

Minutes of the Meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 24 October 2016 at 6pm in The John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.

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

Officers: Terry May (Interim Assistant Director – Property and Development), Richard Brown (DLO Project Manager), Steven Boland (Housing Services Lead), Lucy Clothier (Senior Accountant), Martin Price (Tenant Empowerment Manager), and Andrew Randell (Democratic Services Officer).

(The meeting commenced at 6.00pm)

1. Apologies

No apologies registered.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Tenant Services Management Board held on 20 September 2016 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, Mr I Hussey, Mr A Akhigbemen, Mr K Hellier declared personal interests as Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Tenants.

5. Financial Monitoring 2016/17 as at 31 August 2016

Members considered the Financial Monitoring 2016/17 as at 31 August 2016 previously circulated, concerning the Housing and Communities Quarter Three performance Scorecard and a verbal update on the performance of the Repairs Service.

Looking at the detail set out in the report, the information was set out as follows:

- Reported that the current revenue forecast outturn for the financial year 2016/17 is an underspend of £129k.
- The HRA capital account is forecasting spend of £17.873m against a budget of £20.129m with £2.256m forecast to be spent in future years.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Reserve forecasted balance as at 31 March 2017 is £2.471m, which is above the recommended minimum level (£1.8m) set

within the Council's Budget Strategy and HRA Business Plan.

- The HRA is a 'Self-Financing' account for the Housing Landlord function, which is budgeted to break-even (net of approved transfers to/from HRA Reserves). The current forecast HRA Revenue Outturn for 2016/17 is a net surplus of £129k (0.5% of gross income).
- The current forecast outturn for 2016/17 was set out in Appendix A.
- The major under and overspends forecast for year were summarised as follows:
- **Dwelling Rents and Service Charges:** Void rate is lower than budgeted leading to additional income of £299k.
- **Leasehold Income:** Income from leaseholders is higher than budgeted by £48k to reflect the increased cost of maintenance on shared blocks.
- **PV Income:** This is a one year pressure in expected feed in tariff income of £60k due to limited unit size. This has been taken into account in the Business Plan on an ongoing basis.
- **Housing Management:** Underspends in IT costs (-£20k) are expected pending implementation of new IT systems, along with RTB income of £39k, which from 2017/18 is included in the Business Plan.
- **Asbestos Surveys:** Asbestos surveys and testing continues to be a priority and the forecast variance is £58k overspent due to the increased activity.
- **Voids:** The forecasted overspend of £100k on void repairs will be monitored through the year but this fluctuates with the number of voids at any one time.
- **Grounds Maintenance:** A review of Grounds Maintenance works on HRA land is currently underway and will shape the ongoing service. The current forecast variance is £20k over budget.
- **Supported Housing:** Additional works and equipment in Supported Housing have created a forecast overspend variance of £20k.
- **Other Maintenance:** A forecast overspend in General Maintenance (+£100k) and Responsive electrical (£20k), driven by demand is partially offset by an expected underspend in Responsive Heating works (-£65k). This will continue to be monitored throughout the year.
- **Interest Receivable:** Higher reserve balances mean that the interest received on investments is higher than budgeted by £40k.

HRA - Risk and Uncertainty

- Budgets and forecasts are based on known information and the best estimates of the Council's future spending and income. Income and expenditure over the financial year 2016/17 is estimated by budget holders and then reported through the budget monitoring process. During this process risks and uncertainties are identified which could impact financial projections, but for which the likelihood

and/or amount are uncertain.

Housing Revenue Unearmarked Account Reserves

The HRA reserves at the start of the year were £2.675m. The use of the 2015/16 underspend and the surplus of £129k in 2016/17 reduced the balance to £2.471m. This is above the minimum recommended reserve level of £1.800m by £671k, although it should be noted that the Business Plan already accounts for the use of reserves above the minimum balance.

Table 2: General Reserve Balance

	£k
Balance Brought Forward 1 April 2016	2,675
Use of 2015/16 underspend (Full Council July)	-333
Budgeted Balance March 2017	2,342
Forecast Outturn 2016/17 (as at 31 August 2016)	129
Forecast Balance Carried Forward 31 March 2017	2,471
Recommended Minimum Balance	1,800
Forecast Balance above recommended minimum	671

HRA Capital Programme

- The HRA approved Capital Programme is £20.129m. This relates to schemes which will be completed over the next five years. The Council is supporting this investment through the use of Capital Receipts, Revenue Funding and Borrowing.
- Appendix B set out in the report provided a breakdown of the HRA Capital Programme Outturn by scheme.

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

- Discussion took place around “cyclical works” being undertaken alongside the timescales around the works.

Resolved that the officer’s report be noted.

6. Performance Indicators Quarter 2 2016/17

The Housing Services Lead gave a verbal update concerning the Performance Indicators for Quarter 2 Summary presented to the Board Members following every quarter.

The summary of indicators was the selection of areas which the Board felt were most important or of interest to tenants.

The indicators were published in the newsletters and on the Council’s website to report the services performance at the end of each quarter.

Looking at each section of the performance scorecard for Quarter two, the figures and percentages as follows:

- Managing Finances (housing) - There were 1 measure of which 100% were Green, 0% were Amber, 0% were Red and 0% were N/A.
- Service Delivery (Satisfaction) – There were 4 measures of which 75% were Green, 0% were Amber, 0% were Red and 25% were N/A.
- Service Delivery (Decent Homes) – There were 1 measure of which 0% Green, 100% Amber, 0% Red and 0% were N/A.
- Service Delivery (Operational Delivery) – There were 6 measures of which 33.3% were Green, 33.3% were Amber, 33.3% were Red and 0% were N/A.

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

- HC2.8 was considered, due to a systems failure the figures were unable to be produced. This would be looked into to resolve the issue.
- HC4.2 – further figures were awaited on this area. PDA's had now gone live.
- Members were made aware of section HC1.1. Due to Universal Credit going digital it was anticipated that this would have an impact on rent arrears which were likely to have an impact and increase on the non payment of rent.
- HC 2.5 and 2.6 were discussed, there had been increased instances of antisocial behaviour. The estates officers had been proactive in tackling antisocial issues as they had arisen.
- HC 2.7 and the satisfaction of the lettable standard was considered. It was determined that it was about being consistent with tenants in delivering it to a lettable standard.
- HC 4.4 was determined on client circumstances in undertaking adaptations along with disabled facilities grants.
- In relation to HC 4.8 sheltered housing were still getting used to the reporting process and submitting information.
- Reported that there were still plans in place to mitigate any adverse impacts of Universal Credit. A welfare reform strategy action plan detailed the approach in responding to welfare reform. Provision had been set aside in the business plan for additional debt.
- Addressing the under occupancy rate was being undertaken in partnership with others including the citizens advice bureau, to enable tenants to seek advice and information.
- Somerset savings and loans have enabled tenants to have bank accounts set up. DWP had been worked closely with alongside Revenues and benefits.
- MIND have been working with tenants that have mental health issues to provide information and advice.
- More debt and benefit advisors along with estate officers had been employed to assist around bedroom tax and incentives to move with the transfer removal grant. Support would be given alongside one to one support for those who need it.
- The situation would be monitored closely over the coming months to assess the impact from Universal credit.
- The Tenant Services Management Board congratulated the team on the background work undertaken relating to Universal Credit. In addition the anti-social behaviour team were commended on the work to tackle cases in the borough.

Resolved that the officer's report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 6.45pm)