

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 19th November 2012 at 6:15pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chairman), Councillor Steve Brooks, Councillor Robert Bowrah, Mrs Jessie Bunn, Mrs Enid Drage, Mr Mark Edwards, Mr Dennis Galpin, Mr Ian Gould, Mrs Judith Hegarty, Mr Kevin Hellier, Mr Robert Middleton and Mrs Tammy Urquhart.

Officers: Steve Esau (Property Manager; Maintenance) James Barra (Health and Housing Manager), Paul Hadley (Housing Manager – Lettings), John Hart (Estate Officer), Steve Boland (Housing Services Lead), Phil Webb (Housing Manager; Property Services), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Sharon Harvey (Supported Housing Team Manager), Rosie Reed (Tenant Services Development Officer), and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

Others: Councillors J Adkins, F Smith and J Warmington
Graham Vickery from Halcon North Tenants & Residents Association
John Clarke; Managing Director and Owner ALHCO.
Alan Murray; Contractor Manager ALHCO
Dale Macy from ALHCO.

(The meeting commenced at 6.15pm)

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 29 October were taken as read and signed.

2. Declaration of Interest

The following members declared a personal interest as a council house tenants:

- Mr Dustyn Etherington
- Mr Mark Edwards
- Mrs Jessie Bunn
- Mrs Enid Drage
- Mr Dennis Galpin
- Mr Ian Gould
- Mrs Judith Hegarty
- Mr Robert Middleton
- Mr Kevin Hellier
- Mrs Tammy Urquhart

Councillor Bowrah declared a personal interest as he has family members who are council tenants.

Councillor Brooks declared a prejudicial interest as tenant of a Council owned property.

3. ALHCO Performance Report.

The Property Manager for Maintenance gave a verbal update accompanied by a spreadsheet detailing the ALHCO Quarter Two KPI Performance Report for the period

covering April to September for 2012. The spreadsheet detailing ALHCO performance included such headings as Servicing, Reactive Maintenance, Voids, and Requests for Service, Health and Safety and Finance.

The following points were covered during the brief update of the ALHCO representatives;

- Ongoing problems with data transfer between TDBC and ALHCO.
- All CP12's were now in place. These are done electronically via the PDA's.
- Issues around access rate. High number of failed entries.
- Cumulative number of voids for year so far is 267.
- Scheduling site was moved from Scotland to new site in Bristol.

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

- Board members voiced some personal concerns and problems related to missed or no shows for appointments regarding servicing or repairs.
*Currently, there are 368 engineers for ALHCO on the roads. The engineers should be calling the next appointment whilst on route.
The contact details for ALHCO representatives would be passed to the clerk for distribution to the members of the Board. Officers requested that they be included in any communications regarding issues and problems.*
- The chair requested that Board Members with personal issues relating to appointments please contact both ALHCO and TDBC directly.
- What system do you use to contact tenants?
*Currently, we send a letter, then a follow up letter finally a telephone call. But we are hoping to introduce a SMS service as well. So it would hopefully become letter, then follow up call with a reminder SMS.
Currently, we operate AM and PM appointments but we are looking to introduce two hour slots, which would then become one hour slots.*
- Where does the money from the sale of scrap go?
All scrap is dealt with by TDBC. This is taken to a Scrap Yard across from the depot.
- The notice time between the letter and the appointment was not enough. This worked out at less than a week
- Concerns were raised relating to engineers ability to use PDA technology. What is process for training staff?
All staff using the PDA's receives half a day's training initially. The PDA's includes a series of quick reference menus and prompt questions. Staff have access to mentor if they have any further problems when out in the field although, no staff have used the calling mentor service. Staff has received a further half a day's training.
- Could ALHCO representatives bring along PDA's for the Board to look at?
- The servicing of my boiler originally was due late May time but this last servicing wasn't until November.
ALHCO's aim is to get into a routine of completing servicing before the winter period to just leave repairs and emergency calls.

Resolved that the Officer's report be noted.

4. Performance Indicators Quarter Two – 2012/13.

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update accompanied by tables detailing the Health and Housing KPI Performance Report for the period covering Quarter Two of 2012. The tables detailed the overall KPI performance of Quarter two and the Top Ten Quarter one and two performance indicators selected by the Tenant Service Management Board during Quarter one performance report.

The overall KPI performance report included such headings as Managing Finances, Service Delivery Satisfaction, Service Delivery Decent Homes and Service Delivery Managing Housing Stock.

The Officers informed the Board Member that 49% of the 33 KPI were Green.

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

- On comparison of the two quarter's, there has been some improvement but only two have decreased. Could there be a link online to enable people to view the full report?
The Council would ensure the full report is available to view online. An Officer ensured the Board that they wouldn't be satisfied until all KPI's were green. We are improving slowly.
- Concerns raised around the VOID's area. Please could officers explain?
Council surveyors have gathered the data but were having problems entering the data into Academy IT system. This issue would affect the result against the target.
- Were the targets realistic with some of the KPI's? Would some of them be too high?
The target for repairs KPI's were realistic but there were other KPI targets requiring review.
- It was suggested a review takes place and re-set the KPI target to something more realistic.
- Is the target too low on point 12 of section four Service Delivery?
This completion element is to look and make assessment of the repairs required, not to make the repair. This may require another visit.
- Should the target for completion of repairs be 99.9% for emergency repairs?
Completion of the emergency maybe outside the essential 24 hours.
- Should Jobs requiring a second visit be excluded from this KPI?
There were limits to the current COSY IT system. But the Council would review the KPI's relating to repairs.
- The Council should stick to 28 days not have different levels.
- The Council is breaking down the repairs into separate section as well as emergency and non-emergency.
A single repairs category would not challenge the contractors to complete.
- Would the new version of COSY system work effectively with the PDA's? And would that affect the KPI's?
New version of COSY system has not been confirmed as yet.
- It appears that software issues and problems have had negative outcomes on the KPI's

Resolved that the: -

1. The Board noted the Officer's report; and
2. Officers to present a report or presentation to the Board on the current software systems as well as information of the new software system.

5. Financial Statement Quarter Two 2012/13.

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update accompanied by spreadsheets detailing the Housing Revenue Account Performance Scorecard Report for the period covering Quarter Two of 2012. The spreadsheets detailed the breakdown of overall performance of Quarter two split between capital and revenue.

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

The following points were covered during the brief update of the Health and Housing Manager;

- High Voids Cost; relating to houses in Halcon. Some requiring extensive repairs.
- Under spend in some Capital Programmes. This is a risk.
- Right to Buy sales have increased. Now stands at 15.

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

- When is the start of the heating contract?
There were a number of contracts concerning heating, but the larger contracts have not yet materialised. There also been a delay in the launch of a new energy efficient electric heater.
- Does this mean that those due to have their heating upgraded, would have to wait?
100 new heating systems have been installed some through ALHCO.
- In this financial performance report, there seem to be a lot of red unhappy boxes? As well as a lot of zero spend; if you don't use it, you lose it.
Unfortunately, this is nature of finance. The council is looking at either starting small short term or more large long term contracts. The preference is start the process of procurement for more large long term contracts. But the procurement process is complicated.
- What is the status of the soundproofing installation?
This is done in the duplex flats between the floors but this would only be done when both floors are empty.
Maybe this should be removed from the capital lines, as this only seems to see occasional activity.
The officer's confirmed these would be moved to the Revenue budget.
- Why when phase one and two were incomplete, were the Council starting phase three?
There were several sets of contracts and contractors running at the same time, some with the DLO.
- What is the progress of the bathroom contract?
This is 200 house contract for a period of one year. However, the Council has met that and provided more than 200.

- When updating tenants' bathrooms, why are the Council not using dual flushes on the toilets?
This would be included in the details of the new long term contract during the procurement process. The officers would include the Board Members when the specifics of the contract details are being decided.
- There is an open procurement session at Yeovil for Advantage Southwest for doors etc. Maybe more representatives would want to attend?

Resolved that the officer's report be noted.

6. Transfer Removal Grant Policy and Leaflet Report.

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the details of a proposed new Transfer Removal Grant (TRG) Policy and an updated TRG Information Leaflet that aims to assist council tenants when moving to more suitable accommodation.

The supply of appropriately sized good quality housing has a key role to play in positively influencing living standards, health, development and the wellbeing of households.

Demand for social housing in Taunton Deane, in particular family sized housing, is such that it would mean a long wait for applicants.

The aim of the TRG policy is to encourage existing Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) tenants who are under occupying their property, or those who were willing to vacate a purpose built disabled property, to move to another council or housing association accommodation that would be more suitable in meeting their current housing needs.

The full details of the policy were presented in addition to this report. The policy sets out:

- Which tenants are eligible;
- What support Housing Services can give to tenants who wish to move to more suitable accommodation; and
- How and what grant they can expect on completion of their move.

The cost of implementing this policy would be met within existing budgets. The Housing Services current annual TRG budget is £30,000.

Consultation with tenants was carried out between the 1st July and 31st August 2012. Tenants who had previously accessed the existing TRG scheme were canvassed for their views and comments.

A second stage of consultation was completed with the members of the Tenants' Forum on the 21st September 2012 where the proposed new policy and leaflet were discussed and comments received.

Subject to agreement/approval the policy and information leaflet would be implemented with effect of 2nd January 2013.

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

- Concerns were expressed over the size of the Grant available. I think £2000 is enough of incentive. The PR on the availability of this Grants needs to be increased.
The current budget is £30,000, next year the budget would be £60,000. The number of TRG's by the end of the year would be 20, currently stands at 17 with three more in the pipeline.
- Is the decision criteria related to number of bedrooms and number of people occupying the house?
Also depends on whether or not you were going up or down in size of property.
- Are the house details included on the application form?
Most people downsizing don't know what house they are going to.
- In reference made a previous Board Meeting, I believe that tenants should be rewarded if they leave houses in good condition.
Most people wanting to downsize leave their houses in good condition. This is included in the criteria of the Grant.
- General agreements about the need for increased advertisement, as people were aware they are rattling around in a house too big for them.
Executive Member present acknowledged the comments and views of the Board and the situation would be reviewed.
- Would this be advertised in Tenants Talk Newsletter on a regular basis?
- All Board Members agreed that the size of the grant was too small relative to the size of the properties.

Resolved that the: -

3. The Board noted the Officer's report; and
4. The Board showed their support for new policy and information leaflet.

7. Verbal Update on Leycroft Grove Local Lettings Plan.

The Estate Officer gave a verbal update on the Local Letting Plan (LLP) at Leycroft Grove. This included a brief summary of the situation in the area prior to the implementation of LLP as part of wider improvement plan including the Police and other agencies as well as an update on the ongoing situation at Leycroft Grove and the improvements since the start of LLP.

The following points were covered during the summary of situation prior to the introduction of LLP;

- Leycroft Grove is made up of 32 residential buildings.
- Recurring problems included drug abuse, ASB and noise issues.
- Increasing amounts of Police activity included 12 drug warrants.
- 65 Police incidents reported prior to LLP
- Police introduced a Wider Improvement Plan; this took the problem solving approach, which included more foot patrols and introduction of the LLP.

When properties in an LLP controlled area come up for re-let, this is openly advertised on the property information. The applicants to a property in LLP area were rigorously checked to make there was no history of drug or alcohol abuse, ASB, priority going to mature applicants and/or seeking or employed.

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

- The Board would like to congratulate the officers and the Council for your efforts and progress with Leycroft Grove LLP.
- There were some drug use but the majority have moved on. It's quite an achievement.
There were still problems at Leycroft Grove, it's not perfect but these can be pinpointed.
- Would it be done as elsewhere, maybe on a smaller scale?
This has to be part of wider plan; it would work solely on its own.
- We would understand the low turn around for Voids in this area if that means the right person is allocated to the property.
- The LLP is a low key but effective element to improving problem streets and areas. Where have these people gone?
I don't know where these people have applied after the Council have evicted them. Most likely spread throughout the housing stock.
- The improvement in Leycroft Grove, could this be carried out in areas of Priorswood?
Plans have already been set in motion for LLP at Lyngford Crescent as part of a wider plan to improve that area. This was discussed at a previous Board meeting.
- It's a shame this was not implemented years ago. The improvements could be extended further.
- LLP is making people of Leycroft Grove feel safer.

Resolved that the officer's report be noted.

8. Verbal Update on Halcon North; the Next Steps.

Councillor Brooks left the room before the decision of this item after declaring a prejudicial interest.

The Tenant Services Management Board went into confidential session. The Health and Housing Manager gave a confidential verbal update on the Halcon North Regeneration Project.

Resolved that the officer's report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 9.05pm)