

**Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Monday 18 March 2013 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House Taunton.**

**Present:** Mr Dustyn Etherington (Chair), Mrs J Bunn, Mrs E Drage, Mr M Edwards, Mr I Gould, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr R Middleton Mrs T Urquhart, Councillor Bowrah and Councillor Brooks.

**Officers:** Shari Hallett (Health and Housing Business Support Lead), Chris Hall (Commercial and Community Services Manager), Steve Esau (Property Manager; Maintenance), Phil Webb (Housing Manager; Property Services), Steven Clarke (Tenant Services Development Officer), Stephen Boland (Housing Services Lead), James Barrah (Health and Housing Manager), Steve Major (Housing Development Project Lead) and Emma Hill (Corporate Support Officer).

**Others:** Councillors Jane Warmington, Graham Vickery from Halcon North Tenants & Residents Association  
Nicholas Taylor

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

**1. Apologies**

Mr K Hellier and Mr D Galpin

**2. Public Question Time**

Resident of Kilkenny Court expressed their concerns at the state of communal bathrooms as well as other communal areas that had clearly fallen into disrepair and the community feel that these areas need some attention. The guttering around the outside was also broken and along with the continual problems with the lift.

*The Property Manager for Maintenance said that he would arrange for himself and a surveyor to set up a meeting and inspect these issues. Concerning the lift, the Council were aware of the continual problems and were investigating the financial aspect of replacing it.*

Committee Member also a resident of Kilkenny Court enquired whether or not the Council had given out personal details of tenants or residents to private companies. This was in relation to difficulties had when trying to change energy suppliers after recently moving into the Court and also after being contacted by the current supplier of the flat with his knowledge.

*The Health and Housing Manager suggested that they discuss this matter away the Board meeting.*

**3. Repairs Review 2012 – 2013 Report.**

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the response to repairs response rates being off target within the Health and Housing scorecard, the Health and Housing Manager requested a review of repairs.

## Actions Taken to Date



- Flow chart produced to understand the repairs process.
- ALHCO separately had updated the Tenant Services Management Board on two occasions.
- Two meetings held with DLO to jointly discuss how to improve performance.
- There had been an 8% increase in DLO job tickets issued to beginning of Feb 2013 and 6% increase in overall contractor tickets which had increased pressure.
- A new report had been created to produce the completed jobs figures and we had reviewed all open tickets and closed those that were mistakenly left open.


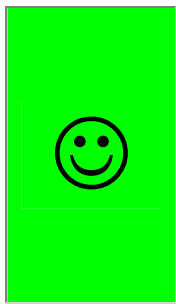
Other actions taken to date in relation to changes:-

- All DLO tradesmen now telephone each job before attending; Tenant's telephone number was flagged on the tickets.
- Outstanding job report produced for all contractors and results sent to the Property Manager (Maintenance).
- DLO produces weekly open ticket report to analyse outstanding jobs.
- The completed job report was created to allow monthly monitoring of the statistics.
- IBTSU (I have been to see you) process used when a tenant was out had changed, jobs were now closed on second aborted visit where there had been no one home and answering the telephone on two occasions.
- Discussions with DLO glazing contractor have begun and hope to be able to email tickets to them.
- The DLO was investigating capacity issues.
- Tickets which were complete and had remained unclosed and now had been closed.

The method of reporting statistics had been jointly reviewed and the data report was flawed. Firstly, the report included all DLO services for example ground maintenance; this had the effect of keeping tickets open and making statistics appear worse. Other refinements need to be made e.g. due to constraints between computer systems emergency or out of hour job tickets would show as not being completed on time. To rectify the effect of this in the performance figures to date, we were manually reviewing all of these job tickets. This problem would resolve itself when the "Cosy" computer software was replaced but in the meantime we would need to change the way we enter retrospective tickets to give a more accurate reflection of performance.

The improvement in statistics shown below: (figures are for Quarters 1 to 3 2012/13)

<p><b>10. Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b> Completion of repairs within priority target times: Emergency (within 24 hours) Target =98%</p>		<p>Was 92.01% Now 92.07% We are ranked 253 out of 272 for all providers and 36 out of 41 for all councils who own stock.</p>
<p><b>11. Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b> Completion of repairs within priority target times:</p>		<p>Was 65.52% Now 83.92% and we are ranked 245 out of 260 for all</p>

Urgent (within 3 working days) Target =94%		providers and 36 out of 41 for all councils who own stock.
<b>12. Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b> Completion of repairs within priority target times: Non Urgent (up to 28 days) Target =85%		Was 80.62% Now 90.02% and we are ranked 231 out of 264 for all providers and 31 out of 40 for all councils who own stock. (Changed from Red to Green)

NB: The effect of not being able to demonstrate completion of retrospective tickets on time was still a factor within these figures.

There was still further work to do to understand and improve our repairs performance figures but work had begun and would continue.

The following points were covered during the brief update of the Commercial and Community Services Manager;

- There had been a new focus on priority reports, which could now be drawn from Academy instead of the COSY system.
- Reported problems with return around times for glaziers. This was originally completed by trained DLO workers during the days of single glazed windows but the current double glazed windows must be completed by contractor and was not possible to turn around within seven days. New timescales consist on temporary plastic pane within 24 hours and then 28 days to replace.
- Currently, there were nine vacancies at the DLO. With the first phase of internal advertisement completed only five applicants so far.
- With an increased level of work due to reduced number of staff, timescales had been affected.
- There had been successful tender for the new software including hand held computers. The completion timescale could be up to nine months for full installation. Contract had been awarded but not signed.

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

- For clarification, do you they need to come and measure each window requiring replacing or could they not keep a template for roads or areas of houses? *Each window must be individually measured in case of movement within houses. Each window can be different by millimetres or centimetres.*
- A Committee Member had been notified of a requirement to change a single glazed window in the house but not date was given and this was months ago. *It depends whether it was a window refresh changing from single to double or a broken window replacement as to which department would be dealing with it but there was a contract for refresh windows as well as broken window replacement.*
- It used to be that the Council a policy that they didn't remove and change the window during the winter months (with exception to broken windows), what had happened to this?

*The Council currently had a number of different contracts running all best to be done during the warmer months and not enough to months to complete all so some windows had to be refreshed during the colder months.*

- Plastic Window Pane replacement over broken windows instead of wooden boarding was step in the right direction. Boarding makes estate and community look ugly.
- *The Procurement processes was lengthy and had limits so the Council were trying wherever possible to keep the work in-house.*
- After the Officer's review of the repairs figures, they appear to be more accurate and improving, which was re-assuring but the figures for emergency repairs still gives the Board concerns.

*The Council were still getting problems with retrospective tickets being entered after emergency call-outs over the weekend. This was the next task on the list to sort out so they wouldn't effect the next quarter and would be more accurate.*

- With the introduction of PDA's, how would that affect data transfer? Would it cause problems?

*The Council had been told the data transfer between PDA's and back office would be seamless due to the company already providing the Council back office software.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

#### **4. Gas and Other Heating Quarterly Monitoring Report**

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the report and annex had been produced to give members monitoring information on the performance of the servicing and repair contract with ALHCO.

This report was for Quarter three showing performance data; in addition the report highlights issues with the contract and improvements being made. TDBC had a responsibility as a landlord to ensure that all rented properties had a valid Gas Safety Certificate; an annual gas safety check had to be carried out. In addition the contractor was responsible for the servicing of solid fuel and oil appliances together with checking electric storage heaters, servicing of extract fans, smoke detectors and breakdown repairs.

At the end of Quarter three we had 72 properties without a valid Cp12 Certificate, 50 properties attributed to being lost off the ALHCO's Aero mark IT System following the change over from Scotland to Bristol at the end of December. At the time 45 properties had been revisited, the 5 remaining properties which we had not been able to gain access. These properties had been included on the March Hit list to gain access. These visits take place from 26 to 28 March. The remaining 22 were late services all of which had valid certificates.

A summary of additional concerning Reactive Maintenance for Quarter Three:

- KPI figures were showing below target in all areas in Quarter Three
- One of the problems was the manual handling of data back from the contractor
- Also the number of different appliance types a total of 144 making it difficult for the contractor to achieve a first time fix
- The void levels had been above average for Quarter three.

- The work ALHCO had to do was been carried out on time but this had do with a number of installations where systems had not passed the gas safety inspection.
- A third party organisation called Quarter Gas to carry independent audit of ALHCO's work. They carried out audits in the last quarter, whilst there were no serious issues.

There were still a number of issues and problems that the Council and ALCHO were working together to resolve. Some of these can be resolved in the short term others would take longer particularly around data transfer, which cannot fully be resolved until we had automated links between academy and aero mark. Below were a number of actions and improvements that are being carried out:

- Weekly Operational meetings.
- Weekly monitoring information and data from Aero mark.
- Gas Officer attending Bristol Call Centre monthly to discuss and resolve issues with the Call Centre Manager.
- South West Audit Partnership was carrying out an audit of Gas Servicing and Maintenance Management. We were hoping to see the results in April. Any actions or recommendations would then be put into an action plan.
- Working with Alhco, Taunton Deane Borough Council's Finance and Information Technology to explore interfacing between the two systems.

Heating systems that were serviced regularly work more efficiently therefore reducing CO2 emissions and the environmental impact.

Currently, the revenue surrounding Scrap Metal stands at £7,500 but there had been problems around transferring of money. But the estimated total at the End of Year looks to be around £10,000. This would be going to the HRA.

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

- Could the Council consider standardising system around the variety of appliances?  
*The initial work with ALCHO around the discontinuation of parts had helped with the current five year replacement program.*
- The replacement of back to back boiler, could this include heaters?  
*The Council were still installing heaters but it required a letter from a Doctor stating they require instant heat in the form of electric fire.*
- Was the Council considering Carbon Monoxide detectors for all open flu appliances?  
*The Council would be looking into this.*
- Concerns rose over numbers of jobs cancelled (78), although percentages dropped off rapidly later in the Quarter four.  
*The Council would be working with ALCHO to bring them up.*
- Council data about individual properties needs to be reviewed as Board Member had been contacted about having their Gas Boiler serviced but they had a Rayburn.  
*There problems around data for the Council and ALCHO. With the new Software and PDA system, the majority of these would be solved.*
- Concerns rose over the remaining outstanding CP12 within Tenant houses. Couldn't the Council gain access with out permission?

*The Council cannot just gain access to the property. We must give notice of a minimum of 24 hours but the entire process starts with plenty of time before the current certificate expires.*

*Access without permission would need to be an emergency. The Council had a strict procedure for all issues.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

## **5. Contracts Specifications Report**

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the start new contracts for the replacement of timber fascias and soffits with UPVC, and new heating installations using air source heat pumps such as:

- Air source Heat Pumps and Cylinders
- White plastic rainwater installation
- Radiators and Valves

Members were previously briefed of the planned Capital workload for 2013/14 and budgets had now been confirmed; the Housing Capital budget being in the sum of £7.7 Million.

### **Fascias and Soffits**

In order to be able to properly deliver the works necessary within the HRA 30 year Business Plan it was essential Housing Property Services prepare a number of contracts within the next six months. This would ensure that arrangements were in place to cover all the eventualities for planned and responsive work to be covered.

The first in this line of contracts was for the replacement of existing fascias and soffits to roofs with UPVC cladding. This work would originally been part of our planned external repairs and redecoration works but it had not been part of it for the last five years. Access to high level within those contracts was inordinately expensive for the volume of work that was to be done and as savings would be needed at the time to afford Decent Homes work. It was decided to postpone this work until such time as a full programme could be devised. In the meantime, if roofing work had been carried out then we would replace fascias and soffits as part of that work. We were now in a position where fascias and soffits would be programmed as a stand-alone contract.

This year's contract was a trial project on one type of gutter system (concealed) and was being part funded by budget slipping from 2012/13 into the New Year. We shall take what we learn from this one type of guttering and expand it into a longer term contract later in 2013/14.

### **Houses**

The houses had been described in location and by type. Each house was a complete installation with components described for each roof slope or elevation. The "Total" figure was the number of that type of house in that location. Downpipes were replaced in the existing positions.

## **Flats**

The blocks of flats had been described as a single installation to be replaced in totality, with downpipes replaced in the same position as existing.

## **Maintenance, defects liability and servicing**

The air source heat pump equipment was supplied through the Advantage South-West procurement arrangement with a direct supply contract between the contractor and Daikin. The Daikin equipment was provided with a five year manufacturer's warranty.

The Contractor would accept a 12 months defects liability period under the minor works contract with Taunton Deane Borough Council

The Contractor would enter into a servicing Contract with Taunton Deane Borough Council as described herein for both previous installations and the works currently being tendered for.

## **Taunton Deane Borough Council Tenants**

The Contractor would be required to liaise with the tenant in terms of the design and installation of the Daikin system and prior to the handover, instruct the tenant in the use of the equipment and provide the tenant with the operating hand book.

It was intended that the void properties would be added into this contract and the Contractor would be required to return to the property to instruct the new tenant in the use of the equipment as described above at no additional cost.

The individual property design was to be achieved with discussion with the resident and due regard to the resident's possessions and furniture layout.

Each individual property design was to be approved by the Supervising Officer before implementation.

The following design criteria were to be adopted in respect of each individual property. Where a property was presented when these design criteria were not met, the property was to be drawn to the attention of the Supervising Officer.

1. External walls to be insulated cavity walls with facing brick external skin and block work inner skin.
2. Windows to be UPVC double glazed
3. Roofs to be insulated to a minimum thickness of 200mm

Consideration was to be given to the resident's particular usage of the property.

Where necessary, consideration was to be given to the layout of the garden and access to the building, including both front and rear doors, and where re-design of the pathways to accommodate both the unit and its drip tray arrangements was required, this was to be implemented with the submitted design.

We had a current contract with Otter Heating Services who were continuing to install until such time as the new contract was in place; this was likely to be late spring time.

A consistent problem was that not all tenants that we offer it to actually welcome it and although the Council had a list of prospective addresses for installation, they were met

with fair amount of resistance. We were visiting tenants in advance of the works now in an attempt to convince them of the benefits available.

This work was necessary to be able to deliver the Medium-Term Capital Programme and the HRA 30 year Business Plan.

This work would feed into “Quality Sustainable Growth and Development” and in addition would help to deliver the HRA 30 year Business Plan.

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

- What would do about those Tenants who refuse the installation of new systems?  
*Installation plans based around life of heating systems. Tenants would refuse installation for many reasons but Council would have to accept and wait until property becomes available.*
- Would the Council be tackling Night Storage Heaters?  
*The Council would be tackling this and easily programmable systems installed where no gas was available.*
- Could the Council look into sustainable and alternative heating sources with increasing gas prices? And would be Tenants be allowed to choose what heating sources would be installed into the property?  
*The Council were investigating and making sure the alternatives were future proof.  
The Tenants preferences would be taken into account but there were many factors that the Council were required to take into account.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer’s report.

## 6. Welfare Reform Strategy Update Report

Considering the report previously circulated, concerning the details of a new Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan that aims to help with mitigating the impact of welfare reform on Taunton Deane Borough Council’s housing service and its tenants.

The action plan had been developed alongside the strategy and pulls together into one plan objectives and activities on benefits and money advice, financial inclusion and affordable warmth.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 would be enacted on the 1st April 2013. The four major changes that were taking place:

- Under Occupation (bedroom tax)
- Benefit Cap
- Non Dependant Deductions
- Universal Credits

The key parts of the three year Housing Services Welfare Reform Strategy was:

- The strategic vision;
- The strategic objectives; and



- The priorities for action.

Details of Housing Services welfare Reform Strategy Action Plan were presented to the Board Members along with this report.

Of the 500 affected people within Taunton Deane 283 had been visited by Housing Officers so far. These visited were to establish their position and advise them of their options.

Feedback had been obtained from tenants and members of the Tenants' Forum.

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

- Concerns raised the use of direct debits within the Welfare Reform and Benefits if these benefits fail to make it into bank accounts on time, then bill direct debits would fail and people would be charged.  
*When Universal Credit starts everyone would go to electronic payment but Somerset Savings and Loan run a Jam Jar accounts but the Council would be giving them options but not forcing them.*
- Had rent arrears increased? How would people cope from receiving money weekly to monthly? What about those people who was not IT savvy?  
*There had been an 11% increase in rent arrears. There would be a transitional grant to those changing from Benefits to Universal Credit. There would a post put into place to assist with this change.*
- Had the Council contacted any Local Authorities that didn't retain any housing stock to see in regards to Welfare Reform?  
*The Council had contact other Local Authorities and were doing similar breakdown.*
- Did the figures for downsizing and upsizing match? 516 people affected.  
*40 People wanting to downsize and these were encouraged to mutually exchange but there would enough one and two bedroom houses or stock.*
- Did our plans for house building match our demographic need? What would happen to those wanting to downsize but there wasn't the stock to do so?  
*The new build size would be mix of house sizes. This would make for a better community. These would qualify for the discretionary housing payments to help.*
- Advertise through 'Tenants Talk'. Pull on the heart strings around people needing to move due to over crowding and encourage those living in houses to big for them. Sort of Peer pressure.
- The Council need to help people under the pressures on Council Housing Stock.  
*Not all vacant or available properties were advertised on Homefinder, only the majority. There were some exclusions i.e. direct matches. These maybe families suffering or receiving violence towards them.*

**Resolved** that the:-

1. The officer's report was noted.
2. The Board Members supported the recommendation for approving the new Welfare Reform Strategy and Action Plan to Executive Councillor Jean Adkins.

## **7. Report on Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day and Tenant Services Management Board Annual General Meeting.**

The Tenant Services Development Officer gave a short verbal update confirming that the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Open Day would be held on 15<sup>th</sup> April at Somerset County Cricket Ground starting 10:00am running until 5:00pm and also the Tenant Services Management Annual General Meeting would be on the same day in The Long Room at 3:30pm.

The Tenant Services Development Officer mentioned that the Open Day would require a number of meeters and greeters and the majority of the Member made known they would be available to help at some during the day.

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

- It was requested that a new batch of Board Member name badges be ordered for the event as some Members had them and some did not.  
*Officers said they would order those for on the day.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

## **8. Verbal Update on Creechbarrow Road Development Project.**

The Health and Housing Manager gave a verbal update on the Creechbarrow Road Development Project. Firstly, the Health and Housing Manager introduced the new Housing Development Project Lead to the Board Members.

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

- The Council had received the first acceptants for moving from Creechbarrow Residents.
- The Buy Back process had now started.
- The Council had started a cycle of fortnightly meetings with at least 50 actions taken away for each meeting.
- There had been continual changes to the development project design. During the pre-planning meeting had brought up more changes. An up to date version would be brought to the Board Members soon.
- The Officers stated there was still a lot to do.
- There would be two consultation events:
  - 9 April 2013 from 4:00pm until 7:00pm at Baptist Church in Halcon.
  - 10 April 2013 from 4:00pm until 7:00pm at Deane House
- If the consultation dates were not convenient, individual session can be arranged.
- The Council was up to date with all its permissions in regards to the project. The next decision would be going to Full Council in July.

The officer detailed the project roles of officer within Taunton Deane for the development project:

- Financial Element – Lucy Clothier

- Liaison Element – Rosie Reed
- Communication & Consultation – James Barraah & Rosie Reed
- Open Space Element – Debbie Arscott
- Legal Element – Nicola Cooper

The Council was looking at its work stream around how the Council would let the properties on the new development:

- Looking wider for those overcrowded within the Halcon area.
- Effective letting for the development site.

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

- Board Member asked for clarification in relation to the consultation event on 9 April, was this open to all?  
*The consultation event was open to all, both residents of Creechbarrow Road as well as wider Halcon Community.*
- What were the Council doing about the existing garages on the Creechbarrow Road Development?  
*The garages within the Knightstone section of development had been done already but those within the Taunton Deane section still to be done.*
- What was the risk of RTB for the larger properties? Could the Council index them?  
*That is risk for all the houses but there were restrictions to this brought to the Board at a previous report. The officers would look into indexing the new houses. The government were actively encouraging RTB.*

**Resolved** that the Board noted the Officer's report.

(The meeting ended at 8.00pm)