

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 14th February 2011

Tenant Services Management Board Annual General Meeting 2011

Report of Martin Price – Tenant Empowerment Manager

1.0 Executive Summary

The Terms of Reference of the Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) state that the TSMB holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in April of each year or within 15 months of the previous AGM. This report highlights the already agreed content of the AGM and examines other opportunities for the event.

It should be remembered that as it is nearing its first year in existence the TSMB has not previously held an AGM and therefore has no precedent or set format for the event.

2.0 Background

The Tenant Services Management Board held its first meeting in April 2010. One of its first tasks was to agree its Terms of Reference. Section 15 of this document states that:

“An Annual General Meeting will be held in April each year, or within 15 months of the previous AGM to:-

- Receive reports from the outgoing Chairperson on the board's activities during the year
- Elect Chairperson and Vice-chairperson
- Elect representatives to any Sub-committees or working groups
- Consider and vote on any resolutions put forward by tenants”

The above are the only requirements of the AGM set out in the Terms of Reference and can therefore be seen as the only compulsory items of the event.

In terms of the election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson it should be noted that Section 5 of the Terms of Reference state that:

- The board shall have a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson elected by the TSMB.
- Only voting tenant members of the board shall be eligible for nomination as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.
- The posts will be subject to elections at each Annual General Meeting. Should any post(s) fall vacant before an Annual General Meeting an election will be held at an ordinary board meeting.

3.0 Format of Annual General Meeting

As stated above, the TSMB has never before held an AGM and therefore has no previous format to follow. The TSMB could decide:

- To hold just the AGM
- To hold an AGM with other items to be added to the event's agenda such as a look forward to what the TSMB will be doing in the coming year
- To hold an AGM during a "Tenants' Day" (please see point 4 below)

4.0 "Tenants' Day"

A "Tenants' Day" is an event which typically runs all day (morning to evening, times to be agreed) and gives tenants an opportunity to gain information on and ask questions about topics that are of interest to them. The day is informal in terms of tenants can pop in at any time during the day, appointments do not have to be made.

Examples of groups or organisations that could be present during the day include:

From Tenants' Groups:

- Members of the TSMB to explain their role
- Members of the Tenants' Forum to explain their role

From TDBC:

- Repairs and Maintenance – discuss any issues in terms of the maintenance of a property and future major work programmes
- Housing Options – to discuss the allocating of properties and Choice Based Lettings
- Supported Housing – what options are available for those in need of support, be it sheltered housing, extra care housing and linking in with the Deane Helpline

- Estate Management – discuss issues such as what TDBC does about anti-social behaviour and different ways to pay rent
- Housing Benefit – to help with debt and welfare advice
- Community Development – opportunities for neighbourhood events and funding
- Affordable Housing – such as information on the regeneration of Halcon North

From outside of TDBC:

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Jobcentre Plus - to discuss employment opportunities
- Energy Efficiency organisations (and energy suppliers) – how to save money in relation to energy bills

The above suggestions are by no means exhaustive and if the TSMB approves the “Tenants’ Day” it would be key in deciding who to invite to the event. Members of TDBC departments and other organisations would be present at stalls throughout the day to answer questions and give information to tenants.

The actual AGM of the TSMB could form part of the “Tenants’ Day”, with the formal meeting perhaps being held at 2pm.

5.0 Venue of Annual General Meeting

Previous discussions with tenants have suggested that tenants prefer to visit a central, non-TDBC venue when attending events. One possibility is for the event to be held at the Somerset County Cricket Ground. TDBC could negotiate a beneficial rate with Somerset County Cricket which should reduce the costs of staging the event.

6.0 Publicity

Whichever format the TSMB chooses in terms of the AGM an effective publicity campaign is key to ensure as many tenants as possible know about the event and are able to attend.

As well as tenant representatives informing other tenants of the event TDBC staff such as the Media and Public Relations Officer, Estate Officers and Sheltered Housing Officers could be asked to help publicise the event in conjunction with posters, flyers and the Somerset County Gazette.

7.0 Financial Implications

The main costs of the event would be the hire of the venue and publicity. Once the TSMB has agreed the format of the AGM officers will provide costings and report back to the board.

8.0 Links to Corporate Aims (Please refer to the current edition of the Corporate Strategy)

Proposals have the potential to impact on the Corporate Aims: Tackling Deprivation and sustainable Community Development; Regeneration; and Affordable Housing

9.0 Recommendations

It is recommended the Tenant Services Management Board:

- Receive and note this report;
- Consider the format of the Annual General Meeting
- Consider the venue for the Annual General Meeting
- Task Officers with planning and organising the Annual General Meeting and update the Tenant Services Management Board at their March meeting.
- If a “Tenants Day” format is preferred consider which topics and organisations should be invited to and represented at the event.

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