

## SWT Tenants Strategic Group

Monday, 16th December, 2019,  
6.00 pm

**Somerset West  
and Taunton**

**Committee Room 1 - The Deane  
House**

---

**Members:** Francesca Smith, Janet Lloyd, Alex Akhigbemen,  
John Beaman, Jessie Bunn, Dennis Galpin, Richard Hirsch,  
Ivor Hussey and Livi Mongare

### Agenda

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Apologies  |                 |
| 2. Notes from previous meeting 11 November 2019   | (Pages 5 - 12)  |
| 3. Public Question Time   |                 |
| 4. Declarations of Interest   |                 |
| 5. The year ahead for Housing (verbal update) - James Barrah, Director of Housing         |                 |
| 6. North Taunton Woolaway Project - Richard Wiseman                                       | (Pages 13 - 24) |
| 7. Housing development pipeline - Richard Wiseman, Programme Manager                      | (Pages 25 - 46) |
| 8. Housing information, communication and technology update - To follow                   |                 |
| 9. Housing retrofit and new build thermal principles - Richard Wiseman, Programme Manager | (Pages 47 - 60) |



**JAMES HASSETT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chair will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate. Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chair will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: [www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

The meeting room, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room, is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

If you would like an agenda, a report or the minutes of a meeting translated into another language or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please email: [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

**SWT TENANTS STRATEGIC GROUP**

**MONDAY, 11TH NOVEMBER, 2019**

**Present:** in the Chair; Alex Akhigbemen,  
Jessie Bunn, Dennis Galpin, Judith Hegarty, Ivor  
Hussey, Kevin Hellier, Livi Mongary and Richard  
Hirsch. Councillor Fran Smith

**Also in Attendance:**

**Officers:**

- Stephen Boland ( Specialist Housing) James Barrah (Director Housing) Kerry Prisco (Finance Specialist)
- Briony Cole (Case Management Lead) Tracey Meadows ( Democracy and Governance)

**Apologies:** Janet Lloyd

**1 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Stephen Palmer and Councillor Janet Lloyd

**2 Notes from previous meeting**

The notes from the meeting on the 19 August were agreed.

**3 Business plan, housing finances, what information will be coming to the Board in the future**

Business plan, housing finances, what information will be coming to the Board in the future.

The Director of Housing, James Barrah updated the group on the business plan and housing finances and what information would be coming to the board in the future. The transformation process generated efficiencies across the organisation and the impact on housing was that it generated savings for the housing service and more savings would come through as we continue to refine our services with the utilisation of new technology.

The housing function was dispersed across the organisation. We have undertaken a review on how effective that has been across the last few months and in line with the fact that we have a new leadership and new Portfolio holder, Cllr Fran Smith. Our ambitions were to put housing as a key priority in our Corporate Plan and how we engaged with residents. We are not quite ready to report on this yet but will come back to you with a plan in December, this will also include the North Taunton regeneration project.

During discussion of this item the following comments were raised; replies are in italic

- Please can you update us on the challenges of the transformation process; *we now occupy the first floor, this has had an impact on how we work as a team so lots more conversations going on through the course of the day. This has improved how we work and how we communicate. The team are now much more flexible and agile in how we work. The IT equipment was now portable and our records were now digital and not paper which has improved how flexible we work. In terms of the rest of the building we have let parts of the building. The Police had occupied the ground floor with Meridian who were an employment agency. Discussions with other parties were ongoing to create revenue for the Council which was a good thing. In terms of the transformation, some bits had gone well and there were clear areas of learning. A new council was set up in April and that element has worked well. There were lots of staff changes and we had to manage with less staff. Stabilisation of services was ongoing and continued to make progress.*

#### 4 **Changes to working practices - Leaning our processes**

Changes to working practices – Leaning our processes

The Head of Customer, Simon Lewis updated the group on the work that was being done on the 'Lean' process following transformation. The Housing service had reduced its permanent staffing resource and were reliant on transition staff maintaining service delivery. Andrew Scofield has been engaged to stream line our processes to see what works for the customer. We were currently writing a specification to move from Academy to Open Housing and wanted to reflect lean process in the new design we required that building inefficient processes into the new housing system. 3 key housing processes had been agreed for lean, they were Lettings, Rent Collection and Repairs.

The objectives for this were;

- New streamlined responsive repairs process;
- Maximise automation where possible, including reminder to tenants of date and scheduling of visits;
- Review opportunity to maximise same-day repairs;
- Reduce staff resource requirement for end to end process;
- Clarity of what we should and should not be repairing to reduce unnecessary costs, including recharging for wilful damage and negligence;
- Reduction in repair costs;

Voids and Letting Process Leaning

The process for tenants notifying us of intention to end tenancy, through to them leaving, recharging for damages, undertaking repairs, advertising vacancy and selecting new tenant and then letting to a new tenant requires many hand-offs and appears inefficient. The proposition is that by leaning this process, we could make significant efficiency savings, increase income from recharges for damages, reduce

loss of rent from void period and potentially reduce future 'failure demand' by ensuring property fit for habitation and right tenant for right property and they are set up to succeed in their new tenancy. All of which would save significant time and cost.

### Objectives

- New streamlined Void and Lettings process;
- Common 'year 1' repairs to be reduced by carrying out during void (e.g. washer replacement on dripping taps) – therefore reduce responsive repairs;
- Reduction in void costs (lost rent) and quicker let for new tenants;
- Reduced cost in officer involvement (hand-offs);
- Increased recovery of recharges;
- Less failure demand generated from new tenants in year 1 due to stronger tenancy inductions – therefore less officer time for new tenants;

### Rent collection and Recovery Process Leaning

The protocol we have for collecting rent and pursuing rent arrears is weighted heavily to giving tenants every opportunity to pay and to demonstrate in court that we have taken all steps reasonable – however at its fullest extent this can involve 20+ steps / interactions with the tenant (to eviction stage), which is expensive, time consuming and inefficient. The proposition is that by leaning this process, we could make significant efficiency savings, increase rent collection and possibly reduce evictions. All of which would save significant time and cost. The scope of the project is to include the rent collection process, arrears recovery, through to notice seeking possession and eviction due to rent arrears.

### Objectives

- New streamlined rent collection and recovery process
- Maximise automation of reminders
- Reduce staff resource requirement for end to end process
- Reduction in tenants falling into rent arrears and average level of arrears.
- Increase in rent collection
- Reduction in evictions (and associated costs) due to arrears

Homes in Sedgemoor were able to implement a BPR review of this process and now collect an additional £500kpa rent and have reduced their rent arrears.

During discussions of this item the following comments were made, replies in italic;

- Is there a target for voids? *The target is now 3 weeks. The pre-voids officer will check the property for what is needed and we also take the opportunity to perform asbestos checks and any other repairs to the property;*
- The new builds in Rockwell Green, Wellington were built quickly but not occupied until the end of the project resulting in a loss of income; *the scheme took a while to complete and hand over as everything needed to be right before we hand over properties. The new process would put an end to this;*
- Can you cut the grass on the properties that are vacant for a while? *This will be fed back to the Localities team;*

## 5 **Service charge and rent changes for 2021/22 - proposed increases**

Service charge and rent changes for 2021/22

The Finance Specialist, Kerry Prisco updated the group on the Fees and Charges for 2020/21.

The purpose of this report was to recommend the level at which Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) propose to set rent levels and service charges for its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) owned properties. This will apply to those assets either already accounted for within the Council's HRA or to be added to it in the future.

### **Dwelling Rental Income**

The Government introduced the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 Social Rent Reduction, which required all social housing landlords to reduce the rent payable by tenants by 1% each year between April 2016 and April 2019 (excluding shared ownership homes and temporary accommodation). This superseded the Government's previous 10 year rent increase policy implemented in April 2015.

In February 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed that increases to social housing rents will be limited to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% for 5 years from 2020. The September 2019 CPI figure is 1.7% as published by the Office for National Statistics on the 16 October 2019.

The Government has also issued a direction to the Regulator of Social Housing to set a new Rent Standard to be effective from April 2020. Whilst a policy statement has been issued this is not expected to be confirmed until December 2019.

As a consequence, a separate Rent Policy paper will be presented to the Tenants Board and the Council to recommend the dwelling rental income and Shared Ownership rent for 2020-21.

### **Service Charges and Non-Dwelling Rental Income**

Approximately 8% of HRA income, amounting to £2.094m, comes from non-dwelling rents (mainly garages but also shops, land access and meeting halls), charges for services and facilities, and contributions to HRA costs from leaseholders and council tenants.

### **Service Charges**

Housing Service Charges are made to housing tenants for the services that they use. Service Charges are set locally each year and are in addition to the Rent Charges.

The Government has issued a direction to the Regulator of Social Housing to set a new Rent Standard to be effective from April 2020. The proposed Policy Statement recommends registered providers should endeavour to keep increases for service charges within the limit on rent changes, of Consumer Price Index (CPI) + 1

percentage point, to help keep charges affordable. The September 2019 CPI figure is 1.7% as published by the Office for National Statistics on the 16 October 2019.

SWT are proposing to increase service charges by CPI+1% for 2020-21 to ensure that they remain affordable for tenants.

### **Garages**

The proposal is to increase garage rents for private tenants and owner occupier so that they are in line with the open market value rental rate at £10 per week for 2020-21.

### **Meeting Halls**

The fees levied for 2020-21 for meeting room hire will be increased by CPI+1% and then rounded to the nearest 10p as requested by tenants during feedback provided in 2017/18.

### **Guest Rooms**

The fees levied for 2020-21 for meeting room hire will be increased by CPI+1% and then rounded to the nearest 50p as requested by tenants during feedback provided in 2017/18.

### **Temporary accommodation**

The fee for temporary accommodation is broken down into two elements: the licence fee and the service charge.

### **Licence Fee**

Whilst the Housing Benefit (HB) subsidy is regulated, the amount social landlords can charge for temporary accommodation is not. Temporary accommodation is also exempt from the new Rent Standard. The proposal for 2020-21 is to continue setting the temporary accommodation licence fee at 100% off the permitted Local Housing Allowance (LHA) ordinary rate as of April 2020.

### **Service Charge**

The proposal for 2020-21 is to increase service charges by CPI+1%.

### **Exceptions**

Charges for properties not on mains sewerage

These properties charges for sewerage will be increased in line with the Wessex Water increases for 2020-21 once known. Wessex Water rates for sewerage standing charge per annum and poundage charges are used in the system calculation. For 2019-20 these are £7.00 per annum for unmetered sewerage standing charge and £1.6379 for the poundage charge payable per £ of rateable value of the property. Wessex Water will publish their new charges in February 2020 (available from their website) for 2020-21.

During the discussion of this item the following comments were raised, replies in italic

- What is the difference between license fee and service charge? *The service charge is for services that are provided as part of the temporary accommodation whilst the tenant is there. The licence fee reflects the use and occupation of a property for a homeless person on a daily rate;*

## **6 Specification for the Housing management system (open housing)**

### Specification for the Housing Management system (Open Housing)

The Housing Specialist Stephen Boland update the group on the replacement of the Housing Landlord IT System. The current housing management IT system used by the Council to help delivery landlord services to circa. 5,700 tenants is Capita's Housing Academy system. The system was introduced in 2006/07 with an annual contract for Capita to provide software support and maintenance i.e. upgrades for the system. The system is central to the day to day operation of the Council's housing landlord function.

Capita has formally notified the Council that they will be ending Housing Academy System support and maintenance with effect from September 2020. In so doing there is a strong likelihood of our current system eventually failing (more probability as time goes by) where the severity of the consequences are thought to be extremely harmful for the Council and its customers.

The Council was now in a position where it needs to procure a new system that would allow the housing landlord function to continue to meet current and future business requirements. The benefits of this new system was that it would allow for analysis of workload, and allow managers to more effectively target and quickly prioritise resources. It will also significantly aid and speed up communication particularly across areas of the housing service and the council and thereby significantly reduce mistakes; and we would be able to add new system processes easily and quickly, updates by non-technical council staff will be achievable to facilitate speed of deployment to meet changing customer and service needs. The benefit to customers would be that the customer would be able to self-serve and access information relevant to their specific requirements 24/7 using a wide variety of e-enabled devices including PCs, tablets, and smartphones. With all information held in a central place accessible by all, tenants will be given better, quicker and more consistent responses to their queries, they will also be able to update their own information. Staff time will be freed up and will then be able to spend more time in direct contact with tenants and leaseholders. Mobile working for staff will enable them to access and update information 'in the field' visiting tenants.

The new system would enable sophisticated management information reporting to aid the deployment of our staffing resources. Such reporting will all support our approach to problem solving and continuous improvement. A new system would also provide a full interactive web-site for tenants and leaseholders. Examples of services that need to be built in the web site include: the ability to request services; send messages to officers; report repairs; view progress of repairs; look up rent account information; request a new swipe card; make an application for a transfer; view details of voids; make a complaint; interrogate mutual exchanges, update personal records.



**Monday, 11th November, 2019**

We would also have the capability to automatic workflow. Automation is a key driver of efficiency and taking waste out of our service. Automation will mean higher quality services at lower cost, focusing on those highly repetitive tasks that add the least value.

During discussion of this item the following comments were raised. Replies are in italic.

- Concerns with the cost of implementing this system;
- Time Line for the new system; *we were looking to sign in December. Once signed we would be presented with a time table that we would need to resource.*
- The board members need to trial this new technology; *we need to ensure that people are supported to get the best out of it. So those that are unable to access this are still supported. This needs to be fed out in the community;*
- Concerns with the timing of this, are we confident that we can deliver this on time, September 2020? *There is a load of work to do on this project and we will make sure that we have the appropriate resources to get it up and running as soon as possible;*
- Concerns with the current IT system, website no consideration for illiterate customers ie pictures; *we will take back those concerns regarding equality. The new system would cater for those needs, this had been specified;*
- Concerns with the lack of broadband in rural areas to enable customers to use the new technology;
- Support for system, will this be a phone call or will the supplier come out on site? *This can be a phone call or the supplier would come onsite;*

## **7 Terms of Reference and Elections for 2020/21**

Terms of Reference and Elections for 2020/21

The Housing Specialists updated the group on the Terms of Reference. Stated that this was a transitional year how could we make best use of the board's time and what functions were of interest until the elections in April 2020.

A small group could be set up outside of this formal setting to give views and opinions to set up what we want included in the group.

During discussion of this item the following comments were made. Replies in italic.

- We used to have a pre- meet before the meetings. *2/3 sessions were needed before April.*
- New members to have sight of work already done and what you wanted from us. What skills were you looking for? *More engagements from tenants. Help us to formulate policies and processes. Hold us to account, create ideas using your own experiences. Members to visit communities and have wider conversations with residents to feedback concerns to us;*
- Previously tenants were not interested in joining the board; *we need to be creative to get a broader spectrum on board with this group;*

**Monday, 11th November, 2019**

A session in December will be arranged to bring the group up to speed with the business plan and budget setting in February.

The meeting ended 7:50pm

**Duration of the meeting:** Times Not Specified

Chairman at the meeting on  
Monday, 11 November 2019

# Strategic Tenants Board

## December 2019

# North Taunton Woolaway Project

# Background

Page 12

- In 1984 the Government designated the Woolaway house type as defective under the Housing Defects Act 1984
- Structural Engineering Report 2013 & Appended 2016



Somerset West  
and Taunton

# North Taunton Woolaway Project



## Existing Properties

**Table 1: Tenure of North Taunton Woolaway Project Area**

	In TDBC Ownership	In private ownership	Total
Existing Woolaway Homes	167	45	212
(Acquire) & Demolish	140	22	162
Refurb	27	* See note	27
New builds	226		226
<b>Total Proposed</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Net Increase in SWT stock</b>			<b>86</b>
<b>*23 homes in private ownership excluded from planned works</b>			

# North Taunton Woolaway Project

## Outline Application Illustrative Phasing

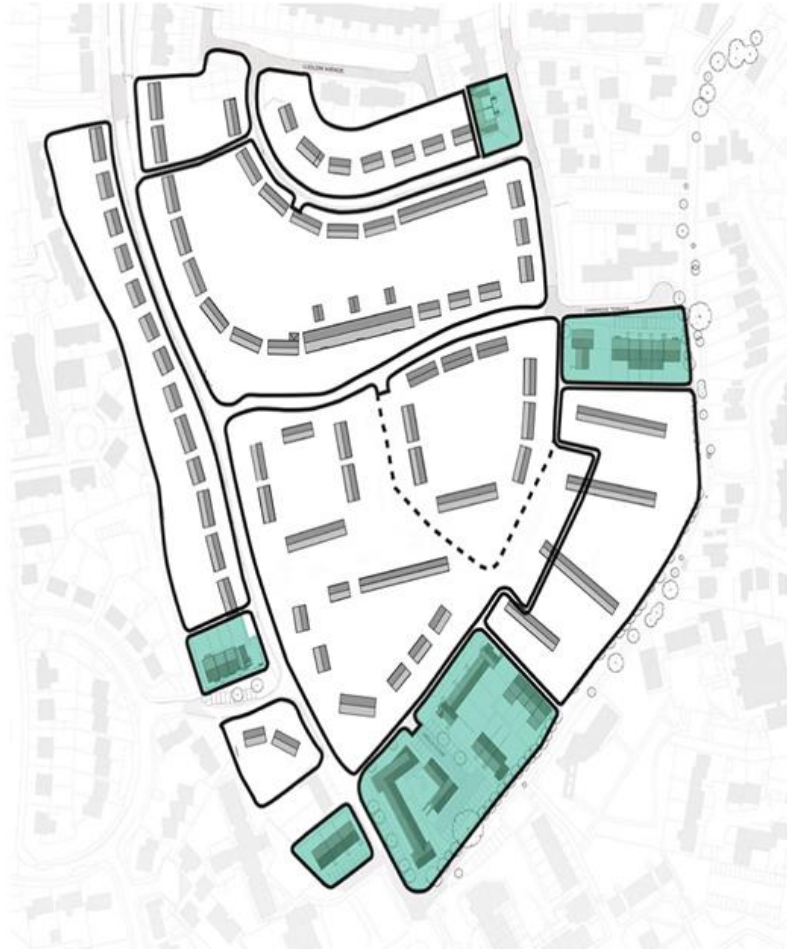


Page 14

- Most substantial land led regeneration scheme of the Council's stock in many years.
- Tackles some of our worst performing stock in one of the most socially deprived areas in our County.
- Flagship housing project of our housing development programme.
- Shadow Council in Feb 19:
  - Approved the 5 phased regeneration scheme – estimated in region of £45 million over 10 – 12 year programme.
  - Phase A – estimated supplementary budget £7.2 million (marked in orange Phase 1)

# Phase A

Page 15



- Decant of 26 properties:
  - 23 SWT tenants
  - 3 Home Owners
- Provision of 47 new homes plus Community Facility
  - All Council Homes
    - 17 x 1 bed
    - 14 x 2 bed
    - 11 x 3 bed Chalets
    - 5 x 4 bed Houses
  - Includes 6 Wheelchair adapted properties (CAT 4)

# Key Achievements

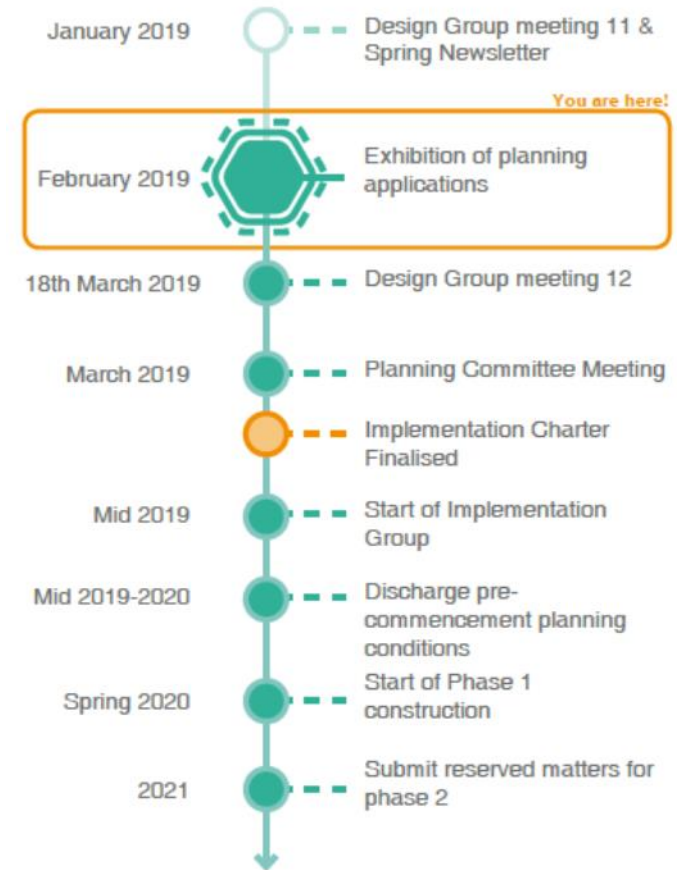
## North Taunton Woolaway Project Masterplan Update

- Outline planning permission granted unanimously by Planning Committee on 27th March 2019.

Page 16

Design Group consisting of 20 residents (home owners and tenants) reviewed design of the scheme and house types. Now evolved into the Implementation Working Group to provide feedback to help to shape the way the Project is delivered and maximising the positive impact upon the community.

- Commended by the Royal Town Planning Institute - Regional Award in Planning Excellence for Community Involvement.
- Skip days arranged for residents to be able to prepare for their decant and assist vulnerable tenants who are unable to remove their rubbish by themselves.



**Somerset West  
and Taunton**



# Key Achievements

## Phase A

- Planning permission was granted for Phase A unanimously by Planning Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Design Review Panel considered the design and community consultation process undertaken was extremely rigorous and considered to be outstanding and the design has the full potential to be exceptional.
- Vacant possession of Phase A has almost 100% secured.
- As part of the decant process, 10 tenants have downsized and 2 tenants to have moved to more accessible accommodation
- Procurement for the demolition and construction of Phase A is well advanced.

Page 17



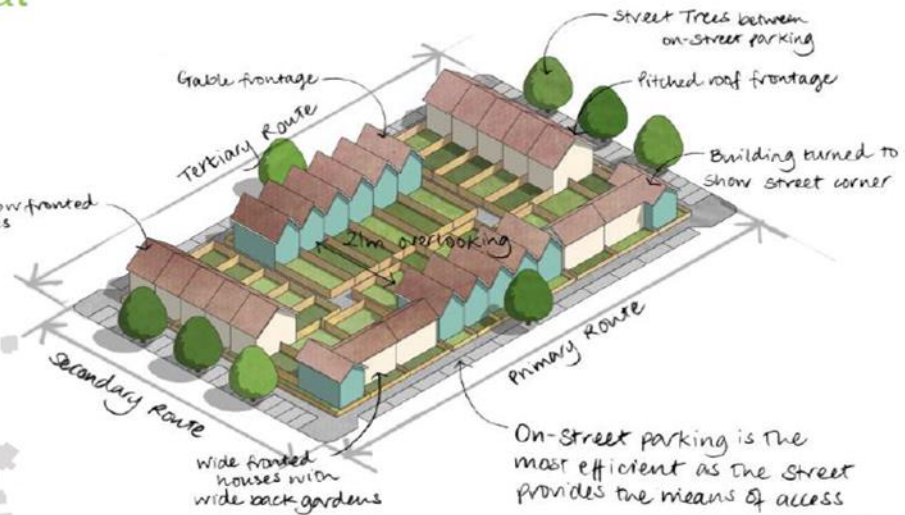
Somerset West  
and Taunton

# Sustainability / Climate Change

## Urban design principles

Enclosed perimeter block with houses that address the street corner

Page 18



Somerset West  
and Taunton

# Sustainability / Climate Change

Page 19



Somerset West  
and Taunton

# Report :

Page 20

- Acquire the remaining private owned homes in the Project area to achieve vacant possession of the scheme, thus alleviating the requirement for timely and costly Compulsory Purchase Orders;
- Progress the enabling works and Reserved Matters planning submission for the remaining phases to decrease the time in which it takes to complete the regeneration;
- Discretionary Homeloss Payment to tenants and
- To fund the additional costs in Phase A.

**Table 2: Number of Private Home requiring Acquisition within each Phase of the North Taunton Woolaway Project**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>No of Private Homes</b>
Phase A	3
Phase B	1
Phase C	7
Phase D	11
Phase E (Refurbishment Phase)	0

**Any Questions ?**



# SWT Strategic Tenants Board December 19

Housing Development Pipeline  
SWT Housing Schemes

# Contents

Page 24

- Schemes in:
  - Completion/  
Defects Liability  
Period (DLP)
  - Construction
  - Design
  - Consideration
  - Development
  - Buybacks
  - MMC



# Schemes in Completion (DLP) | 121-123 Outer Circle



## Overview

- 121-123 Outer Circle aka The Link Centre
- Conversion to 4x1b2p flats
- Completed 25 October.
- Used for short term temporary accommodation.

# Scheme in Construction – Laxton Road Garage Site



## Overview

- Laxton Rd is currently a garage site
- Garages will be demolished
- 2 blocks of 4 1bx2p
- Due for completion late 2020

# Scheme in Construction – Laxton Road Garage Site



# Scheme in Construction – Laxton Road Garage Site



Current progress:

- Setting up site boundary towards rear with neighbours which will act as acoustic barrier during construction..
- All other boundaries are in place and site setup is complete.
- Preparing to pile foundations. Piling matt has been laid out.

# Scheme in Construction – Laxton Road Garage Site



# Schemes in Development | North Taunton Woolaway

Page 30



## Overview

- Partnership with residents and stakeholders
- Nash & Taylor Lewis
- Detailed Planning Permission for Phase A and Outline Planning Permission for the whole development
- The replacement and refurbishment of 186 Woolaway Homes and the erection of additional dwellings to provide up to 230 dwellings

Somerset West  
and Taunton

# Schemes in Dev | NTWP Phase A



**Dorchester Road Flats**



**Cambridge Terrace South**

## Overview

- Replacement of 26 Woolaway homes and erection of an additional 21 dwellings – including a community facility building.
- Includes the decant of 6 households into void properties within the project area.
- Allocations of Phase A New Builds

# Schemes in Dev | NTWP Phase A



Page 32

**Dorchester Road Flats**



**Cambridge Terrace South**

## Current progress:

- In the process of gaining vacant possession of tenant and home owner properties in Phase A before end of year.
- Appointing demolition contract to commence early 2020.
- Procuring main contractor to carry out build. Due to appoint by March 2020.
- Programme estimated at 18 months.



# Schemes in Dev | NTWP Phases B-E



3D Model of the Illustrative Masterplan

## Remaining Phases

- Reviewing phasing options for B - E for early delivery of dwellings
- Reviewing indicative housing mix
- Full council approval for remaining home owner acquisition (to achieve vacant possession) achieved in Dec 19.
- Continuous engagement with all residents.

# Schemes in Consideration : Wellsprings Close

Page 34

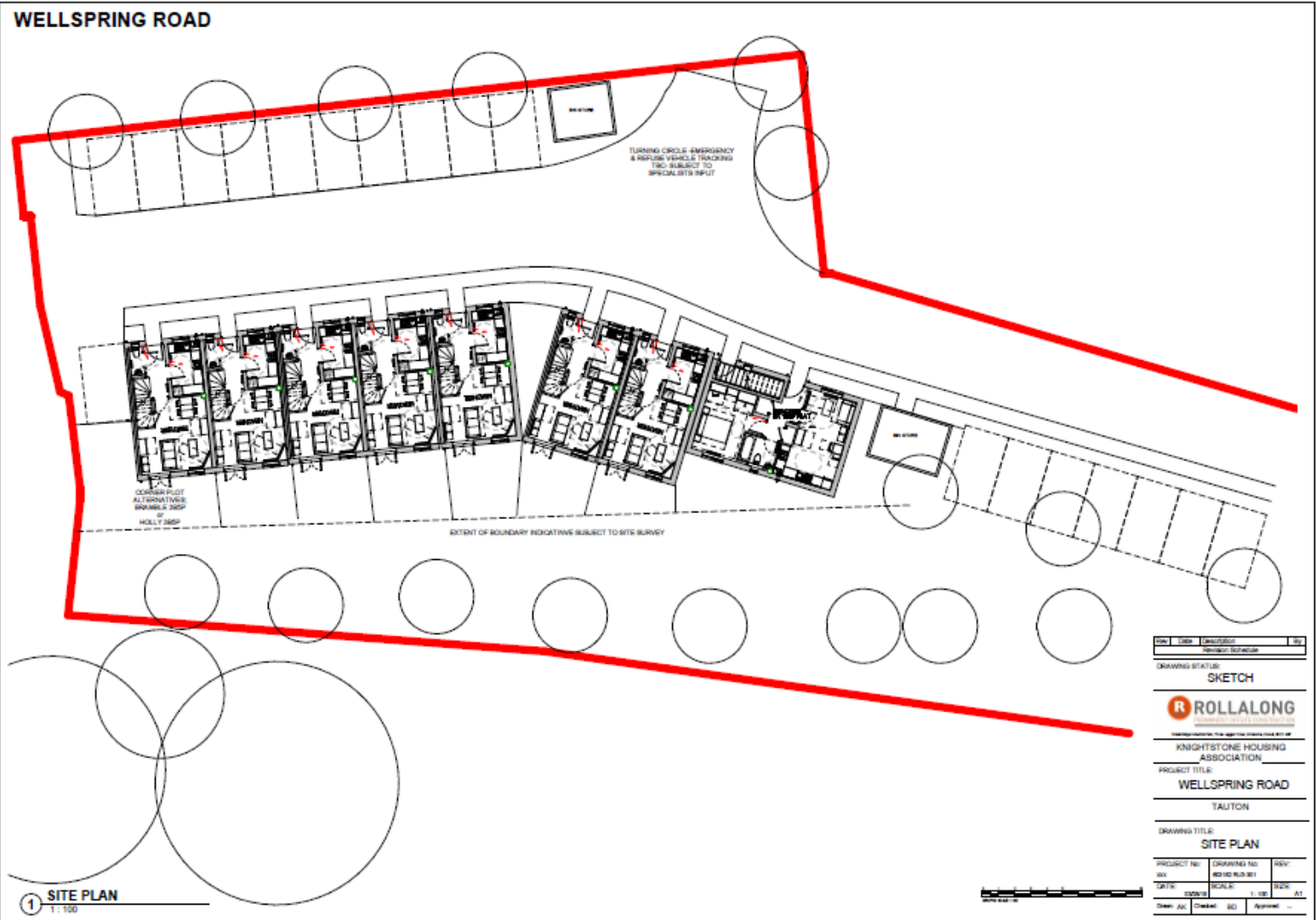


## Overview

- Council owned garage site, with garages still in private ownership.
- Sewer crossing under site.
- Good access allows potential for modular MMC.

# Schemes in Consideration : Wellsprings Close

Page 35



Somerset West  
and Taunton

# Schemes in Consideration : Milton Rd Garages



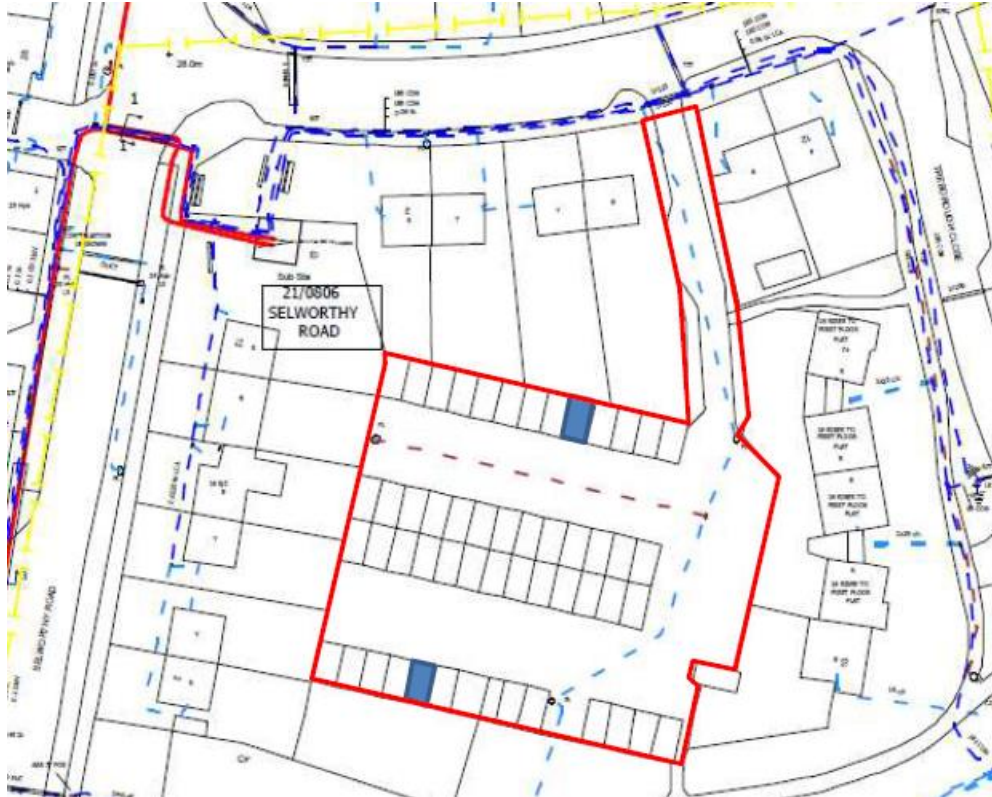
Page 36

## Overview

- Council owned garage site in Taunton
- Issue which affect feasibility include one privately owned garage and the presence of a gas main on the site..
- Initial actions include; contacting the garage owner regarding purchase, appoint an architect to undertake initial sketch designs.

# Schemes in Consideration : Blackdown Rd Garages

Page 37



## Overview

- Council owned garage site in Taunton
- Issue which affect feasibility include privately owned garages, neighbours access rights, utilities crossing the site and a narrow access which would need to be improved
- Initial actions include; contacting garage owners regarding purchase, consult with planning officers regarding the access lane and appoint a lead consultant to undertake a technical review.

# Buybacks – Q1 completed

House Name / No	Street / Road	Town	Post Code	Date of Completion	Type of Purchase	Price
26	Inner Circle	Taunton	TA1 2BW	21/06/2019	Buyback	£ 135,000.00
31	Shakespeare Avenue	Taunton	TA1 2HZ	21/06/2019	Buyback	£ 187,500.00
33	Milton Road	Taunton	TA1 2JF	24/06/2019	Buyback	£ 200,000.00
6	Charles Crescent	Taunton	TA1 2XN	27/06/2019	Buyback	£ 185,000.00
10	Outer Circle	Taunton	TA1 2BU	10/06/2019	Buyback	£ 137,500.00

Page 38

# Buybacks – Q2 completed

House Name / No	Street / Road	Town	Post Code	Date of Completion	Type of Purchase	Price
1a	Slapes Close	Taunton	TA2 7RT	18/09/2019	Buyback	£ 100,000.00
400b	Cheddon Road	Taunton	TA2 7DR	27/09/2019	Buyback	£ 110,000.00
25	York Road	Taunton		27/09/2019	Buyback	£ 145,000.00
9a	Enmore Road	Taunton		30/09/2019	Buyback	£ 205,000.00
15	Longforth Road	Wellington	TA21 8RH		Buyback	£ 220,000.00
45	Bossington Drive	Taunton	TA2 8HF	04/09/2019	Buyback	£ 190,000.00

Page 39

# Buybacks – Q3 completed

Street / Road	Town	County	Post Code	Date of Completion	Type of Purchase	Price
Enmore Road	Taunton	Somerset		18/10/2019	Buyback	£ 195,000.00
Pickeridge Close	Taunton	Somerset		20/11/2019	Buyback	£ 115,000.00
Lesieux Way	Taunton		TA1 2LF	29/11/2019	Buyback	£ 195,000.00
Gay Close	Wellington		TA21 9EZ	22/11/2019	Buyback	£ 118,000.00



# Buybacks – Q3 (forecast)

Street / Road	Town	County	Post Code	Date of Completion	Valuer	Type of Purchase	Price
Baldwin Road	Taunton	Somerset			Adrian James	Buyback	£ 165,000.00
Blackmoor Road	Taunton		TA2 8EL		Adrian James	Buyback	£ 230,000.00
Rochester Road	Taunton		TA2 7LD		Adrian James	Buyback	£ 185,000.00
Lime Crescent	Taunton		TA1 2QG		Adrian James	Buyback	£ 175,000.00
Buckland Road	Taunton		TA2 8EP		Adrian James	Buyback	£ 164,000.00
Farrant Close	Taunton		TA1 5EN		Adrian James	Buyback	£ 115,000.00
Juniper Road	Taunton		TA1 2QD		Adrian James	Buyback	£ 175,000.00
Holford Road	Taunton		TA2 7PD		Adrian James	Buyback	£ 200,000.00
Warwick Road	Taunton		TA2 7RQ		Adrian James	Buyback	£ 190,000.00
Wellsprings Road	Taunton		TA2 7LZ		Adrian James	Buyback	£ 164,000.00

# Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)

## Overview

- We continue to investigate MMC options
- Met with Rollalong in late August 19. Now received and indicative sketch.
- Met with OC Housing in October 19
- Site visit from Rollalong to Wellsprings Rd in October 19

Page 42

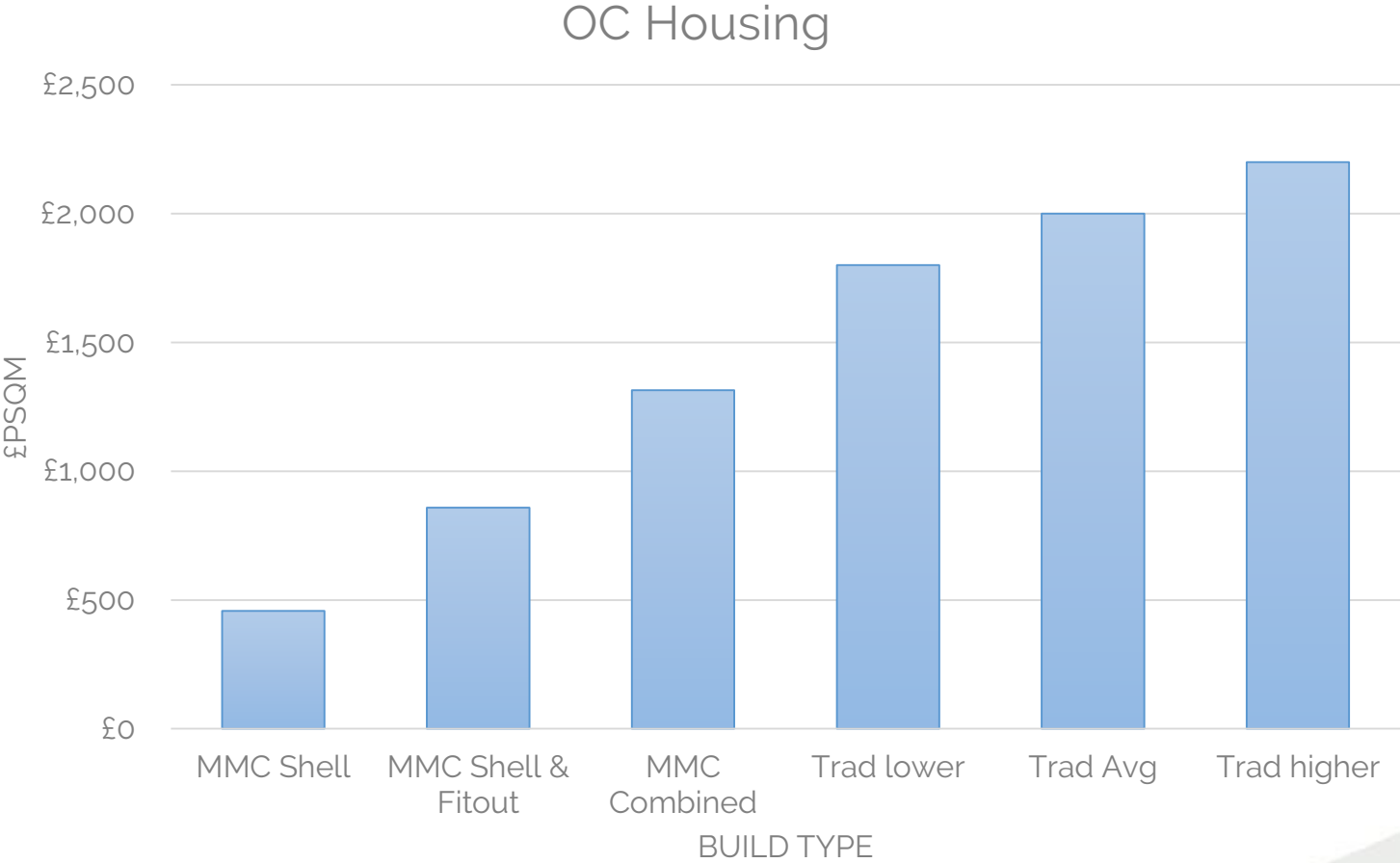


# Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)



Somerset West  
and Taunton

# Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)



# **Wellington Warmer Homes (WWH)**

## **Close Out Report & Future Strategy:**



## **Report undertaken by:**



November 19<sup>th</sup> 2018

## **1. Executive Summary:**

In 2016 Taunton Deane Borough Council began a pilot scheme to identify and tackle some of the most energy inefficient and fuel poorest stock. With over 1,200 non-traditional properties in its general needs housing portfolio, this project was focused on improvements to the fabric of “hard to treat” (solid wall), “hard to heat” (off-gas) properties, with the aim of helping tenants to feel warmer and cosy in their homes at an affordable energy bill cost.

The homes chosen were located in Wellington, Somerset and were found to have latent building defects, whereby the incorrect insulation solutions had been installed under previous investment programmes. This needed to be removed, fixed and draught proofing measures also undertaken, by installing state of the art double glazed windows.

In addition, renewable and energy efficient heating schemes are being installed and the early signs are that these improvements are making a dramatic difference to tenants lives and back pockets. With an investment just short of £1.4m, The Council embarked on the project by tackling the worst EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) rated homes, where fuel bills were exceeding £1,600 per calendar year. This initial investment has helped to tackle 111 homes, with insulation; draught proofing and heating improvements with the learning used help future investment decisions to the remainder non-traditional stock.

Not only did we achieve the objectives, but we exceeded all expectations by controlling project costs during the project to such an extent that we were able to deliver a further 20 homes at no extra cost to the original contract sum. On top of this we were able to trade the carbon savings made to the properties to secure £144,000 cash back to The Council in the form of Government ECO funding.

The tenant feedback has been excellent and we are now monitoring the performance of the energy reductions to demonstrate the importance of having a fabric first approach and providing tenants with meaningful investment decisions, that is making a real difference to lives.

Kitchens and bathroom replacements are important but they are merely cosmetic when faced with ever increasing energy and utility bills, which in turn may impact on the ability of tenants to pay their future rent. We in turn are making considerable savings to the cyclical maintenance and responsive repair costs, by placing a protective thermal blanket of external wall insulation (EWI) to the properties.

This blanket helps to provide protection to the external brickwork and render and maintains a healthy fabric solution, which ensures the house is maintained to a lettable standard for the longer term, protecting the Councils revenue stream. In addition the reduction in damp, mould and condensation has been eliminated achieving future cost savings to responsive repair costs, in fixing these ever increasing problems.

The project has been a complete success and should now be monitored for the longer term and proof of concept should be translated into any new asset investment plans for the remainder non-traditional stock.

## **2. Purpose of report:**

The purpose of this document is to provide a close out report on the success of the Wellington Warmer Homes projects and to help inform future asset investment strategy, for the remainder of Taunton Deane Borough Council's (TDBC) Non Traditional housing stock.



*Fig 1. Completed properties in Kelway Road*



*Fig 2. Contrasting completed properties adjacent to private homes*

### **3. Background information:**

Over recent years, governments have introduced various programmes aimed at improving the performance of existing homes, from Decent Homes, CERT and CESP to ECO funding, with varying degrees of success.

One of the biggest criticisms levelled at previous retrofit funding programmes relates to how the money was spent and more specifically, how the big energy companies have managed their allocations of the schemes. Some in the sector felt the money was wasted and not targeted enough towards the key areas that have the potential to make the biggest difference to people's lives and how a properties thermal performance can be maximised.

While it is good to give residents new kitchens and bathrooms, if the fabric of the property is failing, then this should be considered a greater priority, since poor thermal performance or fabric condition increases the heat loss of the property and impacts greatly on the tenant's ability to pay fuel and utility bills. Installing new kitchens and bathrooms whose properties have poor thermal performance is the equivalent to sticking brand new engines in rusty old cars!

In 2016 TDBC appointed Low Carbon Expert to undertake a review of its fuel poorest stock, which identified a large percentage of properties (22%), whose construction was both non-traditional, poor fabric condition and sat off the gas network. This review identified the need for a fabric first approach to help tackle those properties likely to be the fuel poorest within the stock.

#### **What did we do?**

A decision was taken by TDBC to apply this fabric first approach to 111 non-traditional properties in Wellington, Somerset, in a bid to improve their thermal performance, eradicate damp and mould, lift tenants out of fuel poverty and future proof revenue streams for the worst properties for the Council. The project was titled Wellington Warmer Homes (WWH).

TDBC's WWH project was costed as a £1.4m refurbishment programme, initially to properties in Wellington Somerset (Phase 1) to a mixture of low-rise flats and house located in Gay Street, Humphreys Road, Lillebonne Close and Kelway Road. The estate was built in the post war period, during the 50s and 60s, when the country was in the midst of a housing crisis and speed of construction was the overriding goal.

The properties were of non-traditional system-built Laing Easiform properties, classified as hard-to-treat, with defective cavity wall insulation, the cavities only measure 45mm. They are not connected to the gas network, heat is provided by electric heaters. The homes were plagued by damp and mould.

Following inspection on other homes, TDBC surveyors were attributing these issues initially to tenant behaviour, not opening windows, trickle vents and covering up radiators, suggesting that residents needed educating, when in reality, the problem was not the tenants but stemmed from poor maintenance & latent building defects.

Fuel poverty was identified as a major problem. With poor performing structures, resident's money was literally being lost through the walls and gaps around the windows and doors. With old electric heaters serving the properties, heating the homes was identified as very expensive, with some tenants paying over £150 per calendar month to provide heating and hot water.



The council chose to tackle the underperforming homes by adopting a fabric first approach, installing new windows and applying external wall insulation (EWI) almost like a thermal blanket to improve the U-values of the existing structure, make the properties more airtight and reduce heat loss.

Positive Input Ventilation systems was also fitted to boost indoor air quality and a number of homes involved in the scheme will in future benefit from the installation of air source heat pumps. The cost per property of having these works done equates to approximately £10,000 excluding the heat pump works.

Consultant Steve Sheldon and principal contractor Low Carbon Exchange (LCX) were appointed to help TDBC deliver the project as a pilot scheme procured through an existing public body framework. The council consulted with residents before embarking on the scheme to get a consensus of the key issues.

The Council's overarching objective was to tackle fuel poverty. People's utility bills are still increasing and the Council are trying to do something about it. Poorly insulated and heated homes can have energy bills up to as much as £2,000 a year.

Homes that have been insulated effectively will see a significant reduction in their energy bills and the level of savings will depend on how efficiently the tenant uses their energy in the home. The pilot scheme set out to combat these problems and provide warmer and more affordable homes to live in.

An open day was held and the Council invited all the residents to attend and find out more about the project. On the day, LCX explained the build up of the EWI system and talked through the build up process. Residents were also shown CGI images depicting what the properties would look like once the work was completed.

Residents had other concerns about their homes and the estate in general, which were tended to by The Councils housing management team and property services staff. Works were undertaken over an 8-month period and the tenant feedback from 43 customer survey reports was either very good or excellent.

Prior to the Wellington Warmer Homes programme, the council properties were EPC E or F rated and residents were struggling to find a way out of in fuel poverty. The completed homes now achieve an EPC C rating, which is a significant improvement and will no doubt make a considerable difference to resident quality of life, not only by reducing fuel bills, but also by providing a better internal environment.

The scheme was delivered to all 111 properties for a cost of approx. £1,179,000 saving almost £200,000 on the anticipated costs, while in addition producing around £144,000 in ECO funding back into the business.

Given this saving, a further phase of works was added to the pilot scheme (WWH phase 1.5) and a further 20 Laing Easiform properties were treated with EWI and ventilation to the Priorswood area of Taunton. At the time of this report these works have now also been completed at no additional cost to the original cost proposal, The Council have effectively had an additional 20 properties insulated for nothing!

#### **4. Client and Tenant Benefits:**

The Council has collected feedback from 43 homes across both phases of work with comments received across all of the benchmarked items as very good or excellent experiences. TDBC are now collecting fuel bill data to compare this to previous fuel bill and utility costs, to measure and record the impact and benefits. We have significantly reduced the heat loss, the homes are warm and cosy and aesthetically pleasing from the outside and they look clean and appealing.

Due to the wrong insulation being installed during previous funding regimes, these homes were at risk of further fabric deterioration and may have impacted on the ability to let these properties in future years. This is of particular importance to both private and public body landlords given the imminence of the 2019 disrepair act being brought into future property letting legislation.

The SAP ratings of the properties have moved from low 40's to the high 60's/lower 70's, bringing them in line with the 2014 fuel poverty legislation targets, whereby minimum EPC bands were set out to be achieved.

In addition to energy saving impact for tenants, protecting the fabric of the buildings with a thermal blanket and protective coat has presented the potential for savings in future external and internal cyclical maintenance costs and responsive repair bills.

This has set the bar for non-traditional stock within the Council's housing portfolio and the learning provides a platform to tackle the remainder non-traditional stock (which totals some 1,070 properties) with a verifiable proof of concept method.

#### **5. How can this benefit TDBC:**

With the ECO funding (ECO3) now moving to a benefit led process, this will provide TDBC with an opportunity to capitalise on this process while maintaining all of the key objectives set out at the beginning of the pilot schemes.

Tackling the remaining non-traditional stock, will help reduce the Council's responsive repair bill in tackling damp and mould issues, which has equated to £100,000 over the last 2 years and will help to future proof the Council from any properties with the potential to fall into the disrepair act qualifying criteria.

Undertaking this now, or planning a strategy for implementation, will also assist the council to tap into available funding and reduce the capital burden, which inevitably will have to be found in future years but may not necessarily be supported by Government funding programmes.

A cost impact report for tackling the remainder of the Council's non-traditional stock has been previously prepared by Low Carbon Expert Ltd – see appendix 1.

#### **6. The commercial opportunity & wider sector issue:**

This project is considered pioneering from a Local Authority perspective, so much so that the project was featured in the national trade press publication "Local Authority Building & Maintenance Magazine". The project could be utilised to demonstrate to others the success and potential in treating non-traditional stock.

These types of works have previously been undertaken by other Social Landlords, who are now extending proof of concept to whole house energy efficiency solutions, in an attempt to replace older outdated decent homes models.

A commercial opportunity exists for both reduction in future years investment liabilities and wider section promotion of the solutions. TDBC can continue to be part of this process on either a formal or non-formal basis.

### **7. Integrating to future strategies:**

It is now essential that the Council collect the data and learning from these pilot schemes, to integrate into future asset investment strategies and benchmark these properties against other non-traditional, yet to be treated properties.

This will help the Council to gauge a range of through life cost benefits, in particular reduction in responsive repair costs to properties experiencing damp, mould and condensation and the potential external savings for reduced cyclical maintenance fabric related costs.

### **Next steps**

The next steps for The Council are to monitor and research the tenant benefits and impact on their fuel bill reductions and integrate the commercial opportunity that is available within our future asset management plan. This will help us to have a robust approach when it comes to tackling the remainder of our non-traditional stock in a cost effective manner.

## **Appendix 1**

**Updated non-traditional stock  
analysis for:**



**Report undertaken by:**



October 31<sup>st</sup> 2017

### Updated Summary:

The following stock information provides an update on the non-traditional housing stock status for Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC), in relation to the Governments published Fuel Poverty (FP) targets. In addition, helping to identify the potential financial impact of delivering future energy efficiency investment works currently not budgeted for.

This report is aimed and helping to highlight those properties at greatest risk of not meeting the Governments fuel poverty targets and presenting the greatest risk to the business of future fabric failure, leading to potential re-letting issues, likely to affect future revenue receipts and business plan forecasts.

It also represents the greatest opportunity for the business to improve its current energy efficiency status, and help those tenants in greatest need of help by significantly reducing their fuel bills.

It should be noted that this updated data excludes the properties that have been identified as priority as part of the "Wellington Warmer Homes" (WWH) project and is also based on historical EPC and stock data received in late 2016, which we understand in part could be unreliable.

### High Level Stock Analysis (As of Oct 2017 utilising 2016 data)

<b>Total stock analysis:</b>	<b>5,802</b>
<b>Non- traditional properties:</b>	<b>1,277 (22%)</b>
<b>Non-trads below Fuel Poverty (FP) Target:</b>	<b>684 (53%)</b>
<b>Non-trads below FP &amp; off-gas networks:</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>Wellington Warmer Homes Properties</b>	<b>107*</b>
<b>Revised properties below FP target</b>	<b>577**</b>

\* Excludes leasehold properties

\*\* Subject to overlay of disposals and unsuitable properties

The 577 properties are broken down into the following construction types as follows:

<b>30</b>	<b>BISF HOUSE</b>
<b>129</b>	<b>EASIFORM</b>
<b>240</b>	<b>CORNISHPRC</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>CONCRETE</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>REEMA PRC</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>SPECIAL PP</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>AIREY PRC</b>
<b>92</b>	<b>WOOLAWAY</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>TRU-STEEL</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>STANDERWIC</b>

### **Future Energy Efficiency Investment Strategy:**

We would recommend that prior to selecting any further non-traditional properties, for subsequent future phases of energy efficiency work, that full stock data and strategic analysis is undertaken on the following:

- Undertake a range of detailed surveys representative of this stock to determine the risk, suitability and viability to receive future improvements for hard to treat and hard to heat homes
- Overlay all of the historical business as usual (BAU) energy efficiency improvement works likely to affect a properties EPC status
- Review all existing EPC status of non-traditional stock and compare the revised data to FP targets
- Post surveys provide an update on the FP and cost impact analysis
- The disposal of properties likely to affect the impact (EG Woolaway's)
- Consider the impact of other planned programmes of work
- Consider other investment planning relevant to estate or community areas
- Review the vulnerability of tenants with the housing team and incorporate this within the decision making process
- Review current tenant rent and debt liabilities to TDBC to determine priorities
- Review and input from the original "Curtins" report
- Consideration of any imported lessons learnt from WWH

### **Budgeting For Future Capital Expenditure:**

Without undertaking detailed PAS2030 and further specialist surveys, including structural and chartered surveyors reports to representative properties, it is extremely difficult to justify future capital budgetary expenditure plans and the funding potential.

However for non-traditional builds satisfying the "Ofgem" criteria of solid wall status, and able to receive solid wall insulation measures, the average cost to retrofit these properties is in the region of £10 - £15,000, including overheads, profit and prelims and +/- dependent on the following factors.

- Property footprint size
- Fabric status & other potential latent fabric defects observed from surveys
- Client preferred optional extras
- Construction anomalies (EG gables, outbuildings, boundary walls/fences, DPC levels, roof status)
- Part wall act potential disputes
- Other integrated programmes of work (windows & doors, heating)
- Extent of enabling works (attached services/utilities/customer owned equipment EG satellite dishes, gates and fences)
- Insulation and specification type (Grenfell Tower report may influence future insulation specifications)
- CDM status
- Conservation area status and specific planning application requirements
- Project size and professional support required
- The above costs normally excludes replacement windows, doors and heating programmes that may become more cost effective and less disruptive to integrate into insulative programmes of work
- Some properties may be unsuitable for External Wall Insulation (EWI) application and require an alternative hard to treat cavity solution

Over the last 4 years the Alliance Homes framework has recorded an average solid wall insulation cost per property of £12,500 across numerous geographic projects, including all client driven extras, building defect rectifications, ventilation improvements, overheads, prelims and profit.

If all Woolaway properties (92 No.) are excluded from future improvement works (disposal), and the remainder 485/577 properties are retained and qualify for solid wall/EWI improvement status; TDBC may need to set aside approx. £6m to tackle all non-traditional builds proven to have this status and suitable for this solution.

This may prove to be best-case scenario and would exclude BAU costs for replacement windows; doors, heating and other energy efficiency upgrade works.

It should be noted that the above stock analysis is based on the initial 684 non-traditional properties falling below the FP targets and/or off the gas network.

There remains a further 593 properties with non-traditional status, that are currently recorded as having an EPC status already meeting the FP targets. Should this prove not to be the case, once the EPC data is ratified, then there is the potential for these properties to also fall into the solid wall or system built uninsulated status, requiring consideration for future energy efficiency improvement works.

If these properties were retained and found to require an external insulation solution to meet FP targets, or require fabric improvements to maintain longer-term revenue streams, then up to a further £7.5m may be required to set aside, to improve these properties to modern day standards.

If it is TDBC's objective to identify future capital/revenue risk and cost certainty for all the current non-traditional stock, TDBC could commission further chartered surveyor reports, revisit the existing Curtins report and validate the EPC data against a good sample of properties representative of this type of stock. The costs to provide such reports, assess the business risks and better validate the cost certainty could be offset by the ECO funding likely to be realised from the Wellington Warmer Homes project.

### **Funding Potential:**

Any property attracting solid wall status and receiving an EWl solution, could attract ECO funding to offset the capital investment costs. It should be noted that the following figures are based on 2016/17 quotations for the WWH project and may diminish as energy companies achieve their carbon obligation targets.

Property Archetype	Obligation/Funding		
	CERO	SWI	HHCRO (EFG)
3 Bed End Terrace	£1,501	£4,031	£5,792
3 Bed Mid Terrace	£722	£1,914	£2,746
Heating Type	Electric Storage Heating		
Construction	Easiform		



It should also be noted that while some of the above properties might well fall outside of the Governments FP targets, or indeed not be required to achieve the interim FP target status, current funding certainty for solid wall qualified schemes ceases at September 2018, with no current guarantee of future support beyond this date.

TDBC should consider expediting validation of their non-traditional stock data/EPC analysis, to maximise the potential to offset any future capital investment liabilities, if it wishes these properties to be a medium to long-term letting and revenue stream and benefit from any external support granted.

With this in mind and for clarity, the 485 properties highlighted in this report as falling below the FP targets, are broken down by their current recorded EPC status as follows:

F 15 (Don't meet the 2020 targets)

E 150 (meet the 2020 targets but won't meet the 2025 targets)

D 320 (meet the 2025 targets but won't meet the 2030 targets)

### **Procurement & Planning Works:**

Once the stock and risk is validated, TDBC could utilise existing budgets, by deferring non-essential works and placing some of the required capital into the areas identified above, that are likely to have the greatest energy efficiency benefits to the business, its tenants and reduce the business risk liabilities.

TDBC are currently trialing a pilot project WWH utilising current existing frameworks, the learning from this pilot scheme and the benchmarking of costs/funding, should be utilised to gauge investment priorities into other non-traditional stock areas.

### **Monitoring & Management:**

It will be essential to install an effective monitoring and management solution for the WWH project, to ensure effective future operational and strategic planning associated with non-traditional schemes.

This will include be not be limited to:

- EPC improvement benchmarking
- Achieving cost effective FP targets
- Measuring actual energy savings with tenant engagement
- Measuring the overall tenant experience
- Providing cost effective future procurement solutions
- Meeting business plan objectives
- Benchmarking of costs

