

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: Thursday 13th June, 2013
at 2.00 pm (Committee Room 4)

Group Meetings at 1.15 pm

A G E N D A

PART ONE

1. To note any items which the Chairman considers to be of an urgent nature.
2. Questions on Notice

The Chairman to answer questions on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the Borough and which fall within the terms of reference of the Housing Management Forum where due notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 10.3 and 10.4.

3. To receive notice from Members who may wish to move any delegated matter non-delegated and which will be decided by a majority of Members present and voting at the meeting.
4. Admission of Public and Press

To consider whether the public and press should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the agenda.

5. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations by Members and/or co-optees of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Members are reminded that, in accordance with the revised Code of Conduct, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Members may however, also decide, in the interests of clarity and transparency, to declare at this point in the meeting, any such disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, as well as any other registrable or other interests.

6. Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th February, 2013.
7. Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- (D) 8. Appointment of Representatives to Working Groups etc.
- (D) 9. Housing Service's Delivery Plan 2013/14
- (D) 10. Housing Complaints – 'Designated Person'
- (D) 11. Changes to Tenant Participation Arrangements

OPERATIONAL

- (D) 12. Housing Maintenance Investment Programme
- (D) 13. Welfare Reform Action Plan
- (R) 14. Barrow & District Credit Union
- (D) 15. 6-24 Middleton Avenue, Barrow – Vehicle Crossing
- (D) 16. Housing Management Performance 2012/13

FOR INFORMATION

- 17. Planned Investment & Planned Maintenance 2012/13 Year-End Expenditure.

NOTE: (D) – Delegated to the Executive Committee
(R) – Referred to the Council

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM MEMBERS:

Councillors: K Hamilton (Chairman)
D Barlow
M Irwin
A. Johnston
F G Murray
R J Pointer
J Richardson
K Williams

Tenant Representatives: Mr M Burton
Mr A McIntosh
Mr W Ward
Mrs K Warne (To be confirmed at the Tenants' Forum on 10th June, 2013)

For queries regarding this agenda, please contact:

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HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Date of Meeting: **13th June, 2013**

Reporting Officer: **Executive Director**

Title: Appointment of Representatives to Working Groups etc.

Summary and Conclusions:

The Council on 14th May, 2013 gave delegated authority to Committees to make appointments to Outside Bodies, Working Groups etc. in accordance with the number and allocation of seats to political groups agreed at the meeting. In the case of the Housing Management Forum this involves appointments to the Tenant Compact Working Group and the Homelessness Funding Working Groups.

Recommendation:

You are requested to make recommendations regarding appointments to the following Working Groups:

Tenant Compact Working Group:- three Members (2:1) and three Tenant Representatives; and

Homelessness Funding Working Group:- two Members (2:0) and two Tenant Representatives.

Note:- (Labour: Conservative).

Report

At the Annual Council meeting on 14th May, 2013 the allocation of seats in respect of Forums, Panels, Working Groups etc. were agreed.

You are requested therefore to nominate Members and Tenant Representatives to the Tenant Compact Working Group and the Homelessness Funding Working Group for 2013/2014 in accordance with the notional seat allocations outlined above.

Note:- Membership for 2012/13 was as follows:-

Tenant Compact Working Group

Council Representatives (2:1) Councillors Barlow, Hamilton and Williams.

Tenant Representatives – Mrs P. Charnley, Mr W. McEwan and Mr A. McIntosh.

Homelessness Funding Working Group

Council Representatives (2:0) Councillors Hamilton and Pointer.

Tenant Representatives – Mrs P. Charnley and Mr A. McIntosh.

Background Papers

Nil

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: Thursday 28th February, 2013
at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Hamilton (Chairman), Barlow, Irwin, Murray, Pointer and Richardson.

Tenant Representatives:- Mrs P. Charnley, Mrs G. Giddings, Mr W. McEwan, Mrs C. McFadyen and Mr W. Ward.

29 – Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th January, 2013 were taken as read and confirmed.

30 – Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Johnston and Williams and from Tenants Representatives Mr M. Burton, Mr A. McIntosh and Ms K. Warne. Mrs G. Giddings had attended as a substitute for Mr A. McIntosh.

31 – ASB Action Ltd

The Housing Manager submitted a report providing Members with information on the Service Level Agreement currently in place with ASB Action Ltd to assist the Housing Service with the effective management of anti-social behaviour which was a key component in the Housing Service achieving its aim to provide well-maintained homes and estates where people choose to live.

He advised that the Council had an obligation to the Residents in the local areas they managed to do all they reasonably could to prevent crime and disorder in those areas. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 also required Social Landlords to review their policies for tackling anti-social behaviour annually and publish their policies and procedures for inspection.

The services provided by ASB Action Ltd included:

- Reviewing cases referred and providing action points to the Estates Team within specified timescales to ensure prompt service to Customers;
- Where appropriate, collecting evidence and constructing witness statements to a standard required for Civil Court proceedings;
- Acting as a professional witness in court where required;
- Carrying out audits/case reviews;
- Providing the Estates Team with the range of appropriate legislation which could be used to resolve specific cases and support strategic initiatives;

- Reviewing the Housing Service's existing Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures and, where necessary, making recommendations to ensure service improvement;
- Providing the Housing Service with a witness support service, including an out-of-hours telephone service to support the most vulnerable witnesses;
- Providing a coaching, training and mentoring service for the front line Officers and Managers of the Housing Service on the best practice for tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour; and
- Seeking to provide a service which appeared seamless to the complainant/witness.

It was noted that ASB Action Ltd offered a specialised service which focused on assisting social housing providers to deal with anti-social behaviour issues. Their existing Service Level Agreement with the Council included 15 days to be used over a 12-month period. The cost of 15 days Service Level Agreement including training was £7,068.75 plus VAT and it was noted that during the last 12 months, ASB Action Ltd had assisted the Housing Service to successfully obtain five Injunctions for anti-social behaviour.

The Housing Manager advised that the Estates Team had developed working arrangements with ASB Action Ltd and in recognition of the value derived from the Service Level Agreement he suggested renewing the Agreement for a further 12 months, thus suspending the requirement to obtain alternative estimates.

Members of the Forum had considered it to be appropriate to run a seminar regarding anti-social behaviour to which Members of the Housing Management Forum and Tenants' Forum should be invited.

RECOMMENDED:- (i) To note the information on the Service Level Agreement with ASB Action Ltd;

(ii) To agree to progress the Service Level Agreement for a further 12 months with ASB Action Ltd; and

(iii) To agree that a seminar be arranged regarding anti-social behaviour and Members of the Housing Management Forum and Tenants' Forum should be invited.

32 – STAR Survey: Action Plan

The Housing Manager submitted a report which considered the findings of the recently completed STAR Survey and proposed an action plan to respond to the views received.

He reported that the STAR Survey was a means by which Social Landlords could gather information regarding the views of their Tenants in a structured manner. The Council had agreed to carry out the survey last year, the findings of which had been reported to the meeting on 17th January, 2013 (Minute No. 26 refers).

The information gathered in the survey was used to inform the service on Tenants' views on a range of issues. The information could then be used to identify areas of service which may require improvement.

Results indicated that there were generally good levels of satisfaction of the services provided. The results of the survey had been analysed in detail in the Housing Manager's report, a copy of the survey had been placed in the Members' Room and was also available on the Council's website following the link to Council Housing/Surveys.

To summarise the report it was clear the Council's services to Tenants generally scored well across most areas. It was clear that the geographic area, age of Tenant, gender and where there was a Tenant with disability did have an influence on the score.

Whilst it could be argued all aspects of the Council's service were important, it was helpful in that the survey identified what Tenants had said in terms of identifying the area of service which were the 'key drivers' to improving satisfaction and overall satisfaction. In the case of the Council's Housing service, the three top drivers were:

- (1) Listening to and acting upon Residents' views;
- (2) The repairs and maintenance service; and
- (3) How Residents' enquiries were dealt with.

In the case of (1) and (2) above, the Housing Manager suggested that this was about the culture, model of delivery and day-to-day experience of the contract between Tenants and the service. Clearly from the overall score, the current approach achieved high levels of satisfaction but some "groups" perception was of higher levels of dissatisfaction. In particular, the Survey highlighted this as prevalent in households with a disability in their household.

Likewise in repairs, targeted action for younger people to promote service standards may be helpful to manage expectation levels.

Whilst not key drivers, the Housing Manager suggested that from the survey and discussions with colleagues, the perception of how complaints and anti-social behaviour were dealt with required further consideration.

In considering the information as a means of developing the service, it should be noted that good scores were recorded across most areas of service provision.

The Housing Manager had suggested that the model of delivery of services did not currently meet the needs of the majority of Residents and required only refinement in specific areas rather than a remodelling of services.

He also suggested there were areas of the service that could be developed at minimal cost, whereas others such as 'appearance of neighbourhood' may be more difficult to respond to in view of the mixed nature of the estates and cost implications.

He further suggested the practice of carrying out a general satisfaction survey (STAR) should be incorporated into the routine practice of the service on a three-yearly basis. The information contained in the survey would be used to inform the service on any service developments that were progressed in the future and a benchmark to judge performance.

The Housing Manager had proposed an action plan to respond to the matters raised throughout the survey.

RECOMMENDED:- To agree the following action plan to respond to the matters raised throughout the STAR Survey:-

(1) Tenant Involvement and Influences in Services

To consider and progress options for ensuring Tenants such as those with a disability in their household were listened to and had the opportunity to express their views.

To consider and progress options for encouraging Tenants in the 16-34 age band to have the opportunity to engage and participate in the provision of services.

(2) Anti-Social Behaviour

To carry out a review of the current procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour; and

(3) Complaints Procedure

To review and improve understanding of the Complaints Procedure.

33 – Decoration Allowance

The Housing Manager submitted a report to consider and agree an increase in the Decoration Allowance paid to new Tenants when accepting a Tenancy. He reported that it was common practice for Social Landlords to provide a Decoration Allowance to new Tenants and such allowance was provided as a contribution towards redecorating a property which would be incurred by a new Tenant.

During the process of preparing a property for re-letting, Officers as part of the inspection process would make a judgement on the number of rooms that would require redecoration.

A new Tenant, when signing up for a Tenancy, was provided with a voucher to the agreed value that could be redeemed at a number of local shops for decoration materials. The current allowance was £15 per room and had been at that level for many years. The Housing Manager suggested that it should be increased from £15 to £20 per room and advised that a budget provision of £75,000 had been included within the Maintenance Budget. He suggested that the increase be met from that budget but would be monitored as the year progressed.

Members considered £20 to be low but as the Housing Manager had advised that this could be accommodated within the existing budget it would be agreed for this year. The Housing Manager would take on board comments made when producing the budget for the following year.

RECOMMENDED:- To agree that the Decoration Allowance be increased to £20 per room from the start of the next financial year.

The meeting closed at 2.18 p.m.

Part One

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 9
Date of Meeting: 13th June, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	

Title: Housing Services Delivery Plan 2013/14

Summary and Conclusion:

The purpose of this report is to agree the Housing Service's Key Tasks for 2013/14.

Recommendation:

Members are requested to:

1. Comment where appropriate on the Key Tasks for 2013/14.
2. Agree the content of the Service Delivery Plan.

Report

The purpose of this report is to agree the Housing Service's Key Tasks for 2013/14 attached at **Appendix A**.

These Key Tasks will form the focus of the service's work during the year and to achieve the Housing Service's vision to "Provide well-maintained houses and estates where people choose to live".

The Key Tasks table includes reference to 'tasks' referred to elsewhere on this and previous HMF agendas but, in doing, so seeks to bring them together in one document.

Members are asked to comment, in particular regarding the areas of service to be subject to scrutiny by the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

The recommendation has no detrimental impact the built environment or public realm.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

KEY TASKS FOR THE HOUSING SERVICE 2013/14

	TASK	LEAD OFFICER	TARGET	REFERENCE
1	Establish scrutiny role for Tenant Participation Compact Working Party and progress the service reviews Possible options: Anti-social behaviour (STAR), Tenancy Agreement and Tenant's Handbook.	Colin Garnett	Start immediately	Minute of Executive Committee
2	Consider approach to engaging with under-represented tenants	Colin Garnett	Summer 2013	STAR Survey and Scrutiny report on Tenant Participation Services.
3	Review and Update 30-year Business Plan	Les Davies	To be completed prior to budget setting process for 2014/15	HMF report Housing Maintenance Investment Programme
4	Continue to develop approach to mitigate risks of Welfare Reform	Janice Sharp	To be completed prior to introduction of Universal Credit	'Significant financial risk to income of HRA'
5	Review of rents and service charges for supported and furnished tenancies and dispersed accommodation with particular reference to changes in housing benefit arrangements	Jane Coles	To be completed in preparation for 2014/15 budget setting process.	HMF report 'HRA 2013/14' (17 Jan 2013)

HOUSING SERVICE VISION:

"Provide well-maintained homes and estates where people choose to live"

Part One

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 10
Date of Meeting: 13th June, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	

Title: Housing Complaints – ‘Designated Person’

Summary and Conclusion:

The purpose of this report is to consider the Council’s approach to the future handling of complaints with regard the provision of housing management services. It proposes the establishment of a designated Tenant Panel, based on the sample terms of reference as developed by the National Tenant Organisation.

Recommendation:

Members are requested to:

1. Agree the establishment of a Tenants’ Complaints Panel to act as the ‘designated person’ using the terms of reference developed by the National Tenant Organisation.
2. Agree membership of the Tenants’ Complaints Panel consists of the Chair of the Housing Management Forum and two tenants who represents tenants on the HMF.

Report

The purpose of this report is to consider the Council’s approach to the future handling of complaints with regard the provision of housing management services. It proposes the establishment of a designated Tenant Panel, based on sample terms of reference as developed by the National Tenant Organisation.

From April, 2013 the Local Government Ombudsman Service changed. In future a Housing Ombudsman takes over responsibility for investigating complaints about the landlord functions of local authorities.

The new arrangement includes the proposal to appoint a ‘designated person’ within the Landlord’s Complaints Procedure. A ‘designated person’ could be an MP, a local councillor or a designated tenant panel.

The general role of the designated person is to assist in resolving tenant complaints and issues locally.

Should a complaint be unable to be resolved through the existing landlord’s complaints procedure, the complainant would have the ‘option’ to ask the ‘designated person’ to help resolve the complaint. Should this not be possible, there remains the option to refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Should a tenant not wish to take the option of the ‘designated person’ being involved, they would have to wait eight weeks before pursuing the option to ask the Housing Ombudsman to take up the complaint.

In considering the options for appointing a 'designated person' I would suggest the most appropriate arrangement would be to establish a Tenant Complaints Panel (the Panel) for the purpose. A copy of a draft Sample Terms of Reference developed by the National Tenant Organisation is attached at **Appendix B** which could be adapted for our purposes.

Should a complaint not be resolved through the normal Council's Complaint Procedure, the tenant would be given the option to have the matter considered by the Panel.

The most appropriate approach to the Panel would be to have membership that was not involved in the routine decision-making process of the Tenants' Forum and Housing Management Forum. However, due to the small number of tenants involved in the process, I would suggest it would be difficult to recruit individuals that either have the understanding of the services of the Housing Department and good practice within the field to sit on the Panel. I would suggest therefore in the first instance the Panel consist of the Chair of Housing Management Forum and two tenants nominated by the Tenants' Forum.

Subject to agreement by Housing Management Forum, I would look to put in place the arrangements as soon as practical.

This will include reporting back anonymously to the Housing Management Forum through the Performance Indicator Report the number of complaints made and upheld.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Localism Act 2011

[Name] DESIGNATED TENANT PANEL

SAMPLE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Developed using National Tenant Organisation sample terms of reference

These sample terms of reference are intended only as guidance. They are likely to require amendment to suit local circumstances. If you do use these terms of reference, we would be grateful if you could acknowledge National Tenant Organisation authorship of them

Statement of Intent

The purpose of the [Name] Designated Tenant Panel (the *Panel*) is to enable the *Panel* to play a role in helping to resolve complaints received from tenants of [Landlord name(s)¹] (the *Landlord*) locally, potentially using powers to refer complaints to the Housing Ombudsman Service where local resolution is not possible.

1 Aims, objectives and intended outcomes

1.1 The *Panel*'s aims and objectives are:

- to use local knowledge and relationships to work with tenants² and the *Landlord* to find local solutions to complaints and problems raised by tenants
- to constructively challenge the *Landlord* and tenants so that they can sort things out for themselves wherever possible

¹ A Designated Tenant Panel may be recognised by one or more landlord and/or it may be recognised in relation to particular tenants of a Landlord (ie. an area based Panel).

² These terms of reference refers throughout to tenants as a collective term that applies to all persons who receive services from the Landlord, including tenants, leaseholders, shared homeowners, people who receive care and other services. The term could also apply to other members of the public who could potentially receive services or who are affected by services provided by the Landlord.

- to be part of a local democratic framework providing support to tenants
- 1.2 The intended outcomes of the work of the *Panel* include the following:
- tenants complaints, problems and issues will be resolved more effectively, quickly and locally, wherever possible without the need to involve the Housing Ombudsman Service (the *Ombudsman*), to the satisfaction of tenants and the *Landlord*
 - greater local knowledge of tenant concerns and issues will help tenants to participate in improving services
 - positive and empowering relationships will be developed between tenants and the *Landlord* that will help to raise the ability of tenants to shape their housing service
 - positive relationships will develop between the *Panel* and other designated persons.
- 1.3 To achieve these aims, objectives and outcomes, the *Panel* will work in partnership with the *Landlord* and other tenant panels operating in the *Landlord*. The *Panel* will also seek constructive relationships with local councillors and MPs.

2 Remit and powers

- 2.1 The *Panel* has been recognised by the *Landlord* to act as a Designated Tenant Panel for purposes of referring complaints to the *Ombudsman*. The *Panel*'s recognition was discussed and agreed with the *Landlord*'s tenants. The *Panel* is listed on the *Ombudsman*'s Register of Tenant Panels.
- 2.2 The *Panel*'s formal legal power is to refer complaints to the *Ombudsman*, which it will do in the following circumstances:

- the *Panel* considers that a complaint cannot be resolved locally and the *Panel* considers that there is merit in referring the complaint to the *Ombudsman*
- the complaint falls within the *Ombudsman's* remit
- the *Landlord's* complaints procedure has been exhausted
- the complainant wishes the complaint to be referred to the *Ombudsman*

- 2.3 The *Panel* will also use its powers of influence and persuasion to make recommendations and suggestions to the *Landlord* regarding changes to the *Landlord's* service that may prevent complaints arising, and regarding how complaints are dealt with in the *Landlord*.
- 2.4 The *Panel* will negotiate with the *Landlord* regarding how it may be involved in complaints handling at earlier stages of complaints, although the *Panel* does not adopt its formal "designated" status until a complaint has exhausted the *Landlord's* complaints procedure.
- 2.5 The *Panel* will be publicised and accessible to all tenants of the *Landlord*. The *Panel* will respond to all enquiries from tenants with a view to resolving problems and issues at the earliest possible occasion working in partnership with the *Landlord*.

3 Delegated authority

- 3.1 For avoidance of doubt, the *Panel* will have no delegated authority and no decision-making powers in relation to the *Landlord*. The *Panel* will enable discussion between it and *Landlord* staff regarding complaints issues, who may have delegated authority to implement changes, or who will refer decision making matters to the level within the *Landlord* where delegated authority rests.

3.2 [Staff member(s)] will be responsible for *Landlord* liaison with the Panel and for referring specific complaints matters as appropriate. They will also ensure that strategic matters raised by the Panel are referred appropriately within the *Landlord*.

4 Membership of the Panel

4.1 The Panel will have up to [x] members, who have been assembled as follows:

[Optional approaches]

- the *Panel* has been elected by the tenant constituency
- the *Panel* has been selected through a recruitment process agreed with the tenant constituency
- the *Panel's* membership is drawn from the membership of [x Tenant Panel] whose recruitment process is set out in its terms of reference
- the *Panel's* membership is drawn from tenants from several landlords
- the *Panel's* membership has been developed through some other means

4.2 The *Panel* may choose, having consulted with and considered the views of the *Landlord*, to co-opt up to [x] additional members who may bring particular skills or qualities onto the *Panel*. Co-optees [must be/may not be] *Landlord* tenants. In agreeing to a co-option, the *Panel* will clearly identify the reasons for the co-option and will choose whether the co-optee shall have voting rights within *Panel* meetings. Co-options will be reviewed on an annual basis by the *Panel*.

- 4.3 *Panel* members will normally serve for a [three] year period, with recruitments staggered over the period to preserve continuity. The initial recruitment process will determine the length of time initial members shall serve. At the end of the period of office, *Panel* members may apply to be recruited again, but *Panel* members may serve for a maximum of a [nine] year period.
- 4.4 The *Panel* will elect a Chair and Vice Chair from amongst its members. It [may/may not] choose to elect a co-optee in either role.
- 4.5 The [person identified for the role] will ensure secretarial and other servicing functions for the *Panel*. The *Panel* has discrete contact arrangements which the *Landlord* publicises to the tenant constituency. A protocol governs how tenant enquiries through these contacts will be received, handled and recorded.
- 4.6 Working with the *Landlord*, the *Panel* will agree a programme to meet the training and development needs of *Panel* members and will ensure that the individual and collective performance of *Panel* members is periodically reviewed.
- 4.7 The *Panel* will agree a quality control system with the *Landlord* whereby the views of tenants who make use of the *Panel*, *Landlord* staff involved in *Panel* complaints handling, and any other relevant people, will be assessed.
- 4.8 The *Panel* will agree with the *Landlord* how it will periodically publicise its activities to the tenant constituency.

5 **Panel meetings**

- 5.1 The *Panel* will normally hold [monthly] meetings, but additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the *Panel* Chair, or Vice Chair in their absence.

- 5.2 *Panel* meetings may consider “strategic” matters – ie. focusing on strategy, policy and overarching review of how the *Panel* is carrying out its activities, and/or they may review particular cases.
- 5.3 Agendas for *Panel* meetings will be planned by the *Panel* Chair working with the Vice Chair.
- 5.4 The quorum for *Panel* meetings shall be [x] members. Co-opted *Panel* members [shall/shall not] count towards the quorum.
- 5.5 Non *Panel* members and observers may be invited to attend *Panel* meetings at the discretion of the *Panel* Chair.

6 Minutes of Panel meetings

- 6.1 Minutes of *Panel* meetings will be taken and confirmed at each subsequent meeting as a true record and signed by the *Panel* Chair.

7 Code of Conduct and other issues

- 7.1 *Panel* members and co-opted members shall be subject to the *Panel*’s Code of Conduct, particularly in relation to confidentiality. The Code of Conduct specifies what action will be taken where a *Panel* member does not comply with the Code of Conduct.
- 7.2 The *Panel* shall ensure that it operates in accordance with Data Protection legislation and has agreed an appropriate policy with the *Landlord*.
- 7.3 The *Panel* has agreed with the *Landlord* how it will be indemnified through the *Landlord*’s insurance policies.

Part One

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 11
Date of Meeting: 13th June, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	

Title: Changes to Tenant Participation Arrangements

Summary and Conclusion:

The purpose of this report is to consider and progress initial changes to the tenant participation arrangements following the agreement of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewing the arrangements and subsequent decision of the Executive Committee on 20th March 2013.

The Housing Service's approach to tenant participation is contained within the Community Involvement Strategy 2011-13, which will be reviewed and updated by your next meeting. This report suggests changes that are necessary with regard to the Tenants' Forum Constitution and with regard to the arrangements for the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party as a result of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review.

Recommendations:

Members are requested to:

1. Note the contents of this report.
2. Agree amended Tenants' Forum Constitution.
3. Agree amended Terms of Reference for the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party and it be renamed Tenant Scrutiny Working Party.

Report

The purpose of this report is to consider and progress initial changes to the tenant participation arrangements following the agreement of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewing the arrangements. The Housing Service's approach to tenant participation is contained within the Community Involvement Strategy 2011-13, which will be reviewed and updated by your next meeting. This report suggests changes that are necessary with regard to the Tenants' Forum Constitution and with regard to the arrangements for the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party as a result of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review and subsequent decision of the Executive Committee on 20th March 2013.

Tenants' Forum Constitution

Attached at **Appendix C** is a copy of a revised Tenants' Forum Constitution for your consideration and agreement. The changes have been highlighted and reflect the decision of the Executive Committee on 20th March, 2013 following the review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Tenant Participation Compact Working Party

It has been agreed the role of the Group should be to carry out a 'scrutiny' role.

Current arrangements for the Tenant Participation Compact Working Party are that there is equal attendance of Councillors and tenant representation. The Working Party meet by agreement and as necessary.

Going forward, I would suggest the following:

Title:

To reflect the change in role it be retitled the Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party (TSWP).

Membership:

To remain as per current arrangement.

Remit:

To agree, in conjunction with the Tenants' Forum an 'Annual Plan' to identify service areas to be scrutinised. This will normally be two areas of service, but may be more depending on service areas selected and resources required to complete.

Purpose:

To scrutinise agreed identified service areas, to consider the current arrangements for delivery and progress changes as thought appropriate in achieving the "vision" for the Housing Service.

Operation:

- Council officers will be identified to assist the TSWP carry out the review (normally the responsible manager).
- Meetings will be chaired by a tenant representative in acknowledgement that the process should be tenant-led.
- Meetings will be agreed as necessary and on a meeting-by-meeting basis as necessary to complete the particular review.
- The outcome of the review will be agreed by the Tenants' Forum and then Housing Management Forum to agree or action as necessary.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil.

**BARROW-IN-FURNESS
TENANTS' FORUM CONSTITUTION**

CONVENTIONS

Throughout this document the words:

1. "Tenants" and "Tenants' groups" are used to describe both Tenants and Residents and their groups. In some areas this will include both leasehold and freehold owner-occupiers, and may include Tenants or Residents of housing association landlords.
2. Tenants' Representative/s shall mean person elected by Tenants to speak on their behalf on tenant-related matters.

The Tenants' Forum is constituted as a consultative and advisory body. It aims to bring together representatives of Council Tenants and to promote their interests in partnership with the Barrow Borough Council as a Landlord.

1. AIMS

- a) To promote and represent the interests of all Council Tenants within the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness.
- b) To give Tenant Representatives the opportunity to discuss issues relating to the management of their homes and estates with elected Council Members and officers.
- c) To encourage and develop Tenant participation in the management of Council housing within the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness via the Community Involvement Manager.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

a) Powers

- i) To seek information which may be of general relevance to Tenants' interests from the Council's Housing Department or from any other source.
- ii) To make representations to the Council's Housing Management Forum on issues relating to Tenant participation, the provision of housing services and any other matters which may be of relevance to Council Tenants within the guidelines of the Tenant Involvement Compact.
- iii) To make recommendations for the allocation of funding for Environmental Enhancement Budget.
- iv) To raise funds by any legal means in keeping with the spirit of the Tenants' Forum to support the Aims of the Forum.
- v) To nominate representation of the Tenants' Forum to be members of the Housing Management Forum. (Nominated representation must be current tenants of the Council).

- vi) To agree the allocation of the training budget
- vii) To nominate representatives to any Forum or meeting agreed by the Council eg Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party.

b) Duties

In consultation with individual Tenants and Tenants' groups, the Forum will:

- i) identify and report issues of concern to Council Tenants;
- ii) monitor housing policy with regard to Tenant participation;
- iii) consider any items referred to it by Council committees, elected Members, officers or Council Tenants;
- iv) produce and make available minutes and other accounts of its work;
- v) identify training needs and encourage the provision of training for Tenants, housing staff and elected Members on participation issues; and
- iv) review the Tenant Involvement Compact and all associated proposals.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- a) The Tenants' Forum shall comprise of a maximum of three representatives from any Tenants' group which has been recognised by the Council.
- b) Any Resident may serve on the understanding that they represent the interests of all Tenants of the area in which they live.
- c) The Council will be represented by the Chairperson of Housing Management Forum.
- d) The Tenants' Forum shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from amongst its Tenants' representatives.
- e) When necessary Forum officer posts may be created for the purposes of furthering the aims of the Forum.
- f) Tenants representing Street Voices or Area Panels may be eligible to serve as Tenants' Representatives if the Forum is satisfied that they represent an area not covered by a currently active Association.

4. QUORUM

No decision can be taken by the Forum unless at least two Tenant groups are represented.

5. FINANCES

- a) The accounts for Tenants' Forum are administered by Housing administration and audited by the Town Hall.
- d) The Council will pay reasonable travel and subsistence to Tenants' representatives attending training sessions and meetings.
- e) Payments for travel and subsistence at shall be at the agreed rates at the time.

6. MEETINGS

- a) The Forum will hold an annual meeting and further meetings in sequence with the current local Council meeting schedule.
- b) If a vote is necessary on an issue each Tenants' group will have one vote. Council representatives shall have no right of vote.
- c) Tenants' groups will nominate Tenants' representatives to serve on the Forum as necessary.
- d) The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Forum will be filled by Tenants' representatives who will be elected annually by a majority vote.
- e) All meetings of the Tenants' Forum will be conducted in accordance with the rules of debate outlined in the Council's Standing Orders.
- f) Meetings are to be open to observers at the discretion of the Chairperson and with the agreement of Tenants' representatives at the meeting. Tenant members can, for all or part of the meeting, decide to exclude observers.

7. AGENDA FOR MEETINGS

- a) Items for inclusion in the meetings can be put forward by Tenants, elected Members and Council staff, by contacting either the Community Involvement Manager, or Chairperson of the Forum not less than seven days before the date of the meeting.
- b) Agendas and reports, together with minutes of previous meetings will be circulated to all Forum members at least three days before the meeting.
- c) The Chairperson will deal with business as it appears on the agenda. Items of an urgent nature may be raised or brought forward without prior notice with the permission of the Chairperson and the consent of members of the Forum.
- d) Copies of minutes and reports will be made available to any member of the public on request, and can be found on the Council website.

8. SUPPORT FOR THE FORUM

Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council will support the Forum by:

- a) providing accommodation for and servicing the meetings;
- b) ensuring that any necessary information is provided to Forum members;
- c) arranging for Councillors and officers to attend Forum meetings as required;
- d) providing training for all members of the Forum; and
- e) providing financial support for Tenants' groups and Tenants' representatives in accordance with the Council's Tenant Involvement Compact.

9. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of the Forum may be amended at any meeting with the proviso that notice of the proposed amendment has been circulated with the agenda at least three days before the meeting. Any changes will be subject to approval of the Housing Management Forum.

Part One

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 12
Date of Meeting: 13th June, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	

Title: Housing Maintenance Investment Programme

Summary and Conclusion:

The introduction of 'Self-Financing' has resulted in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) generating additional funding for investment in the housing stock which will be ongoing. The purpose of this report is to agree in principle how these resources should be incorporated within existing plans.

Recommendations:

Members instructions are requested.

Background

The introduction of 'Self-Financing' has resulted in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) generating additional funding for investment in the housing stock which will be ongoing. The purpose of this report is to agree in principle how these resources should be incorporated within existing plans.

The Housing Services Investment Programme is directed by the Asset Management Strategy 2010-15, a copy of which is available in the Members' Room and on our website.

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out the long-term approach to managing the Council's housing assets to ensure we meet the present and future needs of the community. We achieve this by:

- Effective business planning: to assess the financial integrity of our plans.
- Effective investment planning: to ensure investments deliver value for money.
- Effective option appraisal: to assess management and delivery opportunities.

For your information, I attach at **Appendix D** the previously agreed 'Vision' and 'Aims' of the Strategy.

The Strategy is backed up by a largely financial-based 30-year Business Plan which is updated following the completion of stock condition surveys, consideration of operational experiences, including complaints and tenants' feedback via various means.

Having regard to the above, our approach to delivery of investment in tenants' homes has been based on component replacements, the plans for which are agreed on an annual basis when agreeing the HRA.

Report

As referred to above, the introduction of self-financing has resulted in additional resources being available in the HRA. In setting the HRA budget for 2013/14 it was agreed a sum of £360,996 be included in the Maintenance Budget and a further report to be provided to consider how this could be utilised, in particular following review of the STAR survey results.

In considering the options for making best use of these resources, I would comment as follows:

1. As referred to above, our practice with regard to upgrading property is based on component replacement, the key components being kitchens, bathrooms, central heating and rewires. Targets were set in the Asset Management Plan with regard to the rate at which components would be upgraded and we are ahead of the targets, (as reported to HMF 17th January 2013).
2. Long-term Investment Requirements: As referred to above, the Asset Management Plan looks to identify the long-term investment requirements, alongside the 30-year Business Plan. The Plan as it is, suggests the likely investment requirements to maintain property at the Decent Homes Standard is deliverable.

It would be appropriate, however, to carry out further 'reality testing' of the plan which I would propose be built into the service's Annual Plan.

3. A general comment regarding the Decent Homes Standard is that it perhaps did not have sufficient regard to investment or maintenance of 'communal spaces' and environmental maintenance. Whilst the Council has had regard to this over the years, the main priority has been 'property' rather than 'area-based'. In terms of communal areas and environmental maintenance, I would suggest this ranges from fencing, to maintenance of communal entrances in flats to general estate maintenance such as access paths.
4. STAR Survey: As you will be aware, the result of the survey demonstrates tenants generally have a positive view of services provided (87%). The survey included reference to maintenance in tenants' homes and the environment and again positive responses were received. Generally scores regarding tenants' views of 'their home' scored higher than feedback on questions such as appearance of neighbourhood, although scores of 82% were recorded.
5. From our operational experience, priority in terms of maintenance of public realm has been limited over a number of years. For example, we have not operated a planned approach to upgrading fencing or communal areas on an ongoing basis. Where programmes were previously carried out they are now some years old and require upgrading.
6. I would also highlight to you the difficulties we are experiencing with the upkeep of garage areas. It is many years since any preventative work has been carried out. Garages do represent a significant income to the HRA and it would be appropriate to commence a small scale refurbishment scheme. The approach would be to complete the worst-first and only garages that have clear demand.

In considering allocating these resources, I would also draw to your attention the practicalities of delivering increased investment and the capacity of our Maintenance Team to deliver it. To deliver increased investment may require additional project support in some instances.

Proposals for Additional Investment

Having regard to the above comments, I would suggest the following possible options:

Option 1: Invest the c.£360K to accelerate the agreed programme of component replacement.

Option 2: Use a proportion of the c.£360K to accelerate the component programme but also a proportion to carry out investment in areas of the service it has not been practical to do so previously.

Should Option 2 be the preferred option, I would suggest the resources be invested as follows:

Accelerate component replacement, kitchen, bathroom, and rewire programme by: £150K

(Currently agreed in 2013/14 Investment Profile: £500K; £330K and £227,120 respectively)

Commence a programme of upgrading garages, I would suggest on an area-by-area basis that would be ongoing. (No resources currently identified). £75K

Increase resources for fencing £60K

(Currently agreed in 2013/14 Investment Profile: £25K)

Public realm investment, in particular communal door security and access paths on estates £80K

(Currently agreed in 2013/14 Investment Profile: £20K)

Should Option 2 be agreed, it may not be practical for the Maintenance Team to deliver the schemes. I would request should it not be possible to manage the schemes in their entirety in-house, you note that additional support will be commissioned on a scheme-by-scheme basis, the cost of which will be met from the allocated costs for each project.

Secondly, on a practical level, the nature of estates of mixed ownership does add difficulty to the delivery of fencing schemes. In the first instance, I would look to target areas in which to upgrade fencing would have both a benefit to the resident, but also the community and which have been subject to planned improvements previously. When it is involving owner-occupiers, they will be offered the opportunity to pay and have the fencing upgrade as part of the larger scheme, but if they choose not to, their property will be omitted from the scheme.

Members instructions are requested.

(i) **Legal Implications**

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) **Risk Assessment**

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

Provision of £360K has been identified in the HRA to fund these proposals.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2010-2015

VISION

Our vision is to “Provide well maintained estates where people choose to live”.

AIMS

To achieve our vision we will ensure:

- We deliver maintenance services to the standards and local offers agreed with our customers.
- Our housing stock and public spaces on estates are maintained in good, safe and lettable condition.
- We meet our statutory, regulatory and contractual repairs and maintenance obligations.
- We use short-term and long-term assessments to plan and deliver our services.
- We engage and empower our customers to be involved in all decisions.
- We ensure equality and diversity is at the forefront of service delivery.
- We will make the best use of the resources available.
- We will ensure effective performance management through evaluation of best practice.

Part One

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 13
Date of Meeting: 13th June, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	

Title: Welfare Reform Action Plan

Summary and Conclusion:

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the delivery of the agreed Action Plan including details of our engagement with tenants and proposals for targeting resources as we move forward.

Recommendations:

Members are requested to:

1. Note the information contained in this report.
2. Agree the approach of identifying tenants at greatest risk of tenancy failure due to the reforms and amend procedures for new tenancy visits to take the opportunity to mitigate risks of tenancy failure as far as is practical.

Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the delivery of the agreed Action Plan including details of our engagement with tenants and proposals for targeting resources as we move forward.

The Six-point Action Plan was considered at your meeting on 14th June, 2012 and agreed by the Executive Committee on 20th June, 2012.

The Welfare Reform changes involve a number of changes to welfare benefits. For the purpose of this report, I will concentrate on those changes which have the most significant impact on the relationship between tenants and the Council.

A summary of the implications of such changes is as follows:

Under-occupation (from April 2013)

- Total number of tenants identified who are under-occupying - 326
 - Under-occupying by one bedroom (-14%) - 249
 - Under-occupying by two bedrooms (-25%) - 77
- All tenants have been contacted by letter, telephone or visited. We have still not made contact with 21 tenants.

Benefit Cap (from introduction of Universal Credit)

- 7 tenants have now been identified by the DWP who will be affected by the introduction of a benefits cap.

Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in progress

- No issues raised with Housing to date.

Universal Credit

- Awaiting confirmation of date for introduction.

Although it had been our intention to carry out a series of consultation events, this has not been progressed. From our experience so far, in contacting tenants regarding under-occupation it is clear the majority of tenants are aware of the Welfare Reform agenda and the likely effect on them. In consideration of the need to make best use of our resources, we will, however, be minded to this perhaps being necessary in the future and have agreed to attend events organised by other organisations to promote this issue and to ensure our newsletter includes regular updates and information.

I am pleased to report we have now recruited two additional officers within the Income and Debt Recovery Team. This includes an officer funded through the arrangement to collect water rates and who will focus on a range of support systems to assist tenants with financial inclusion matters and household budgeting.

In addition, and following the approval of a revised Housing Income Policy on 3rd March, 2011 new processes are being introduced to ensure officers are able to invest time in assisting tenants as appropriately as possible to manage their household finances. This has included the Business Support Team dealing with low level arrears or residual arrears.

It is recognised one option for tenants who are under-occupying is to move to smaller property. To assist in this process, it was agreed to introduce a Downsizing Incentive Scheme. A figure of £26K was agreed and the option is being promoted. To date we have received 11 applications: five of which have been agreed and six which are currently under consideration. As you are aware, the Choice-Based Lettings Scheme has also been revised to assist tenants who wish to move due to financial hardship.

Within the housing sector it is expected that rent arrears will increase and may have an impact on business plans. We are, therefore, looking to develop processes to help us manage the changes as referred to above.

Rent arrears always tend to go through cycles – increasing and decreasing throughout the year. However, for your information, below is an example of a comparison with arrears at year end compared to the same period last year:

	Current Tenant Arrears	% of Rent Due
• 1 st April 2013	£203,623	2.12%
• 2 nd April 2012	£181,230	1.96%

With regard to tenants who are under-occupying, details are as follows:

- Number of potential under-occupiers: 326
- Not receiving housing benefit: 47
- Tenants with no arrears: 48
- Tenants not having made payment since 1 April 2013: 119
- Tenants of who have made full or partial payment: 64%

Progressing our Services to Tenants

A number of measures have now been put in place to enable the service to offer assistance and respond to tenants experiencing difficulty.

Such assistance will be based on 'case work' and resources have been increased and processes changed to help increase the time available to develop this work.

In moving forward, it must be recognised the Housing Service must collect the rent due, whilst assisting as far as is practical those tenants experiencing difficulty.

There are many 'personal challenges' individual tenants are going to have to adopt to move forward, and whilst the changes in rules on under-occupation are significant, the introduction of Universal Credit will have to be prepared for as it will signal the end of direct payments to landlords of a tenant's housing costs.

This will increase the number of tenants in difficulty. Whilst our aim would be to offer assistance to all tenants, we will also look to target staff resources to ensure we engage with those groups of tenants who are at greatest risk of their tenancy failing. This will also include looking for 'opportunities' to engage with tenants to mitigate the risks concerned, for instance, forming relationships with new tenants through our new 'tenancy visiting procedures'.

Members instructions are requested.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

Part One

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(R) Agenda Item 14
Date of Meeting: 13th June, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	

Title: Barrow & District Credit Union

Summary and Conclusion:

The purpose of this report is to consider offering an opportunity to encourage new tenants to become members of the recently established Barrow & District Credit Union (BDCU).

Recommendations:

Members are asked to agree:

1. The Housing Service offer a contribution of £5 to each new tenant to become a member of BDCU.
2. Subject to the new tenant becoming a regular saver, after 10 weeks of membership a further contribution of £5 be made.

Report

The purpose of this report is to consider offering an opportunity to encourage new tenants to become members of the recently established Barrow & District Credit Union (BDCU).

Members will be aware the BDCU has now been established and has been operating from premises in The Mall since 28th February, 2013.

The Council and Tenants' Forum supported the development of a new credit union as it is recognised as an important option to be available to residents who may not engage with high street banks or have difficulty accessing loan facilities at an affordable rate of interest.

The Council recognises the introduction of Welfare Reform will be challenging for tenants and the Housing Service. A six-point plan was agreed by this Forum on 14th June, 2012 in order to direct the resources of the Housing Service to assist tenants as far as is practical to do so.

Action 2 involves working in partnership with organisations as appropriate to ensure tenants have access to financial services, including 'affordable credit'.

I would suggest at the present time there is an opportunity to progress this action point by encouraging all new tenants to become members of the credit union by making a contribution towards their membership of the credit union of £2 together with £3 to commence a savings plan. To then assist tenants who engage with a savings plan to contribute a further £5 after saving for 10 weeks.

The BDCU are already operating a similar scheme funded by the County Council and targeted at schools in the inner wards.

If the proposal is agreed, it would be appropriate to adopt a similar administrative approach to establish the Housing Department's scheme.

The opportunity to become a member would be shared with a new tenant at the time of sign-up, with interested tenants being referred to the BDCU for further information and to establish their membership.

Should the proposal be agreed, I would suggest it be reviewed during the budget process for 2014/15 and if it is of positive benefit to be incorporated in the HRA budget.

At this time I am specifically suggesting we target new tenants. This is based on the approach of targeting resources to assist as far as is practical a new tenant establishing a successful tenancy.

It is the case, however, that other tenants should also be given the same contribution to assist them become members of the Credit Union. Details of this options costs are shown on the reverse of this report.

Members may also, therefore, wish to consider:

1. Making the option available to all tenants. (NB: The process would have to be phased to ensure it was delivered appropriately based on the potential number of applicants.)
2. Defer making a decision until the outcome of the targeting of new tenants has been established.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation would have a cost to the HRA. In the last financial year, 245 new tenancies, including transfers were created. The number of new tenants may change slightly from year to year but will not be significantly different and therefore if all were to take up the opportunity and also become regular savers, the cost would be £2,450.

Should the opportunity be provided for all tenants, the likely cost would be £26,970.

These resources have not been budgeted for but could be made available from the HRA Balance for this financial year.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

Part One

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 15
Date of Meeting: 13th June, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Housing Manager	

Title: 6-24 Middleton Avenue, Barrow – Vehicle Crossing

Summary and Conclusion:

The purpose of this report is to consider a request from a resident to construct a vehicle crossing over land owned by the Council.

Recommendations:

Members instructions are requested.

Report

The purpose of this report is to consider a request from a resident to construct a vehicle crossing over land owned by the Council.

Attached at **Appendix E** is a plan showing the layout of properties. As can be seen, between 6 -24 Middleton Avenue is a 'green area' between the frontage of the properties, the pavement and road. The green area is in the ownership of the Council.

I advised the resident I would not agree the request. I did so on the basis he made reference to parking commercial vehicles, loss of green area, it would change the street scene of the area and there are no existing crossings.

The resident did not accept my refusal and asked for it to be reconsidered. I advised him I would bring it to the attention of this Forum.

I would suggest it is understandable why the request has been made. Many Council estates were constructed at a time when vehicle ownership was not prevalent. The layout of estates and access roads has, over the years, become more congested.

It is not uncommon that residents apply for vehicle access to allow in-curtilage parking. In most instances, such accesses involve 'pavement' crossings and are dealt with by the Highways Authority, the County Council. Many properties in Middleton Avenue do have such crossings. There is no doubt this helps ease the congestion where it is possible. In view of the impact on the appearance of the area and loss of green area, I have written to residents who either face the green area or whose properties adjoin it to obtain their views – 19 in total.

The responses received were:

- 3 - In favour
 - 6 - Against
 - 2 - Did not agree one way or the other but one wanted various assurances before commenting, which I am unable to provide.
 - 1 - Suggested alternative arrangements
- 12

In considering the responses, a resident has raised the question of providing additional parking facilities for general use by residents. Whilst a reasonable suggestion, the problem of congestion is common throughout Council estates and it would make it impractical to respond in a way that would be replicated elsewhere.

In summary, whilst recognising the benefit of enabling off-street parking, in this instance the benefits would have to be considered alongside the loss of green area on the avenue.

Members instructions are requested.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

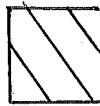
Background Papers

Correspondence held by the Housing Manager.

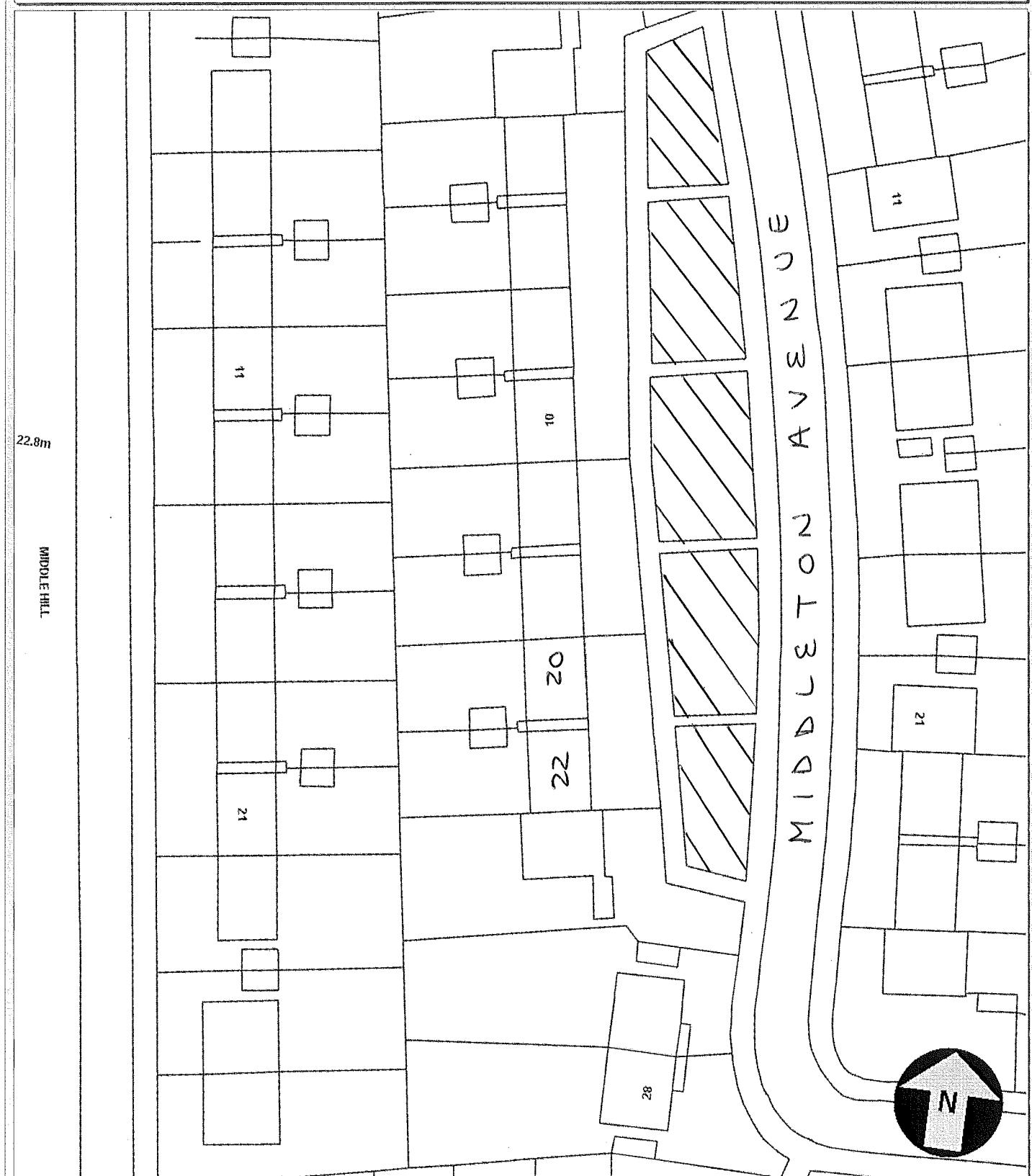
APPENDIX E

Middleton Avenue

Site Plan



Green
Area



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Part One

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(D) Agenda Item 16
Date of Meeting: 13th June, 2013	
Reporting Officer: Jane Coles, Business Support Manager	

Title: Housing Management Performance 2012/13

Summary and Conclusion:

The end of year performance information is attached together with a brief commentary to assist members in their understanding of the key trends.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

1. See through the current sanctions with the repair contractor VINCI and closely monitor their performance
2. Note the information outlined

Background

The end of year performance information is attached together with a brief commentary to assist members in their understanding of the key trends.

The end of year performance information is attached at **Appendix F**.

The Customer Satisfaction section has been updated following the 2012 'STAR' autumn survey.

Report

The significant factor which may have adversely impacted on the performances this year is:

- Continuing performance problems with the repairs contractor.

Strengths

- Current Arrears have risen at a slightly lower rate than last year when considered as a percentage of the rent owed which is a good performance against the general economic background.
- Rent loss on garage and shop voids has reduced.
- Former tenant arrears need to be considered together with the Write Offs which again have decreased in terms of percentage from 1.82% to 1.79%. This is as a result of taking their recovery in house and adopting new working practices.
- Gas Safety, Decent Homes and SAP rating measures have all performed well again this year and are better than target.

- The figure for re-lets now excludes Dispersed as these properties are now used exclusively for Homeless accommodation. The underlying figure is consistent with previous years.
- The number of voids has increased but this is primarily due the worsening condition of void properties and a slowdown by the contractor in turning them around at year end which meant we had double the number of empty properties than at the previous year end. The adjusted Relet times have improved from 37 days to 32.
- Customer satisfaction measured through the 'STAR' survey are very positive and show improvements on the last survey of 2008/09. 88% are satisfied with overall service and 87% remain satisfied with the repairs service specifically.
- The Homelessness Team have been very effective in doubling the number of successful preventions so that the number of eligible homeless has not increased despite a significant increase in presentations.

Weaknesses

The Responsive and Void repair performances are again down significantly on the previous year which is attributed to Contractor management and their IT systems:

- Average time to repair has risen from 12 days to 20
- Overall % of repairs completed on time is down by almost 10%
- Repair orders have decreased yet the average ratio of emergency / urgent repairs (64% v 47%) to all Tenant Demand repairs has increased.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation should improve the financial position.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no implications.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Housing Management Performance Report.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

APPENDIX F

Performance Indicator	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	Target (Median)
£ Rents Collection				
£ Rent & Service Charges due		£9,228,558	9,728,187	
£ Rent collected	8,738,448	9,134,875	9,604,739	8,855,938
Rent collected as % of rent due (inc ft)	103.47%	97.62%	98.85%	99%
£ Current Arrears (dwellings)	£155,726	£181,230	£203,623	£175,679
£ Former Arrears (dwellings)	£103,418	£92,499	£135,745	£128,081
Write Offs (Gross)	£114,706	£75,538	£38,573	£42,803
Tenants evicted for rent arrears	13	6	5	6
Current tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.79%	1.96%	2.12%	3.16%
Former tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.18%	1.02%	1.41%	1.29%
£ Rent arrears Garages	£3,289	£1,824	£1,452	£3,750
£ Rent Arrears Shops	£27,524	£16,602	£22,146	£25,000
Void Management				
Tenancy Turnover %		10.3%	10.4%	8.05%
Total number of re-lets during the period benchmarked (inc Dispersed)	268	278	245	217
No. of Voids	264	227	277	218
Average relet time for dwellings (days)	28	37	32	28
£ rent loss through vacant dwellings	£85,909	£100,227	£111,607	£109,685
£ rent loss due to vacant garages	£4,907	£5,098	£2,290	£4,500
£ rent loss due to vacant shops	£4,844	£16,546	£5,000	£4,000
% properties accepted on first offer	73.9%	86.4%	78.4%	70%
Loss per Void (Rents, Repairs, Mgt & Arrears)	£2,556	£2,846	£2,684	£2,000
Maintenance				
No. Repair Orders issued (Tenant Demand)	10,890	11,587	10,109	9,197
Responsive & Void repairs per property	4.2	4.3	3.7	3.4
P1 & P2 as a % of total repairs	50.5%	61.7%	63.8%	47.5%
% all responsive repairs completed on time	92.5%	87.3%	77.1%	96.3
P1 % emergency repairs completed on time	98.9%	94.6%	94.6%	96.7
P2 % urgent repairs completed on time	89.6%	78.9%	77.3%	94.6
Average end-to-end time for all reactive repairs (days)	12.6	12.25	19.78	8.2
Percentage of repairs completed 'Right First Time'	NA	78.5%	79.79	88.8
Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made	97.13	77%	61%	96.8
Appointments made as a percentage of repair orders (exc gas & voids)	100%	NA	100%	94.1
Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.2%	99.89%	100%	99.8%
Percentage of homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard	0.0%	0%	0%	0.2%
*Average energy efficiency rating of dwellings (based on RD SAP 9.83)	68.3	69.2	69.2	68.90%
Tenancy Management				
ASB cases reported	85	82	72	143
Percentage ASB cases successfully resolved	72%	91%	99%	88%
% Diversity Information: Age	99.88%	100%	100%	100%
% Diversity Information: Gender	100%	100%	100%	98%
% Diversity Information: Ethnicity	94.70%	95%	82%	75%
% Diversity Information: Disability	44.59%	100%	100%	75%
% Diversity Information: Sexuality	41.70%	56%	52%	55%
% Diversity Information: Religion or belief	43.05%	57%	53%	55%
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints upheld	25%	22%	40%	NA

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

APPENDIX F

Performance Indicator	Actual 08/09	Actual 12/13	Target (Median)
Satisfaction			
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's services overall	87%	88%	83%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs and maintenance	88%	87%	79%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their views are taken into account	76%	78%	64%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of the home	NA	90	N/A
Percentage of residents satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live	81%	84%	82%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their rent provides value for money	N/A	90%	N/A
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their service charges provide value for money	N/A	81%	N/A
Value for Money -Direct Costs per property	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13
Overhead per property		£ 140	
Major & Cyclical works	£1,294	£ 1,256	£1,241
Responsive Repairs	£455	£ 480	£424
Void Repairs	£144	£ 167	£176
Rent Arrears & Collection	£53	£ 54	£71
Community Involvement	£27	£ 38	£46
Anti Social Behaviour	£29	£ 41	£38
Neighbourhood Mgt (Estates/Tenancy mgt.)	£34	£ 102	£66
Housing Options	£43	£ 36	£37
Leasehold	£50	£ 70	£136
Total staff turnover	10.3%	7.0%	5.9%
Ave. working days lost / sickness absence	22.3	14.0	18.9
			10.5

Housing Property	Normal 11/12	Dispersed 11/12	Normal 11/12	Dispersed 11/12
Houses	1290	0	1284	0
Flats	1258	11	1256	10
Bungalows	157	0	157	0
Total Dwellings	2705	11	2697	10
Community Centres			5	
Leaseholds	202		204	
Garages	484		486	
Shops	20		20	

Sold Properties	Stock 11/12	Sold 11/12	Stock 12/13	Sold 12/13
Houses	148,500	3	252,750	6
Flats	27,000	1	42,160	2
Land	2,312	1	0	0
Total Sales	177,812	4	294,910	8

Homelessness	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13
Homeless ave. days in temporary dispersed accommodation	46	59	57
Homeless ave. days in temporary B&B accommodation	31	20	27
Homeless Total Cases Closed	616	752	903
Homeless Advice	216	339	408
Homeless Prevention	174	114	170
Homeless Applications	226	185	147
Homeless Successful Preventions	146	85	148
Eligible Homeless (Owed a full duty)	27	29	30

Housing Register	Actual 2010/11	Actual 2011/12	Actual 12/13
Applicants on housing register	1700		
Active Direct Applicants			1471
Active Transfer Applicants			346
Cumbria Choice Register		1745	1817

PLANNED INVESTMENTS 2012-13: YEAR END EXPENDITURE

SCHEME	CONTRACTOR OR SUPPLIER	AVAILABLE BUDGET	NO OF PROPERTIES	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	START DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	CONTRACTOR	COMMENTS	Leasholders affected?
RE-ROOFING WORKS (GRIFFIN)	DLP Roofing	£300,000	183	£ -	Apr-12	Dec-13	DLP SERVICES	COMMENCED WORKS APRIL 2013	Yes
BALCONY REPAIRS	CUMBRIA ROOFING	£29,879	52	£ -	May-13	Oct-13	CUMBRIA ROOFING	WORK COMMENCING MAY 2013	Yes
FENCING WORKS (HINDPOOL)	AB Mitchell Ltd	£57,779	69	£ 17,000	4.2.2012	30.4.13	A B Mitchell	95% COMPLETE	Yes
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£254,000	120	£ 233,733	1.4.2012	31.3.13	K WILSON	100 COMPLETE	No
BATHROOMS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£300,000	200	£ 248,663	1.4.2012	25.3.13	AB MITCHELL	100 COMPLETE	No
KITCHENS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£800,000	300	£ 771,076	1.4.2012	25.3.14	AB MITCHELL	100 COMPLETE	No
HEATING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£575,000	200	£ 633,850	1.4.2012	15.3.13	AB MITCHELL INTEGRAL	100 COMPLETE	No
RE-POINTING	CUMBRIA ROOFING	£150,000	66	£ 156,052	1.4.2012	1.7.2013	CUMBRIA ROOFING	80% COMPLETE	Yes
PAINTING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£200,000	500	£ 173,320	1.4.2012	15.1.13	GH JONES	100 COMPLETE	Yes

HOUSING MAINTENANCE COMMITMENTS 2012-13: YEAR END EXPENDITURE

	Funding Available 2011-12	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	Weekly Available	Gross Comm. as a % funds available
Tenant Demand Repairs	£ 500,326	£ 205,926	£ 9,622	41%
Preliminary Cost	£ 399,674	£ 264,000	£ 7,686	66%
Voids	£ 200,000	£ 158,831	£ 3,846	79%
Gas Servicing	£ 280,000	£ 134,531	£ 5,385	48%
Decoration Vouchers	£ 35,000	£ 22,105	£ 673	63%
Disrepair Claims	£ 25,000	£ 1,656	£ 481	7%
Environmental Impmts	£ 25,000	£ 20,550	£ 481	82%
Disabled Adaptations	£ 300,000	£ 147,142	£ 5,769	49%
Electrical Testing	£ 75,000	£ 50,471	£ 1,442	67%
Door Entry Maintenance	£ 20,000	£ 21,144	£ 385	106%
Total	£1,935,000.00	£1,026,356.00	£35,769.23	