

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Tenant Services Management Board 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012

### Tenants' Open Day

#### Report of the Tenant Empowerment Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jean Adkins)

#### 1. Executive Summary

A Tenants' Open 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.

The first such event was held in April 2011 and received a very positive feedback with over 100 tenants attending. This report examines arrangements for the 2012 event.

#### 2. Background

The first Tenants' Open day was held at the Somerset County Cricket Ground on 18 April 2011. Over 100 tenants attended the event, with over 20 stalls available including various departments of Taunton Deane Borough Council and representatives from external organisations who were able to answer questions on a wide variety of housing related issues and other matters.

A questionnaire was circulated in order to seek the views of those attending the event. Results included:

- 40% of respondents rated the day as 'Excellent', 60% as 'Good'. No respondents considered the event to be 'just okay', 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- 87% of respondents agreed that there were enough departments available on the day

The Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) was presented with a paper on feedback from the event at its meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011. At this meeting the TSMB resolved that the Tenants' Open Day should be an annual event.

### **3. Tenants' Open Day 2012 - Venue**

Last year it was agreed to hold the event on the same day as the TSMB Annual General Meeting. It was also agreed by tenants, councillors, staff and external organisations that the Somerset County Cricket Ground was a success as a venue, especially due to its central location and availability of parking spaces.

As the date of the TSMB AGM has been scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012 the Tenant Empowerment Team has booked the County Room of the Somerset County Cricket Ground for the whole day on this date.

### **4. Tenants' Open Day 2012 - Timing**

The 2011 event ran from 11am until 7pm. It should be noted that the amount of tenants attending the event reduced significantly after 5pm. TDBC also received feedback that some of the organisations left the event early and perhaps a shorter day would be more effective.

### **5. Tenants' Open Day 2012 – Invitations to be stallholders**

By looking at the organisations that attended last year and examining the feedback forms a suggested list of organisations and TDBC departments has been drawn up:

#### **Tenant Organisations**

Tenant Services Management Board

Tenants' Forum

#### **TDBC Housing Services**

- Estate Management
- Leaseholder Section
- Property Services
- Tenant Empowerment Team
- Supported Housing
- Housing Options
- DLO

#### **Other TDBC Sections**

- Housing Benefits
- Deane Helpline
- Environmental Health
- Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership
- Community Development
- Housing Enabling

#### **Non TDBC Organisations**

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Neighbourhood Care
- Centre for Sustainable Energy
- Avon and Somerset Police
- Age UK

- Job Centre
- SCAT

## **6. Tenants' Open Day 2012 - Publicity**

Analysis of feedback from tenants shows that the most popular way of hearing about the 2011 event was by Invitation letter (93%) followed by promotion of the event from a Tenant Services Management Board Member (7%). No respondents indicated they heard about the event via a Housing Officer, the newspaper article or the poster displayed.

It is therefore the intention that each tenant will be sent an invitation to the event, detailing time, venue and stall holders. Even though other forms of publicity did not prove to be particularly popular it would not be time consuming or expensive to advertise the event in the Somerset County Gazette, on the TDBC website and by posters.

## **7. Tenants' Open Day 2012 – Leaseholders**

As can be seen from Section 5 of this report TDBC will provide a separate stall to deal with leaseholder information and queries. Consideration will therefore have to be given to change the name of the event to "Tenants and Leaseholders Open Day". It will also be important to ensure all leaseholders are invited to the event.

## **8. Finance Comments**

The cost of hiring the County Room is free up to 5pm, with a charge of £125 to keep the venue open until 7pm. There would also be a cost to provide lunch for stall holders (dependant on how many stall holders are at the event) and teas/coffees/water throughout the day.

The cost of sending invitation letters to each tenant would be approximately £1,800. This includes design work, printing and postage.

The cost of the event can be funded from existing budgets.

## **9. Legal Comments**

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

## **10. Links to Corporate Aims**

The event can contribute positively to the following council aims: Tackling Deprivation and Sustainable Community Development; Regeneration; and Affordable Housing and Climate change.

## **11. Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## **12. Community Safety Implications**

The event gives the opportunity for tenants to hear what TDBC does to tackle anti-social behaviour and be able to ask questions of the relevant officers

## **13. Equalities Impact**

The County Room of the Somerset County Cricket Ground has been chosen as it has easy access for all.

The invitation letter will include a section that will allow tenants to have the information translated into a different language if necessary, in Braille, large print, audio tape or CD.

## **14. Risk Management**

There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

## **15. Partnership Implications**

The main aim of this event is to provide information to tenants that they will find interesting and worthwhile. It is therefore important to invite TDBC's partners to allow a wider amount of information.

## **16. Recommendations**

It is recommended the Tenant Services Management Board:

- Note this report
- Review and comment on the organisations to invite to the event as detailed in Section 5
- Review and comment on the timing of event as detailed in Section 4
- Comment on the methods of publicity as detailed in Section 6
- Consider whether the event should be renamed "Tenants and Leaseholders Open Day" as noted in Section 7

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