

**Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 4 February 2013 at 6pm in Newton Road Community Hall, Newton Road, Taunton.**

**Present:** Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chairman), Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mr I Gould, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr R Middleton, Mrs T Urquhart.

**Officers:** James Barrah (Health and Housing Manager), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), Rosie Reed (Tenant Services Development Officer) and Tracey Meadows (Corporate Support Officer).

**Others:** Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), Joy Wishlade (Strategic Director), Councillors Jean Adkins, Fran Smith and Jane Warmington.

**Public:** Miss Bleeks, Mrs Cure, Mrs Cure-E-Couto, Mrs Goddard, Miss Parsons, Mr Pierce, Mr Rawlins and Miss Wilkins.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

**1. Apologies**

Councillors Bowrah and Brooks, Mrs E Drage, Mr M Edwards and Mr K Hellier.

**2. Halcon North Regeneration – Creechbarrow Road Development Project. Report of the Health and Housing Manager, James Barrah.**

The Health and Housing Manager, James Barrah, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Proposed Redevelopment of Creechbarrow Road. The report proposals to undertake a redevelopment of housing land at Creechbarrow Road, Taunton. It identifies two potential sections of a combined project, one to be in the ownership of a partner Housing Association, the other to be retained by the Council. The project has the potential to secure significant investment in the Halcon Ward for new housing and significantly increase the affordable housing stock in this location.

In relation to the Housing Association portion of the site the report seeks a decision to progress transfer of part of the site and a development of 30 affordable homes.

In relation to the TDBC portion of the site the outline of a scheme is set out, subject to a satisfactory detailed scheme appraisal. A request is made to approve the redevelopment of the TDBC portion of the site broadly in accordance with the sketch plan provided, and for that purpose to undertake activities.

After the presentation of this item, the Chairman read out comments from the Halcon Ward Councillors reflections on this proposal, this was circulated on separate sheets and acknowledge by the reporting Officer.

During the discussion of this item, board members and the public made the following comments and asked questions:- (*Responses shown in italics*)

- If the proposal goes ahead when will Knightstone want to start building?  
*Knightstone have a firm time scale on the site, the scheme needs to be finished by March 2015 as it is Time Bound, if not funding will be withdrawn.*
- Can we pick the accommodation/area that we are expected to move to?

*We need to reach a situation that is acceptable to everyone, there are limitations on stock but will do we can to accommodate you.*

- Are you going to payout compensation for the inconvenience of moving costs etc?  
*There is an award for disturbance, this is about £4,700, but it is based on individual needs.*
- Would the hub replace the Link Centre?  
*This has not been discussed yet, we need more details.*
- There is concern for the elderly and disabled, how are they going to manage if they have no one to help them move, these are their twilight years and they do not want the added stress of worrying about moving.  
*We have "Tailored Support" which will come in and pack your items for you.*
- Three residents have been living in the same block since they were built in 1976, how are you going to make sure that they stay together through the decanting?  
*We need to look at what support we can give these residents, this may be through Tailored Support or other methods.*
- Are the residents going to be phased in once the houses/flats are complete?  
*Residents will be phased in once parts of the scheme are completed.  
Decanting is not new to the Council, we will speak to the individual concerned and take into consideration their individual needs.  
People will benefit from a better standard of living, cheaper fuel costs, the physical look of the area and maintaining the community spirit.*
- We welcome these comments as residents fear that they may not go back to their home and it will not be the same community spirit that they have enjoyed.  
*Everyone that is decanted will be able if they wish to go back.*
- Concerns that you are only thinking of the land and what you can build on it.  
*This scheme is not a profit driven project; it is an investment in the area. We want to hear your concerns and fears, you can be assured that although there will be an impact we will make sure that it is as stress free as possible.*
- We just want the best for every tenant and all the problems need to be solved before you embark on this project. As the previous project was not appropriate for the area. It is a tough decision that we have been asked to make, but we are please that we are going to gain more family Council homes.
- Is there an expectation that you will put up the rent on these new properties?  
*This is expected as they will be brand new properties built to a code 4 standard. Social rent levels have not been looked at for 20 years, so this is a new thing for us; we need to balance all perspectives. Rents must be the same across the board as older stock is costing more to maintain due to planned maintenance.*
- Does that mean that you will also put up the Council Tax?  
*The District Valuer will look at this and we will be taking advice from them.*
- Why can't a condition be put in that previous tenants pay the same rent as they were before and when they vacate the property, the rent goes up to what it should be?  
*This is a bit tricky, due to administration and fairness.*
- On the Right to Buy Scheme how will this work as after 5 years you can apply to the Council to buy your property?  
*This properties are covered for 15 years, if you do decide that you wish to buy your property you will need to pay the full construction cost, with no discount applied. After 15 years the property discount is applied as per the Right to Buy Scheme.*

The Chairman read out the recommendations from the report. These were agreed by the board members but they also stated that the scheme did not address the other areas of deprivation in Halcon.

**Resolved** that the report would be look at by the Full Council in March 2013.

(The meeting ended at 7.35pm)