



## Housing Management User Panel

### Board Room, Tarka Housing

### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 14 June 2010 at 10 am

Present: Paul Raeburn (Chair), Kirsty Mather, Laura Wyatt,  
Alister Gillies (Tarka Housing)  
Tony Walker, John Sanders, Mick Bentley, Cathy Martin,  
Eileen Brown, Peter Thompkins, Eleanor Rogers (Residents)  
Lucinda Francis, Sara Hurst (Tenant Services Authority)

Apologies: Pauline Davies

Absent: Carrie-Ann Persson

Minute Taker: Janet Glover

Item		Action By and Date
1.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> Paul Raeburn welcomed everyone to the meeting and all present introduced themselves.	
2.	<b>Apologies and Absentees</b> Apologies were received from Pauline Davies. Carrie-Ann Persson was absent.	
3.	<b>Minutes of the last meeting (accuracy)</b> The minutes of the last meeting were presented and no amendments were required.	
4.	<b>Matters Arising from the last meeting</b> Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that Nigel Barnard had a brief discussion regarding the use of the Tenant Resource Room with the Tenant Panel and that this will be discussed further by means of an agenda item.  Paul Raeburn confirmed that the issue of "confidentiality" had been raised at the Tenant Panel by Nigel Barnard.	

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	<p>Paul Raeburn confirmed that there will be a presentation on the arrears process to the User Panel in August.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn confirmed that the issue regarding surface water drainage at Chubb/Churchill had been raised with Joshua Jackson.</p> <p>Kirsty Mather informed the Panel that there were seven long term voids let since the report at the previous meeting in April. The total days void was 3927, averaging at 561 days per let. The total rent loss was £28,779.26, averaging at £4,111.28 per let. Three of these were properties which had been void since Torridge District Council ownership. Kirsty Mather advised that there are currently three long term voids with a total loss to date of £7,884.15. One of these properties is 1 Grenville Estate Crescent where a feasibility report has been made to the Board and is awaiting a decision on whether the six-bed flat should be returned to three two-bed flats. Costs vary from £20,000 per unit (x 3) to £60,000 plus to remain as a six-bed flat to bring them up to the Tarka Standard. Kirsty Mather advised that this property is also of non-traditional structure.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn confirmed that the page and link for Devon Home Choice is now on the Tarka website.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that the new Community Visits had commenced and that information is on the Tarka website. Paul Raeburn advised that as part of this new process Mick Bentley and Eileen Brown will be attending visits with the Housing Officers on a quarterly basis. Mick Bentley requested that relevant information is received prior to their visits and Kirsty Mather will ensure that this is carried out. It was agreed that the Housing Officers will invite Mick Bentley and Eileen Brown to accompany them on the Community Visits.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn confirmed that customer satisfaction surveys are now being sent out for complaints and that performance information will be available for the Complaints Review Panel meeting on 14 July 2010. Following the issue raised by Cathy Martin at the previous meeting concerning a rat problem, she advised that the repair had not been carried out. Paul Raeburn to investigate the matter.</p> <p>Laura Wyatt updated the Panel on progress with the Youth Panel. A Youth Event took place on 3 June 2010 at the Pollyfield Centre which was attended by 16 young people. Ten possible recruits came forward as a result of this event. Mick Bentley asked if expenses will be paid and Laura Wyatt confirmed that they will be.</p>	<p>Kirsty Mather</p> <p>Kirsty Mather</p> <p>Paul Raeburn 14 July 2010</p> <p>Paul Raeburn</p>

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	<p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that a meeting had been arranged with Rupert Warren from Devon Home Choice for Friday, 2 July 2010 at 2 pm. Mick Bentley informed the Panel that he had not completed his work on the Choice Based Lettings Policy and that he had contacted Paul Raeburn to defer this agenda item from today's meeting.</p> <p>John Sanders stated that a formal presentation for the Scrutiny Panel had still not taken place.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn advised the Panel that there will be a Compact Review Panel taking place and that expenses will be looked at within that Review Panel.</p>	<p>All 2 July 2010</p>
5.	<p><b>Transfer Promises Tracking Report</b></p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that the majority of actions in the report had been completed and that the Handyman Service has been deferred. The following points were made by Panel members:-</p> <p><u>Theme Two: Service Improvement</u></p> <p>No 8 - John Sanders pointed out that the Tenant Compact has not been reviewed. However, Paul Raeburn said that this referred to the previous year. It was also noted that the Tarka Talk Team has been suspended.</p> <p><u>Theme One: Delivery of Home Re-Improvements</u></p> <p>No 6 - Mick Bentley queried if the total figure included communal land owned by Tarka which currently has no boundary fencing. Paul Raeburn advised that he would query this figure with Joshua Jackson. A discussion took place on the potential loss of Tarka assets should a resident erect their own boundary and claim legal rights to the land at a later date.</p> <p>No 9 - Eileen Brown asked for the meaning of the abbreviation 'DDA'. Paul Raeburn advised that this was Disability Discrimination Act.</p> <p><u>Theme Two: Service Improvement</u></p> <p>No 5 - As previously advised, this is being deferred due to the Tarka Works Review currently being undertaken.</p> <p>No 8 - Paul Raeburn stated that another Resident Involvement Impact Assessment would be undertaken again this year.</p> <p><u>Theme Five: Regeneration</u></p> <p>No 1- John Sanders felt that that this should be "on target", not completed.</p> <p><u>Theme Six: Delivering Sustainable Communities</u></p> <p>No 2 - John Sanders would like to see a more proactive approach to environmental improvements.</p>	<p>Paul Raeburn 12 July 2010</p>

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6.	<p><b>Open Discussion with the Tenant Services Authority</b> Sara Hurst thanked the Panel for the invitation to attend this meeting. She gave an overview of the Tenant Services Authority and explained that a new Regulatory Framework has been developed which social housing providers have to meet from April 2010 (copies of the document can be ordered online from their website). The framework has six national standards and alongside these will also be local standards which are agreed between tenants and landlords. A general discussion took place, with the opportunity for a question and answer session. The Panel felt that the minutes from the User Panels should be on the Tarka website.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Fuel Poverty Strategy</b> Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that following discussion with Sarah Wigmore it has been decided that the way forward will be an 'away day' with an independent facilitator to progress the fuel poverty strategy. This will involve a group of tenants from both Tarka and Westcountry and it is likely that this will now take place in July at a central location for all. Paul Raeburn will contact the Panel members who wish to be involved in the project when arrangements have been made.</p>	Paul Raeburn To be confirmed
8.	<p><b>Resident Involvement</b> Laura Wyatt gave the Panel an update on the projects she is working on:-</p> <p>Youth Forum - covered in Matters Arising. Summer Play Programme - this will run for five weeks during the Summer. Information will be sent out in two weeks time. United Community Centre - a Service Level Agreement has been made with Sure Start for the use of the Centre. A meeting is being arranged before the end of June for all users of the Centre in order that individual Service Level Agreements can be made. Recruitment of new tenants - taster days are being organised in Bideford, Torrington and Holsworthy. No dates have been set as yet. Recruitment for Scrutiny Panel - a day of recruitment is being organised for early July.</p> <p>Alister Gillies gave the Panel an update on the projects he is working on:-</p> <p>Scrutiny Panel - letters have been sent to 38 tenants requesting an expression of interest. Information packs will be sent to those people who express an interest in becoming involved. Anyone who is appointed to the Scrutiny Panel may need to stand down from any other Panels that they are involved with. Tarka Talk Team - the Talk Team agreed to suspend their activities until September. There are several issues that need to be addressed, including evidence, risk assessment and personal security. John Sanders highlighted that the Talk Team was not set</p>	

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	<p>up as an information gathering group, but to enable tenants to talk to tenants. John Sanders raised a query concerning insurance and Criminal Records Bureau checks for Talk Team members. Paul Raeburn confirmed that Nigel Barnard is dealing with these issues.</p> <p>Compact Review Group - there is a meeting on 19 July 2010 and letters have been sent to a number of tenants. John Sanders voiced concerns that the Tenant Panel are being excluded from being involved in this Group. Alister Gillies pointed out that the process of selection was inclusive and transparent. He added that in any case the Compact Review Group would be composed of members of the Tenant Panel and an equal number of staff. A lively discussion took place and it was agreed that Paul Raeburn and Alister Gillies meet after this meeting to take this forward.</p>	Paul Raeburn
9.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>Mick Bentley requested an up to date copy of the Adaptation Policy. Paul Raeburn to pass this request to Joshua Jackson.</p> <p>Mick Bentley raised concerns over the content of the permission letters issued to tenants who wish to invest in their homes. Kirsty Mather suggested that this be taken to the Asset Management User Panel as the Surveyors Team deal with improvement requests and issue the permission letters. Kirsty Mather also advised that the Policy needs to be reviewed. Paul Raeburn will speak with Joshua Jackson and put this as an agenda item for the next meeting.</p> <p>John Sanders reported that following an inspection of Copps Close by himself and Mick Bentley, they found several items that required attention by the Caretakers (slippery moss on paving, boundary hedge needs cutting back, rubbish in the parking spaces and the hole next to the sewer has not been repaired). Paul Raeburn will check to see if these items have been picked up on the Community Visits by Andrew McMurray.</p> <p>Peter Thompkins raised concerns over staff not being allowed to socialise with tenants out of working hours. Paul Raeburn advised on the professional boundaries policy which staff are aware of and must comply with. Peter Thompkins then continued with the concern that tradesmen were not allowed to have a cup of tea whilst working within a tenant's home. Paul Raeburn confirmed that this does not fall within the professional boundaries policy and Tarka, as an employer, would not have an issue with this.</p> <p>Eleanor Rogers raised issues of rubbish in the front gardens of properties at Morwenna Park Road, although she was not sure if the occupants were Tarka tenants or owner occupiers. Kirsty Mather clarified that if they are Tarka tenants this would be picked up on the Community Visits and action taken. However, if the perpetrators are owner occupiers the Housing Officer would</p>	<p>Paul Raeburn</p> <p>Paul Raeburn 12 July 2010</p> <p>Paul Raeburn</p>

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	<p>pass this to Torridge District Council for action.</p> <p>Kirsty Mather advised that she had collated some statistics and information since Devon Home Choice became live. She handed out a summary of this to the Panel to take away which they may find helpful prior to Rupert Warren's visit.</p> <p>Kirsty Mather advised the Panel that the tender for legal services is due for renewal. Four companies have been shortlisted and the interviews are being held in Torquay on 10 June 2010. Mick Bentley and Eileen Brown are attending with Kirsty Mather.</p> <p>Kirsty Mather informed the Panel that arrangements have been made with Scottish and Southern Energy to be the preferred energy supplier on Void properties and a procedure has been produced. The scheme should have various benefits including avoiding delays with issuing replacement keys for meters and obviously for clarity on meter readings. They will also be completing some of our EPC checks at reduced rates.</p>	<p>Kirsty Mather/ Mick Bentley/ Eileen Brown 10 June 2010</p>
10.	<p><b>Date, Time and Venue of the Next Meeting</b> 12 July 2010 at 10 am in the Board Room</p>	
14.	<p><b>Feedback on Meeting</b> Everyone felt it was an excellent meeting. Eileen Brown thanked the staff from the Tenant Services Authority for attending.</p>	