.
- Plan the schedule of the work programme to get best value from the investment made.
- Instruct Staff/Contractors to remove footwear/or use footwear covers before entering your home.
- Notify tenants, in writing, of proposed major works a minimum of six (6) months in advance, this will assist tenants who are planning to decorate/buy new floor covering.
- Give at least four (4) weeks notice before major works are to be carried out, with an approximate date.
- Ensure contractors write to tenants giving details of work to be carried out in their home.

- Ensure that all contractors treat tenants' possessions with respect during any work.
- Insist that contractors remove all debris created while work is carried out, this must not be placed in the residential bins allocated to tenants.
- Instruct contractors that they must not charge any tools, mobile telephones or other electronic device using the electricity supply paid for by the tenant.
- Ensure that all mains services, electricity, gas and water are reconnected and tested at the end of each day. The tenant must be informed and provided with a temporary alternative if this is not possible.

Key maintenance elements and planned improvements

Kitchens

- Replace kitchens every twenty **(20)** years, or as found to be necessary following a stock condition survey.
- Meet our maximum standards and material specification.
- Offer tenants a choice of kitchen unit colour, tile pattern, floor covering and wall paint colour.
- Design kitchen to maximise space and accommodate any existing appliances and white goods.
- Design kitchens to meet nationally agreed standards on quality and storage.
- Ensure the work is carried out with the minimum of disruption and to be completed within ten **(10)** working days.
- Provide a minimum of ten **(10)** Double electric sockets, this will reduce the amount of adaptors/trailing sockets which may be used.

Bathrooms

- Replace bathroom sanitary ware every thirty **(30)** years, or following a stock condition survey.
- Meet the Councils' Maximum standards and material specification.
- Offer a choice of floor covering and wall paint colour.
- Improve the design where possible.

- Ensure the work is carried out with the minimum of disruption and being completed within ten **(10)** working days.
- Generally an over bath shower mixer tap arrangement will be standard except where common sense and medical needs prevail.

Central heating boilers

- Replace boilers every fifteen **(15)** years, or following a stock condition survey.
- Ensure that replacement boilers meet the very latest energy efficient standard.
- Replace gas back boilers with wall hung combi boilers sited in the kitchen or other suitable position.
- Where suitable, solid fuel back boilers will be replaced with renewable energy heating or other alternative heating.
- Ensure the work is carried out with the minimum of disruption and being completed within ten **(10)** working days.

Heating system replacement

- Replace the heating distribution system every thirty **(30)** years, or following a stock condition survey.
- Install only equipment which meets the latest efficiency standard.
- Install only equipment fitted with a modern programmer, room thermostat and thermostatic radiator valves.

Windows and doors

- Replace windows and doors every thirty **(30)** years, or following a stock condition survey.
- Install windows and doors which meet high standards of security.
- Install windows and doors which are energy efficient, and meet/exceed the current standard.

Planned cyclical maintenance and servicing

Gas servicing

- Ensure that gas appliances are serviced annually as per the legal requirement for all landlords.
- Write to tenants a minimum of four (4) weeks before the annual gas service is due, preferably within ten (10) months of the due date to ensure that the work is carried out to comply with the law.
- Tenants should be aware that, in order to comply with their legal obligation as landlords the Council will carry out a 'Gas Break In' and/or a 'Disc Safe' if they fail to co-operate with the service contractors.
- Provide tenants with a Gas Safety Certificate, if required by the tenant, or the modern equivalent.

Electrical testing

- Inspect and test the electrical wiring in tenants' homes and communal areas every five (5) years to ensure that it meets the current safety standards.
- Provide tenants with a copy of the Electrical Safety Certificate, if required by the tenant, or the modern equivalent.
- Carry out any urgent recommendations within seven (7) days.

External decoration

- Decorate externally every six (6) years and ensure that the paint finishes specified are durable for six (6) years.
- Offer tenants a choice of colour for front and back doors
- Ensure that gutters and rainwater pipes are free from damage, leaks and blockages at least every year six (6) years, making use of scaffolding whilst it is in place.
- Wash down and service all PVCu windows and doors, guttering and drainpipes every six (6) years, making use of scaffolding whilst it is in place.
- Clean, oil and maintain hinges and catches on windows every three (3) years, and provide tenants with information to carry out this when safe/practical.

Response repairs

We promise to carry out a speedy repairs service that gets the job done on time and right first time. The Council will:

- Complete 91% of all repairs on a first time visit.
- Keep 90% of the appointments made without the need to move or cancel.
- Routinely offer an appointment for urgent and routine repairs.
- Carry out 100% of all emergency repairs within 24hrs of being reported.
- Carry out 97% of all routine repairs within 28 days of being reported.
- Ensure contractors show tenants their ID cards.
- Ensure contractors leave tenants' homes clean and tidy after any works. All debris/waste to be removed from site, and not to be placed in tenants recycling bins.
- Report repairs performance regularly to tenants in newsletters and on the Council's website.

Aids and adaptations

We will work with our partners in providing suitable solutions for tenants who need aids and adaptations, and will:

- Provide Occupational Therapist services to assess requests for aids and adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants to tenants where required.
- Process requests for minor adaptations costing less than £1,500 within two (2) working days.
- We aim to complete minor adaptations within ten (10) working days of agreeing to a request. We will carry out the work at a time which convenient to the tenant within normal working hours. If we cannot complete the work within this time scale we will explain the reasons, and agree a reasonable time scale.
- We aim to considerably reduce the time taken to carry out major adaptations, as far as we are able. Unfortunately the Council does not have control of works carried out via other agencies.

Energy & sustainability

We will:

- Comply with or exceed environmental and sustainability related legislation.
- Comply with other relevant standards and requirements.
- Continually improve through implementation of a certified environmental management system, to include:-
 - An Environmental Sustainability Strategy, with relevant targets, guided by the national sustainability policy, publishing annually progress against targets and reviewing the action plan.
- Across our offices, existing homes and new developments:-
 - Use energy, fuel and water efficiently, and reduce usage.
 - Strive to source locally materials, goods and services that are sustainable.
 - Reduce, reuse or recycle waste.
 - Remain committed to the prevention of pollution.
 - Support sustainable urban drainage.
 - Limit impacts to land and wildlife, and promote biodiversity.
 - Control nuisances to our neighbours, such as noise and dust.
 - Communicate the Environmental Sustainability Policy to our employees, empowering them to act.
 - Encourage and support positive environmental practices and performance from suppliers and contractors.
 - Engage with our tenants, regulators and other stakeholders to promote environmental sustainability.

Maintenance in the community

Estate Management

We will engage community sustainability in various forms, with the Council assisting and undertaking the following:-

- Creation and implementation of a community development plan for each area and review it annually.
- Placing stickers on apparently untaxed and abandoned cars on our land within a week of being notified.
- Respond positively to reports of abandoned properties to ensure that they are made safe, investigating the reason for the property being empty and acting to ensure the property is made available to re-let.
- Remove graffiti of an offensive nature within twenty four (24) hours of being notified.
- Ensure all communal areas are predominantly free of litter and rubbish.
- Where a cleaning service is provided, the standards of service will be displayed along with an attendance sheet for the cleaner to sign.

Asset management interim standards

Until recently different standards existed in these areas and our recent standardisation exercise identified that in some areas e.g. fencing, showers and sound insulation, there are financial implications to resolve. Our current financial plan is unable to support raising all our standards to the highest level. As a result we were only able to set a standard which was affordable. These standards are set out below.

This will allow our Tenant's Forum and Tenant Services Management Board Members to consider whether these standards should be increased.

Fences

We will:

- Normally provide a privacy panel (1 timber fence panel up to a maximum length of 1.8m from the back of the property and up to a maximum height of 1.8m) between each home. The remainder of the boundary between the gardens will be enclosed by a post and wire fence up to a maximum height of 1.2m.

- Where the boundary is next to a highway or public footpath, provide and/or maintain boundary fencing or walls up to a maximum height of 1.8m.
- For new homes, maintain the standard of boundary fencing/walls provided at the time of the development.
- Ensure that the fencing/gates to the front (rear where applicable) of your home is in a safe condition and that fixings on gates are in working order.
- Remind tenants that as a general rule, 'if you stand on your front doorstep, the fence on your right hand is your responsibility, and fence on the left is your neighbours' responsibility.

Showers

We will:

- Normally provide a bath mixer tap which includes an over bath shower head.
- Where the home already has an electric shower, we will maintain this until it fails and replace it with the bath mixer tap with over bath shower head.
- Normally provide shower tiling specifically around the shower area. This does not include a shower curtain or shower panels to prevent water splashing as this is a tenant responsibility.
- Fit electric showers where there is a clinical need and it is recommended by an Occupational Therapist.

Sound insulation

We will:

- Normally provide the level of sound insulation required by the Building Regulations in force at the time the home was built, and will strive to bring this to the current level as soon as possible or when it is an intrusion into tenants' lives.
- Where there are significant sound levels generated by the surrounding environment, e.g. by a nearby main transportation route, such as a motorway, mainline railway, or from nearby industrial or commercial activity, we will consider providing enhanced levels of sound installation, where practicable.
- In exceptional circumstances, where the property has no insulation between the floors or walls which it shares with neighbouring homes; and there is significant airborne or impact sound being transmitted between the homes (which cannot be prevented in any other way), we will consider providing enhanced levels of sound installation, where practicable.

TDBC Housing Lettable Standard

We believe every Council property should be clean and in a good state of repair when you move in. We have developed a lettable standard supported by a '**Lettable Standard Booklet**'.

Taunton Deane Borough Council's lettable standard sets out what you can expect and was agreed in consultation with tenants.

The council's responsibilities to maintain the property are set out in your tenancy agreement in sections **1.2 and 1.3**

Our Expectations of Tenants

For us to deliver the best possible service, you can help us by:-

- Keeping any arrangements made with you, especially staying at home when we need access.
- Contacting us as soon as possible, if your plans change.
- Opening doors and windows for painting and leaving them open for as long as possible afterwards. We in turn will try to have this work carried out during the warmer months.
- Opening doors and windows every day for two (2) weeks after we have painted them to stop the paintwork from sticking. We in turn will try to have this work carried out during the warmer months.
- Removing curtains and nets from windows before we start painting, letting us know if you need help with these tasks.
- Take part in estate walkabouts and share with us your needs and concerns.
- Keeping any shared areas clean and tidy.
- Disposing of your rubbish as specified in the '**Waste Management Leaflet**'
- Keeping your entrance, hall, stairway and landing clear for safe emergency exit.
- Reporting:
 - Any problems promptly.
 - Any anti-social behaviour in shared areas.
 - Anyone who dumps rubbish or blocks bin chutes.

Communication with Housing & Communities – Your Feedback

We are committed to listening to your feedback. We welcome suggestions, comments, compliments and complaints about our services.

We will use our best endeavours to resolve any concerns you raise with us as promptly as possible.

Our procedure for managing your feedback is in line with our Customer Care Strategy, which is being developed at present.

We are committed to treating you fairly and respectfully.

Feedback can be submitted in the following ways:

- Online: <https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/have-your-say/>
- Telephone: 01823 356 356
- Email: enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk
- In writing: **Customer Services**, Taunton Deane Borough Council, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE
- In person: Please visit our office at Deane House, for further information:
<https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/>

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