



**Housing Management User Panel**  
**Tarka Housing Board Room**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26 January 2011 at 1pm**

Present: Paul Raeburn (Head of Customer and Community Services),  
 Jon Hadwen (Housing Services Manager),  
 Alister Gillies (Resident Involvement Manager), Mick Bentley, Peter Thompkins,  
 Katherine Russell, Cathy Martin, Reg Strong, Hazel Strong, Eileen Brown,  
 Tony Walker (Residents)

Minute Taker: Beccy Shaw (Receptionist)

Item		Action By And Date
1.	<p><b><u>Welcome and Introductions</u></b></p> <p>Paul Raeburn welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed the Panel that Pauline Davies has stepped down from her position as Chair.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Apologies and Absentees</u></b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Edward Merrick, Janette Merrick and Pauline Davies.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Minutes of the Last Meeting</u></b></p> <p><u>Page 9 – Resident Involvement Update</u></p> <p>Mick Bentley informed the Panel that in the fourth paragraph down, he did receive a response from Paul Raeburn after he asked how much longer the Resident Auditors Void Project would take. It was agreed that December's minutes would be altered to include this.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>Completed Actions</u></b></p> <p>Paul Raeburn handed out a completed actions sheet and explained the actions taken.</p> <p>Mick Bentley informed the Panel that he did not ask why Tarka remove chimneys, he asked whether they are removed at void or not, and if not do the Residents living in the property have a</p>	

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	<p>choice if it is removed. Jon Hadwen said that he would look into this.</p> <p>A discussion took place around what money is used for the external maintenance of garages. It was agreed that Paul Raeburn will look into what department deals with cyclical maintenance and external works to garages.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that the action regarding Residents tending to communal areas is still awaiting a response from Tarka's insurance company and an answer will be given once it is known.</p> <p>It was explained that Paul Raeburn took the issue regarding Residents accessing heating dials in communal rooms to Asset Management who are still looking into it. An answer will be given at the next meeting.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that a redraft of the Garage Policy will be brought to the next meeting.</p>	<p>Jon Hadwen</p> <p>Paul Raeburn</p> <p>Paul Raeburn</p> <p>Paul Raeburn</p> <p>Paul Raeburn</p>
5.	<p><b><u>Election of New Chair</u></b></p> <p>Paul Raeburn explained that as Pauline Davies has stepped down from her position as Chair, another election will need to take place.</p> <p>Peter Thompkins nominated Mick Bentley to become Chair of the Housing Management User Panel (HMUP). Katherine Russell seconded this motion.</p> <p>As there were no more nominations, Mick Bentley was elected Chair and will start his new role at the following meeting.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Resident Involvement Update</u></b></p> <p>Alister Gillies informed the Panel that the next edition of the Tarka Times is on its way and should be out by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in February.</p> <p>Work is going well with the Tenant Panel Development Group which is expected to finish in early March 2011.</p> <p>The Tenant Panel Annual General Meeting (AGM) Steering Group has agreed the processes for the AGM in April.</p> <p>It was explained that the Voids Audit is back underway and still on track to complete around May 2011.</p> <p>Alister Gillies informed the Panel that he is recruiting for</p>	

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	<p>volunteers to help with the Devon Wide Adaptations Protocol. Mick Bentley, Peter Thompkins and Cathy Martin agreed to volunteer. An event is planned for 8 February 2011 and Alister Gillies will be in touch with more information about this.</p> <p>The Panel were told that the Customer Involvement Strategy (CIS) has been approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and will be going to the Tenants Panel for any comments.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Panel training programme has been agreed and should be partially completed for April 2011 to begin working on projects.</p> <p>The Local Offer survey results are in and should be analysed next week. The Local Offer Steering Group (LOSG) will next be meeting in February 2011.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>New Emerging Government Bills</u></b></p> <p>Paul Raeburn explained to the Panel what new bills would be emerging. Mick Bentley felt that if the Government go ahead and reduce Housing Benefit by 10% then both Tarka and its Tenants will struggle.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn and Mick Bentley (Chair) have said that they will keep the HMUP updated with these issues and there will be regular briefings at the meetings.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Fuel Poverty</u></b></p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that the Fuel Poverty Strategy is a Groupwide policy that he is currently waiting for feedback on. He explained that a leaflet on fuel poverty was sent out last year that gave out information on how you can save money on fuel. It is useful so please have a look at it.</p> <p>Cathy Martin asked how Residents know if their property is insulated. Paul Raeburn replied that it is on Tarka's system and we can let you know. Jon Hadwen explained that Asset Management have looked at most properties and get an SAP reading from them. Mick Bentley said that Torridge District Council (TDC) never updated the system so there may be more properties with poor insulation than Tarka thinks. Paul Raeburn said that this is something Tarka are trying to sort.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn went through and explained some main points in the Westward Housing Group Fuel Poverty Strategy and explained that there is a Fuel Poverty section on the Tarka internet.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn said that the document needs to go to SMT at</p>	

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	<p>Westward but should be out in February 2011. He asked people to contact him directly by phone or email as soon as possible if they have any amendments to make to the document.</p> <p>Tony Walker asked when and where tackling fuel poverty will start. Paul Raeburn replied that it will hopefully start in March 2011 if the Board approve it next month and he is not yet sure as of where it will start.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that the Bideford Sustainability Group approached him regarding the feasibility of establishing a communal garden down at Morwenna Park Road. Mick Bentley asked if this was to do with the community project that Tarka are trying to sort out. Paul Raeburn said that this is completely separate. Jon Hadwen said that he would find out who is dealing with the community project.</p>	Jon Hadwen
9.	<p><b><u>Garage Policy and Procedure</u></b></p> <p>There will be a full policy presented at February's meeting.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Anti Social Behaviour Update</u></b></p> <p>Paul Raeburn explained that he does not have a Policy to bring to today's meeting as no one attended the event that was due to take place at Exeter. A survey will be taking place instead and the results should be ready to be brought to April's meeting.</p>	
11.	<p><b><u>Arrears Processing – Rent Statements</u></b></p> <p>The Panel were informed that the rent statements have now been amended from the changes that were decided at the last meeting.</p> <p>Jon Hadwen said that some Tenants get concerned with their sudden arrears, but once the situation has been explained most people are happy to pay it off.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Permission for Improvements and Permission Letters</u></b></p> <p>Jon Hadwen informed the Panel that if you improve your property yourself, you must put it back to how it was before you changed it. There is no definitive statement however as sometimes it is not possible.</p> <p>Mick Bentley felt that if you seek permission and it is granted, then surely it should be accepted. Jon Hadwen explained that if a Resident changes the property too much, then Tarka may not be able to replace the parts. The property could be up to a good standard, but may be too high for Tarka to keep up with and the</p>	

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	<p>products may no longer be available.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn said that he would speak with Josh Jackson and come back to the Panel with a definitive statement.</p>	Paul Raeburn
13.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>There was no other business to be discussed.</p>	
14.	<p><b><u>Date, Time and Venues for Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Friday 18 February 2011, 10am in the Tarka Housing Board Room.</p>	
15.	<p><b><u>Feedback on How the Meeting Went</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Excellent</li> <li>➤ Good</li> </ul>	