

Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on Tuesday 13 October 2015 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mr R Balman (Chairman)
Mr A Akhigbemen, Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr I Hussey, Mr K Hellier, Councillor Bowrah, and Councillor Appleby.

Officers: Jan Errington (Project Manager), Simon Lewis (Assistant Director – Housing and Community Development), Paul Grant (Building Services Manager) and Emma Hill (Democratic Services Officer).

(The meeting commenced at 6.05pm)

1. Apologies

Ms M Davis and Martin Price

2. Public Question Time

No questions received for Public Question Time.

3. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Bowrah declared a personal interest as member of his family were Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants and declared a personal interest as family member had applied to the Council's Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund 'Homeownership' Cash Incentive Scheme.

Councillor Appleby declared a personal interest as Leaseholder of Taunton Deane Borough Council property.

Mr A Akhigbemen, Mr R Balman, Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr K Hellier, Mr I Hussey, and Mr R Middleton declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

4. Extra Care Housing Services Review – Options Appraisal

Consideration of a more detailed update report, which outlined the findings of the options appraisal for the provision of Taunton Deane Borough Council's (TDBC) Extra Care Housing, which was to be re-commissioned as an integrated care and support service through a competitive tendering exercise due for release in December 2015. This external timescale was driving the initial options appraisal timetable and project milestones.

The Extra Care Service Model Review was responsible for the changing of strategic and operational challenges within the Extra Care service. The service review was in two phase, the first of which was the options appraisal and the second phase was the implementation of the agreed option.

The officers had received feedback so far from Council Tenants, Tenants Forum, Staff, Unison and Supported Housing Development Group.

There were two critical success factors:

- Fully Integrated Care and Support
- Responsibility for care and associated risks/care registration

The aims of the service review was to create and implement service models and properties that were:

- Viable and Sustainable
- Fit for Purpose
- Meet local needs and demand
- Attractive to our customers
- Achieve and maintain a high level of tenant satisfaction
- Support people to maintain their independence and social networks of family and friends
- Develop a tailored affordable service model that is right for extra care

The key risks that effected the service review were:

- Time Constraints
- Capacity
- Capability
- Extent to which option meets objectives and aligns with tenants' overall feedback
- Extent to which option could deliver CSF
- Cost
- Procurement risks
- Affordability/Value for Money

There were a number of uncertainties that effected the process and progress of this service review, these were:

- Confirmation of the tender specification details and service requirements
- Confirmation of the funding available (this would be subject to competition)
- TUPE Costs
- The future impact of welfare reform

The outcome of the options appraisal meant that eight of ten of the options were ruled out, also only three of the ten options would deliver a fully integrated Care Support service. The two remaining options were shortlisted after looking at the weighted score summary and were subject to a further assessment, which showed a clear front-runner, which was Option Four was the most realistic approach.

This was Option Four but further detailed modelling work would need to be completed on this preferred option in order to:

- Fully understand the costs of the new service delivery model

- Proposal of key preferred option to Commissioners and confirmation of the process, specification and funding available
- Complete a full Equalities Impact Assessment on the approved option
- Plan and enable a smooth transition to the new delivery arrangements
- Post implementation evaluation and lessons learned workshop

The next step of service review included seeking more feedback and providing updates to the tenants and relevant Groups, Boards and Committees. The Council were waiting for a number of uncertainties to be clarified by the County Council in order the service review to progress.

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

- When the review was completed, would the Extra Care and Sheltered Housing Tenants receive copies of the report?
*Throughout the hold review process Extra Care Tenants would be kept informed and up to date. Officers would provide with FAQ's (frequently asked questions) sheets as well as ensured we continually get their comments and opinions regarding every stage of the process.
For the moment, Board Members need to treat and think of the Sheltered Housing Service Review as a completely separate entity. This project would be finished and changed would be implemented by April 2016.*
- Looking at 3.7.4 of the covering report, indicated that Housing Benefit would end by 2020, if Tenants see this it would frighten them? Please could explain the meaning behind this?
What was meant by that statement was that Housing Benefit would be replaced by Universal Credit by 2020 but that was only if they keep to that timescale.
- It would appear that Options Four was the overall best option.
- Concerns were raised regarding monitoring the level of clear information tenants receive. Officers need to ensure that any feedback from tenants was passed back through the process.
- It also appeared the tenants at Lodge Close were being ignored, the Council needed to re-assure them that they weren't and have that conversation with the tenants to ensure they were re-assured their views had been heard by the officers.
The experiences and views of the Tenants of Lodge Close were difficult to implement as part of the service change as they were having a good experience with the current extra care staff. Their opinion had change to this over the course of the review due to recent changes in staffing. This was similar to the positive feedback from the WSC Magna Tenants had expressed since TDBC starting providing support and advice as well as introducing the Deane's Piperline service as well.
- I was much happier with the contents of the report after hearing the officer's explanation and extra detail regarding the service review.
- Well done to the officer and their team for the work done so far on this service review.
- Looking at the report, there was mention of review of service charges had this been mentioned to Tenants yet? Was there anyway Officers could give the Board and Tenants a rough outline or idea of any increase to charges and could this be communicated to Tenants?
Tenants were aware (slightly) that the Council would be reviewing its Service Charges and these may increase but it would have a lot to do with the new

service provider.

As TDBC would not potentially end up as the 'middle man', this would reduce management involved and so management costs. So there would be a reduction there.

Concerning changes to the service charges, these would need to be properly consulted on but officers felt that was a lot of potential to keep the increases to a minimum.

The Council was currently charging less for Extra Care service than other Housing Associations.

- It appeared that Option Four was the most sensible option open to the Council. The Council didn't have the budgets or the money to fund the setting up and providing of an Extra Care Service.
- Costs and Service Charges would need to increase with minimum wage increasing.

Because of the small size of Extra Care facility to become the provider would be a high risk to the Council. With additional pressures on the budgets as well as those budget were shrinking.

- The bottom line was that we needed to provide the best care with the money available.
- If the Council had no control or say over the tender process, SCC might go for the cheapest option not the best option.

The Council didn't know as yet if we have no input in the tender process. Normally with this type of service it was based on quality of service for the budget, not the cheapest option. Tender process would ask what the provider would include for the price. The Council would be looking for extras as well.

In general, all the comments and opinions related to the quality of service. The County Council wouldn't be driven by cost but by customer service.

Resolved that:

1. The Board note the report.
2. And commented on the officer report and supported the recommendation of the preferred option, which would be taken. Option Four was a partnership approach to service delivery.

5. Any Other Business

There was no other business to be discussed.

(The meeting ended at 18.57pm)