

Minutes of the Meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 19 June 2017 at 6.00pm in Meeting Room C in Flook House at The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

Present: Mr R Balman (Chairman)
Mrs J Bunn, Mr D Galpin, Mrs J Hegarty, Mr I Hussey and Councillor C Booth.

Officers: Simon Lewis (Assistant Director – Housing and Community Development), Steve Boland (Housing Services Lead), Richard Prewer (Property Services Manager), Steve Meers (Principal Accountant), Rachel Searle (Development Manager), Julie-Anne Gordon (Development Officer), Rosie Walsh (Development Officer), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager) and Clare Rendell (Democratic Services Officer)

Others: Councillor Mrs Smith

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor R Bowrah, Mr A Akhigbemen and Mr K Hellier.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 24 April 2017 were taken as read and were signed.

3. Public Question Time

No questions received for Public Question Time.

4. Declarations of Interests

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

5. Taunton Deane Borough and West Somerset Councils Fire Safety Status

The Property Services Manager gave a verbal update on the current fire safety status on Council owned properties. This was raised due to the recent tragic events that had occurred at Grenfell Tower in London.

None of the Council property portfolios had buildings that were beyond four storeys. However, the officers were aware that there were some Housing Association social housing schemes and private landlord/owner occupier buildings that were above four storeys, although these were relatively new buildings.

The Housing Revenue Account housing stock did have a number of two storey dwellings with a cladding system that was to building regulations and met the necessary British Standards and Agreement Certificates. We were satisfied the system was correctly installed.

There was a requirement for all properties of multiple occupation with communal areas to have a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) undertaken and reviewed on a regular basis by a competent responsible person, as per the Fire Safety Order Act 2005.

Detailed below is the current position for each portfolio:-

- The Taunton Deane corporate stock was currently being surveyed by a specialist consultant, Savills, for condition, asbestos, energy rating and included FRA's which were due to be completed by the end of June 2017.
- The Taunton Deane housing portfolio had FRA's carried out between 2010 and 2012. Officers had started a rigorous regime now that there were Asset Surveyors in place. 62 new FRA's had been carried out, with the others scheduled by priority of age and risk.
- The West Somerset commercial properties that required FRA's were carried out in 2016 and were scheduled for review. All compliance requirements within the West Somerset corporate portfolio had been undertaken or were scheduled to be reviewed.

During the discussion of this item the following point was made:-

- Members queried would tenants be given reassurance on the safety of the buildings?
Yes. A press release would be given and also information would be included in the next newsletter. This would include instructions on what to do in case of a fire.

Resolved that the report be noted.

6. Financial Monitoring – Outturn 2016/17

The Principal Accountant presented his report which contained information that related to the Council's financial performance for 2016/17 financial year. Monitoring the budget was an important part of the Council's performance management framework.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was a 'Self-Financing' account for the Council's Housing Landlord function, which was budgeted to 'break even' (net of approved transfers to/from HRA Reserves). The HRA Outturn for 2016/17 was a net underspend of £882,000 (3.3% of gross income).

The HRA approved Capital Programme at the end of 2016/17 was £20,129,000. This related to schemes which would be completed over the next five years. The actual expenditure on the Capital Programme during 2016/17 was £10,762,000, with £9,399,000 for planned investment to be implemented on approved schemes in future years. A net overspend of £33,000 (0%) was reported against the overall programme.

The HRA Reserve balance on 31 March 2017 stood at £3,224,000, which was above the minimum level (£1,800,000) set within the Council's Budget Strategy and HRA Business Plan.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:-

- Members queried where had the money gone for the Halcon One Team Coordinator?
The money was originally received through funding and the officers would not be able to confirm what funds would be received until September 2017.
- Clarification was requested on what the £40,000 would be spent on under the Ladymead Road section of the report.
The property at Ladymead Road had been long term empty and the money would be spent to develop the property so that staff would be able to use it for office space to enable agile working within the community.

Resolved that the Board Members:-

- 1) Noted the reported HRA Revenue Budget underspend of £882,000 in 2016/17;
- 2) Supported a Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme Budget Carry Forward which totalled £9,399,000; and
- 3) Supported £590,000 Supplementary Budget allocations in 2017/18 for the HRA, and utilised the 2016/17 underspends.

7. Performance Indicators Quarter Four 2016/17

The Assistant Director for Housing and Community Development and the Property Services Manager presented the report which updated the TSMB on the current situation within Property Services.

Below is a summary of the results presented to the Board Members:-

- HC1.1 – To maximise the income opportunities and collection of rent. This was reported in the green for each quarter, which had reached over 100% for quarter one and two. This indicated that arrears had been cleared or balances were now in credit.
- HC2.5 and 2.6 – Customer satisfaction and operational delivery for anti-social behaviour. These were both in the green for all four quarters. Managers had requested extra staff to deal with the high demand within the department.
- HC2.7 – Customer satisfaction for operational delivery. This was in the red for the last quarter, however, there had been improvement over the year. The vacant positions had been filled and contractors now understood the expected level of work.
- HC4.1 and 4.2 – Housing stock maintenance and service to tenants. An improvement had been made since last quarter, however, there were still problems with the data collection. Managers were confident that by the end of the next quarter they would be able to report more accurate data that reflected performance.
- HC4.4 – Disabled facilities grant. This was still in the red and was due to challenges with the contractors. It was hoped that this would improve over the next year due to better working relationships with the team and the contractors.
- HC4.8 and 4.10 – Review on sheltered and extra care housing. All the reviews had been completed but there was still work to be done for the data collection to be improved.

Resolved that the content of the report be noted.

8. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

9. Confidential Development Update

Considered report previously circulated regarding the confidential Development updates on the Creehbarrow Road Development, Weavers Arms Development, Rockwell Green, Wellington and Laxton Road, Taunton.

(The meeting ended at 6.40pm)