

**Attendees:** Pat Cowie (PC - Chair), Trudy Saunders (TS), Caroline Greenaway (CG), Anne Saunders (AS), David Taylor (DT), Zoe Parkhouse (ZP), Claire Fry (CF), Emma Elston (EE) and Sam Wallace (SW - minutes)

Agenda Item	Key points discussed	Actions	By when	By whom
<b>Housekeeping, Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	PC welcomed all to the meeting Apologies were received from Sylvia Gregory.			
<b>1. Approval of previous meeting Minutes held on 14 February 2019</b>	Corrected minutes from the meeting in January and the February meeting were approved by the TT members.			
<b>2. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Tenants Together Meeting Held on 14th February 2019</b>	<p>CG asked if the paint policy may need reviewing; ZP has spoken to Mark Baglow and will arrange for a member of staff to attend the next meeting.</p> <p>DT expressed concerns in the last meeting regarding changes in policies - CF will give provide an update on policies during agenda item 4.</p> <p>CF confirmed to TT members that acronyms will not be used in the future and understands the confusion this can cause.</p> <p>ZP confirmed Batch Jobs have been added to Tenants Together Top Targets.</p> <p>CF confirmed that the TT members will be informed of what MDDC's fire risk assessments are and that this will be addressed on the agenda.</p> <p>ZP confirmed to AS that she has been booked to attend the 'Member Event' in Swindon.</p> <p>ZP received email confirmation from SG and CG with updated contact details. The other TT members need to confirm contact details with ZP.</p> <p>Item AOB is for TT members to think of other sections that could be reviewed and can be discussed on agenda item 4.</p>	<p>ZP to confirm member of staff in Mark Baglow's team to attend a TT meeting.</p> <p>TT members to provide up to date contact details from pass to ZP via email</p>	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>ASAP</p>	<p>ZP</p> <p>TT members</p>

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<p><b>3. Allocations role in Housing with Emma Elston</b></p>	<p>EE described how applicants apply to Devon Home Choice and how their housing need is prioritised (aka banding, where A is highest housing need, B is a high need, C is a medium need, D is low and E is where no housing need has been identified). All applications are processed by Mike Jones and banded based on the information provided in each application.</p> <p>EE explained the process for ending a tenancy. This starts with a Notice to Quit from the tenant which gives four weeks' notice from a Monday, that they wish to give up the tenancy. These Notices are processed by Housing Business Support.</p> <p>During this period the Allocations Team contact the tenant or next of kin, to carry out a pre-void inspection, this is often a joint visit with the Void Supervisor. This allows us to advise the outgoing tenant of the required standard for the property when they leave it, identify any potential recharges, note what works will need to be done during the void period and assess accessibility criteria, such as step free. Properties are advertised on a Wednesday (Council and Housing Associations) and applicants have until the following Monday at midnight to bid. The Allocations Team then work through the shortlist to allocate the property.</p> <p>Allocations will arrange viewings of properties and Patrick Hyde will carry out pre void inspections and make sure the property is a good standard before a tenant views the property. When Allocations show an applicant around the property they inform them of the void report and advise what work will be carried out before they become a tenant of the address. There is one final stage if the applicants accept the property and there will be more verification checks and bank statements and an income and expenditure form will need to be completed. There will also be checks if the applicant was with a private landlord before and will check if they had issues with rent arrears or other issues which they need to be informed about.</p> <p>Once the tenancy has terminated the Void Supervisor will visit and complete a void report confirming all works to be carried out and the completion date. The Allocations Team will then view the property with the prospective tenant and advise of works to be completed.</p> <p>If the applicants accept the property checks will be completed to verify their application and they will need to provide documents to support this. A reference will also be requested if they are currently renting elsewhere.</p> <p>CF added that not all properties that come back to us are advertised. The Council makes a direct let when there are vulnerable tenants who are at risk due to crime.</p> <p>EE to check if the time an applicant's applies for a property on the advert has an advantage. To check how this is assessed with Mike Parker or Mike Jones.</p> <p>CF stated when 2% of occupants from outside the district have a property in Mid Devon then a local connection can apply in future Devon Home Choice adverts and not let to every applicant.</p> <p>PC queried the number of people on the waiting list.</p>	<p>To check if the time an applicant's applies is an advantage</p>	<p>ASAP</p>	<p>EE</p>

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	<p>CF answered that there is currently 2,000 on the waiting list clarifying there are currently around 800 between band A and D and the remaining are band E (which is no housing need and the tenant is adequately housed). CF will bring a report to the PDG in June to have a discussion about the future of band E.</p> <p>EE stated that the homeless still need to register on Devon Home Choice CF added that there is an A band panel to decide if tenant has high housing need or not.</p> <p>DT raised a concern that occupants don't represent themselves very accurately. This can impact officer's judgement and the urgency for an occupant to receive the correct housing need. CF admitted this is a difficult challenge, although face to face can improve honesty. However, it does increase cost to the Council; It's much cheaper to have conversations on the phone or by email.</p> <p>EE Thanked the TT group for inviting her and left the meeting.</p>			
<p><b>4. This year's Upcoming Polices</b></p>	<p>The estates team are identifying the rights on every piece of car parking (eg Garage Ground Rent Plots) the Council owns. Garage Management policy will also be checked during this.</p> <p>CF has reviewed the Hoarding Policy with the Neighbourhood Officers and all felt the current policy is still appropriate.</p> <p>The Domestic Abuse Policy and new legislation is currently being looked at by a Neighbourhood Officer who was a Domestic Abuse Officer.</p> <p>CF observed that the current policies were reviewed by Helen Carty when she was the Policy Officer adding that a Policy Officer can only be employed if a large piece of work needs to be carried out.</p> <p>Income Management Policy is ongoing - CF is consulting with stakeholders and other Support Agencies about the policy.</p> <p>Pets and Animals policy is under review – the Neighbourhood Officers confirmed that the current policy is working well and there are very few complaints.</p> <p>The Recharge Policy will be removed from Claire's Policies and passed to Mark Baglow.</p> <p>CF is discussing with Angela Haigh about the usefulness of Flexible Tenancies and how they compare to other types of Tenancy, for example comparing levels of rent arrears, tenant damage etc.</p>			

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5. The 'Tenants Together Top Targets' report for	<p>DT asked if the 135 for 'batch jobs' is the number of batch jobs or the number of things to do in a batch.</p> <p>TS raised concerns that 'average days per void' has increased and are behind target. CF said this may be due to the snow in January, Mark Baglow having instructed staff not to carry out repairs during the snow as the roads were dangerous.</p>	To define 'Batch Jobs' on TTTT.	ASAP	Alexander Barahona
6. Feedback from the Complaints event	<p>TS gave feedback on a recent TPAS Complaints Workshop event and complimented on how clear and transparent the event was. The Ombudsman check the Registered Providers are following the right processes and there's not a blame culture attached. TS added that there are 42 case workers within the Ombudsman service dealing with over 1600 complaints. The attendees found the event to be interesting and useful.</p>			
7. Hot Topics from Inside Housing	<p>CF ran through the current Hot Topics from Inside Housing.</p> <p>CF gave an overview of the recent Business Continuity Plan and the challenges that were faced with the power being cut. There is a meeting to discuss this further on the 29<sup>th</sup> March with Exeter and East Devon. Memory sticks that allow Housing staff to access key information regarding properties, tenants, contact details etc have been implemented.</p> <p>Social Housing rents are to increase following the four year settlement whereby they were decreased.</p>			
8. Environmental Budget Ideas	<p>ZP discussed with the TT members about giving an opportunity to tenants to have a say on what the Environmental Budget should be spent on. This would be on our MDDC Housing Facebook page.</p> <p>ZP has spoken to Lisa Harber and she would like TT members to come up with some ideas on what the budget should be spent on.</p> <p>CG suggested TT put their ideas in a future Housing news for you.</p>	TT members to have ideas on what the budget should be spent on	Next meeting	TT members
9. Tpas Conference 2019	<p>ZP asked the TT members to confirm who will be attending the TPAS Conference - PC, SG and AS confirmed they will be attending.</p> <p>PC complimented the event and appreciates that CF supports the event.</p> <p>PC added that the TPAS Conference was very much appreciated by the attendees of previous events and thanked CF for the ongoing support.</p>			

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<b>10. FRA's (Fire Risk Assessments)</b>	<p>ZP confirmed to TT members that all fire assessments have been completed.</p> <p>CF informed members that the assessments are done by Public Health who have specialist training in this area and make appropriate recommendations. These are picked up by Steve Bennett's team.</p> <p>CF added that the data shown to TT members only applies to flats with communal entrances.</p> <p>The TT members were reassured that all properties have been checked.</p>			
<b>11. A Tenants Together Facebook page</b>	<p>ZP has spoken to Matt Auty about a Tenants Together Facebook page and has received confirmation that this can go ahead. Matt Auty will come and see TT members to discuss the next steps.</p>	<p>To confirm a date to see Matt Auty</p>	<p>ASAP</p>	<p>ZP</p>
<b>12. Any other Business</b>	<p>DT advised that in the last HPIB meeting, Lisa gave a presentation that TT members would be interested in regarding Arrears Management.</p> <p>CF informed the TT members that Mary Sergeant will be leaving on the 29<sup>th</sup> March. The post is being advertised internally and interviews will take place on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March.</p> <p>The TT members would like to thank Mary Sergeant for all her hard work and send all their best wishes.</p>			

**Next meeting 11 April 2019, Exe Room**