



HOUSING MANAGEMENT USER PANEL

Board Room, Tarka Housing

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Friday, 15 October 2010 at 10am**

Present: Paul Raeburn (Tarka, Chair), Jon Hadwen (Tarka Housing), Mick Bentley, John Sanders, Peter Thompkins, Cathy Martin, Hazel Strong, Reginald Strong, Eileen Brown, Katherine Russell, Lucinda Appleby, Pauline Davies, Eleanor Rogers, Tony Walker (Residents)

Minutes: Beccy Shaw

Item		Action By And Date
1.	<p><u>Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn welcomed everyone to the meeting and as there were new members to the Panel. All present introduced themselves.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Carrie-Ann Persson, Julie Jarman, Edward Merrick and Janette Merrick. Jane Shipman has decided not to become a member of the Housing Management User Panel (HMUP) as she will be joining the Scrutiny Panel.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Minutes of the Last Meeting (Accuracy)</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn went through the agenda and informed the Panel that the Resident Involvement Update will now be moved up the agenda.</p> <p><u>Page 1 – Apologies and Absentees</u></p> <p>Eleanor Rogers informed the Panel that she had apologised for her absence from the last meeting.</p>	

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	<p><u>Page 4 – Anti Social Behaviour Update</u></p> <p>John Sanders stated that he also asked that the HMUP have an opportunity to look into cases in more detail and it was agreed that this would take the form of case studies.</p> <p><u>Page 5 – Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Paragraph three, sentence two should have read ‘Paul Raeburn stated that the letter was sent to all Code of Conduct and Constitution Steering members and he would request Nigel Barnard to discuss this at the next Tenant Panel meeting.’</p>	
4.	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Last Meeting</u></p> <p><u>Page 2 – Compact Review Group</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn apologised for the Customer Involvement Agreement (CIA) not being circulated prior to the Tenant Panel meeting.</p> <p><u>Page 2 – Devon Home Choice</u></p> <p>This item will be discussed on the agenda.</p> <p><u>Page 3 – Communal Land</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that he spoke to Josh Jackson regarding works on communal land such as fencing. It was estimated that we do a hundred works in a year.</p> <p>There was an issue where one of our tenants had a big garden and shared some of the land with their neighbour, over time the neighbour had the right to own that land. Peter Thompkins asked why Torridge District Council (TDC) didn't register the land. Jon Hadwen explained that Josh Jackson is now going through a process where land registry is being picked up on community visits.</p> <p>John Sanders informed the Panel that a piece of land to the rear of some garages is being used for storage and asked if the issue had been resolved. Jon Hadwen replied that we created a license for a certain amount each year and this gives us a chance to claim the land back.</p> <p>Mick Bentley informed the Panel that if a tenant erects a fence around a piece of a communal land, in time the land can become theirs. South View is an example of an estate where this could be a problem.</p>	

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	<p><u>Page 3 – Adaptations Policy</u></p> <p>Neither Josh Jackson nor Chris Willmott were able to attend this meeting, but have said that the issue can be raised at the next Asset Management User Panel Meeting (AMUP).</p> <p>Paul Raeburn explained that if someone required major adaptations to their property and it is a family home in a general needs property, we will not do it. We will however do minor adaptations such as grab rails. The reason for this is that the costs would be too high to then go and remove the adaptation ready for a new family to move in.</p> <p>John Sanders informed the Panel that Tarka cannot move people from their homes that they have lived in for years; it could be a threat to their health. Paul Raeburn explained that as far as he is aware we are operating within the law. A meeting is taking place on Monday 18 October 2010 with Coffen Mews and Paul Raeburn will raise this issue with them and get a second opinion.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn said that he would speak with Josh Jackson today and inform him that this item will come up in ‘any other business’ at the next AMUP.</p> <p><u>Page 3 – Permission Letters</u></p> <p>This item is on the agenda.</p> <p><u>Page 3 – Fuel Poverty</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that the Fuel Poverty Consultation was a good event ran by Energy Action Devon. Peter Thompkins felt that the statistics should have been more up to date as they were five years old. Paul Raeburn explained that as he was talking about Devon Wide, he was using the statistics available.</p> <p>This draft strategy will be brought to the Housing Management User Panel (HMUP) before it goes to the Board. Mick Bentley asked if the same figures will be used. Paul Raeburn replied that we will use some figures, but if we find more updated ones then we will use them instead.</p> <p>Lucinda Appleby asked if tenants are getting a choice on which fuel they would like to use. Chimneys are being removed without letting the tenants have a say. Paul Raeburn explained that we work with Advantage South West (ASW) who find us the best efficiency in fuel and this is what we follow.</p>	<p>Paul Raeburn</p> <p>Paul Raeburn</p>
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	<p><u>Page 3 – Service Charges</u></p> <p>This item is on the agenda.</p> <p><u>Page 4 – Trailer at Chopes Close</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that we have found out that we do own the land at Chopes Close. A letter has been sent to the residents and Tarka will be following this up.</p> <p><u>Page 4 – Terms of Reference</u></p> <p>This item is on the agenda along with the ‘Election of Chair for HMUP’.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that the Auditors work with Westward and look at different aspects of the company. They have recently been working on Tarka’s Estate Inspections. Paul Raeburn handed out a document on Auditors.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn explained the process of becoming an Auditor stating that there is an observed two day training course. An interview will take place after this and then more training and support is given.</p> <p>Mick Bentley asked how we manage to evaluate the Tenant participants. Paul Raeburn replied that it involves looking from the individual point. Mick Bentley asked if it is the same as Scrutiny. Paul Raeburn explained that Auditors look at policies, outcomes etc. They look more at policies and procedures. The Auditors will do a final report and will have contact with tenants before handing it over to the Board for them to make an assessment.</p> <p>The Auditors are currently looking at the Voids process and will provide an update for the AMUP, HMUP and the Tenant Panel. Feedback will be given and the Auditors will give presentations and talk with us.</p> <p>Mick Bentley asked when does a tenant have the chance to oppose the works. Paul Raeburn answered that updates and chances to feedback will be given.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Terms of Reference for HMUP</u></p> <p>Alister Gillies joined the meeting.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the meeting that changes have been made to the Terms of Reference and that the Code of Conduct will also need to be looked at annually.</p>	

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	<p>Everyone agreed that the document was good and no further changes were needed. Alister Gilles asked if a Vice Chair should be elected. Paul Raeburn explained that we service the Panel so no Vice Chair would be needed.</p> <p>It was decided that if the Chair cannot attend the meetings for a long period of time then a ballot will take place at the following meeting to re-elect.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Election of Chair for HMUP</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn explained to the Panel how the ballot would be run and asked if anyone would like to be nominated. No one raised their hands.</p> <p>Paul Raeburn then asked if anyone would like to nominate another person. Peter Thompkins nominated Mick Bentley and Katherine Russell seconded. John Sanders nominated Pauline Davies and Lucinda Appleby seconded.</p> <p>The ballot took place and Paul Raeburn counted up the votes. Pauline Davies won the election with seven votes to five and will start her new role as Chair of HMUP at the following meeting.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Resident Involvement Update</u></p> <p>Alister Gillies informed the Panel that the Local Offer Steering Group is up and running and the next meeting will take place on Friday 22 October 2010.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Panel has a full complement of members although we will continue to recruit more members to attend if anyone is absent.</p> <p>The Resident Auditors now have two members recruited but we will be recruiting more hopefully in November.</p> <p>The Working/Steering Group will be helping to develop the Policy on recruitment and training will hopefully be set up by mid November.</p> <p>Alister Gillies informed the Panel that the Communications Group are looking to recruit more members and asked if there were any volunteers. Pauline Davies and Lucinda Appleby put their names forward.</p> <p>The new Resident Auditors Voids project is underway and they had their first meeting on Tuesday 13 October 2010. The next meeting is scheduled for the 2 November 2010. The HMUP will have full consultation before their recommendations go to the</p>	

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	<p>Board.</p> <p>Resident Auditors and Scrutiny training on Confidentiality and Code of Conduct are scheduled for next Monday 18 October 2010 for the new recruits. Alister Gillies was asked who the Scrutiny Panel members were and replied that Tony Walker, Pauline Davies, Edward Merrick and Lucinda Appleby were all members. It was explained that once they have completed their training, which could be as long as twelve months, they will no longer be allowed to attend User Panel meetings.</p> <p>Alister Gillies informed the Panel that he is looking to gather a Focus Group to develop an induction pack for new tenant recruits.</p> <p>Funding applications have been submitted for a mobile office, but there has been no success as of yet.</p> <p>Alister Gillies left the meeting.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Garage Policy</u></p> <p>Caroline Pittwood joined the meeting.</p> <p>The Panel were informed that Caroline Pittwood would like three tenant volunteers to help produce a policies and procedures document for garages.</p> <p>It was decided that Caroline Pittwood would send out a draft to all HMUP members who would read through the document and suggest any changes. Caroline Pittwood will give a presentation in December's meeting.</p> <p>Peter Thompkins said that more maintenance work needs to be undertaken on the garages. Caroline Pittwood replied that we now check every garage that comes back to us. Eleanor Rogers asked if they are only for cars. It was explained that they are primarily for vehicles but anything that is put in the garages is left at the owner's risk.</p> <p>Caroline Pittwood informed the Panel that we advertise the garages on the sides of our vans, on a section of our website and the Tarka News. Paul Raeburn explained that we looked at advertising on the North Devon paper but it was expensive. Peter Thompkins and Cathy Martin suggested Bideford newspapers.</p> <p>Caroline Pittwood informed the Panel that feedback is also being given now when a garage is given up.</p> <p>Caroline Pittwood left the meeting.</p>	Caroline Pittwood December 2010

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9.	<p><u>Anti Social Behaviour Update</u></p> <p><u>Anti Social Behaviour Policy Review</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that we will be reviewing Tarka and Westcountry's Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) policy and he would like the HMUP to have their say. It will take roughly two months to complete.</p> <p>It was agreed that Paul Raeburn will have a few meetings with Staff to make the changes and will then send out the draft to all members of the Panel to check through. Tenants will suggest any changes and then a final document will be produced. The first draft will be given out in December's meeting to be ready for the Board in March.</p>	Paul Raeburn December 2010
10.	<p><u>Arrears Processing – Rent Statements</u></p> <p>Jon Hadwen informed the Panel that he had not had a chance to filter through the rent statements. They will be sent out to HMUP members before the next meeting to be discussed as an agenda item.</p>	Jon Hadwen
11.	<p><u>Service Charges</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that new Tarka tenants pay service charges, but long term tenants that were with us at changeover from Torridge District Council (TDC) do not.</p> <p>Sandford Gardens has two areas of grass that we have to cut, a hedge, garages to control, parking areas and a rough patch of grass. Twenty cuts will take place each year and the rough patch of grass will have three cuts a year. We calculate service charges on a scheme by scheme process.</p> <p>John Sanders explained that tenants shouldn't pay for the garage area in their service charge, the garage owners should pay. Paul Raeburn will look into this and get further legal advice from Coffen Mews.</p> <p>John Sanders felt that we should calculate service charges by dividing by the properties in the area, not by the tenants who pay it and Tarka should pay the rest off. Mick Bentley informed the Panel that tenants are already worried that they may not be able to afford their service charges. Paul Raeburn said that if tenants are worried they should contact their Housing Officer. Eleanor Rogers asked if tenants who pay for service charges know what they're paying for. It was explained that they are and that Tarka</p>	Paul Raeburn

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	<p>take on deficits that they think people will not be able to afford.</p> <p>Peter Thompkins asked if Tarka will reduce service charges if grounds maintenance goes in-house. Paul Raeburn replied that we do not want to cut costs; we just want the quality to improve.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Devon Home Choice</u></p> <p>Paul Raeburn informed the Panel that we will be providing a drop-in clinic for anyone who has a query regarding Devon Home Choice (DHC), but this will be worked around workflows. Jon Hadwen explained that ways to make an application will get easier and people can ask the council to put bids on for them.</p> <p>Mick Bentley feels that the banding is wrong and keeps people from applying. There has been no tenant input on Choice Based Letting. Paul Raeburn explained that we work with DHC and this limits our input on changing anything. The issue regarding banding has been explained to DHC and Rupert Warren will be coming to the office on 17 November 2010 to discuss this with us all. It was agreed that the HMUP meeting will be moved to the same date at 10am.</p> <p>John Sanders informed the Panel that we are only getting at 50% photograph rate. Paul Raeburn explained that housing officers are now taking photographs of properties when they are out on their community visits.</p> <p>John Sanders explained that there are also no addresses. John Hadwen replied that this is done deliberately as properties are advertised while tenants are still living in them. Paul Raeburn asked that all questions are prepared for the next meeting.</p>	
13.	<p><u>Permission Letters</u></p> <p>This item was carried over to the next meeting.</p>	
14.	<p><u>Tarka Homelessness Strategy</u></p> <p>Everyone had a look through the Tarka Homelessness Strategy.</p> <p>John Sanders felt that the strategy did not have properties or provisions. Paul Raeburn explained that we are trying to stop homelessness by helping ASB and other issues.</p> <p>Pauline Davies informed the Panel that people are not being allowed to apply for a house at TDC if they are homeless.</p> <p>John Sanders feels that the document is mostly just words.</p>	

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15.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
16.	<p><u>Date, Time and Venue of the Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Wednesday 17 November 2010 at 10am in the Tarka Board Room.</p>	
17.	<p><u>Feedback on Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There was clearance and transparency in the meeting ➤ The meeting was advanced ➤ Some points get repeated more than necessary 	