

**Minutes of the AGM meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 18 April 2011 at 5pm in The Long Room, Somerset County Cricket Club, Taunton.**

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

**Officers:** James Barrah (Community Services Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Nora Day (Housing Estate Manager), Simon Lewis (Strategy and Corporate Manager), Rosie Reed (Tenant Services Development Officer), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Phil Webb (Housing Manager – Property Services) and Natasha Williams (Administrative Officer).

**Others:** Councillor Morrell and Councillor Stuart-Thorn.

(The meeting commenced at 5pm).

**1. Introduction**

The Chairman welcomed all board members and tenants who attended the meeting and gave a brief history of the formation of the Tenant Services Management Board.

**2. Tenant Services Management Board 2010/2011**

The following issues raised at previous Tenant Services Management Board meetings were highlighted:-

- Service Standards;
- Housing Revenue Account Reform;
- Guest rooms in Sheltered Housing;
- Property Services Review;
- Annual Report to Tenants and Tenant Services Authority;
- Direct Labour Organisation Transformation Project;
- Energy Efficiency;
- Halcon North – Regeneration;
- Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget and
- Council House Voids

A 'welcome pack' had been produced for new tenants. The Audit Commission had commented that the 'welcome pack' included useful information for new tenants.

The Chairman thanked all board members for their time.

Councillor Bowrah thanked Dustyn Etherington for being Chairman of the Tenant Services Management Board. Councillor Brooks concurred.

### **3. The year ahead for the Tenant Services Management Board**

Mr Boland (Housing Services Lead) welcomed all at the meeting and advised that the Tenants Open Day had been a success.

The next 12 months were important as a new era for council houses was emerging. Mr Boland explained the need for self-financing and advised that this was the preferable route for Taunton Deane Borough Council to follow.

The Halcon North regeneration project was briefly outlined and tenants were advised that the Ward would be consulted throughout the project.

The recent status survey identified that 90% of tenants were satisfied with the Landlord service provided. This was an increase on last year and was deemed a positive insight and very good result. In 2008, the best landlords in the country received approximately a 90% satisfaction result, so Taunton Deane Borough Council had done well.

A new business plan was to be in place shortly. Strategic objectives would be included and shaping delivery of services for tenants.

### **4. Election of Chairman**

Dustyn Etherington was appointed as Chairman of the Tenant Services Management Board.

### **5. Election of Vice-Chairman**

Mark Edwards was appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Tenant Services Management Board.

### **6. Public Question Time**

Councillor Morrell raised three issues with board members. It was requested that a review occur with regard to the general fund and the cost of director charges.

It was also requested that the Tenant Services Management Board review the current level of vandalism to properties and consider where savings could be made. An increase in inspections could make savings in the long run.

Councillor Morrell also suggested that the board consider the disposal of land to registered social landlords.

Mr Barrah advised that Councillor Morrell's questions regarding the budget had already been received at a previous meeting and were currently being looked into.

Councillor Brooks advised that a breakdown of the cost of directors would be useful.

## **7. 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.

## **8. Budget Strategy Project**

Mr Lewis explained the significant pressure over the coming years on the Councils General Fund. The Budget Review project was seeking to create savings options equivalent to a 40% reduction over the four years from 2012/13 to 2015/16.

Taunton Deane Borough Council would look into current assets, procurement as well as technology. Current terms and conditions of staff would be reviewed as well as contracts with partnerships.

Mr Barrah advised board members that unprecedented change was going to occur to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Mr Barrah outlined the issue of self financing and that this would go live from April 2012. However, a range of options in the management and asset expenditure that would allow the Council to respond to other challenges facing the HRA.

It was requested that self-financing be put on the forward plan for the next meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board.

The board members were thanked for their time and commitment.

The next meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board would be held on 17 May 2011.

(The meeting ended at 6:10pm).