

SWT Tenants Strategic Group

Monday, 16th March, 2020,
6.00 pm

**Somerset West
and Taunton**

**The John Meikle Room - The Deane
House**

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

Agenda

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Apologies | |
| 2. Notes from previous meetings on the 16 December 2019 and 15 January 2020 | (Pages 5 - 16) |
| 3. Public Question Time | |
| 4. Declarations of Interest | |
| 5. Director of Housing - Verbal update | |
| 6. Zero Carbon Standard - Chris Brown, interim Head of Housing Regeneration and Development | (Pages 17 - 42) |
| 7. Performance Report - Malcolm Riches, Business Intelligence and Performance Manager / James Barrah, Director of Housing | (Pages 43 - 46) |
| 8. Draft Mutual Exchange Policy | (Pages 47 - 58) |
| 9. Tenants Strategic Group - Terms of Reference | (Pages 59 - 66) |



**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

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

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

SWT TENANTS STRATEGIC GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 15TH JANUARY, 2020

Present: Alex Akhigbemen, Jessie Bunn, Dennis Galpin, Livvi Mongare and Ivor Hussey

Officers: James Barraah (Director, Housing) Stephen Boland (Housing Landlord Specialist), Kerry Prisco (Finance Specialist)

17 Apologies

Apologies were received from Kevin Hellier and Richard Hirsch

18 Notes from previous meeting on 16 December 2019 (to follow)

19 Housing Review Account Business Plan 2020-2050

HRA Business Plan 2020-2050 - Report of The Director of Housing

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan contained the financial model of the service for the next 30 years. A number of largely external changes meant that a full refresh of the Business Plan was necessary. This report identified the changes and the impact of these. The report also set out a new vision for the Housing Service and plans for growth in the number of new homes we plan to build. The report also proposed a new rent policy following the end of a period of four years of imposed rent reduction, this would provide a refreshed income position on which to build future plans set out in this report.

Officers worked with external housing and business planning advisers Savills to create a new structure and approach to modelling future financial planning. The proposed Business Plan represented the current established position, it incorporated assumptions concerning future projected substantial growth and gearing primarily to invest in new homes, that have been accommodated within the plan. This substantially increased level of investment was possible due to the imposed debt cap on the business having been removed, and represented higher levels of investment and borrowing than the service had previously undertaken. This created substantial

opportunity to do more, but also would increase risk, factors which would need to be balanced carefully by the Council in the coming years.

The assumptions made within the business plan were prudent without being excessively restrictive; they provided for inflation on income and costs at prevailing rates which were aligned, allowed a considerable investment in existing stock, a substantial investment in new homes leading to a net increase in properties, whilst debt forecast at elevated levels to today at the end of 30 years. The peak debt of the plan was £164.4 million in year 11, which would not have been possible under the previous HRA regime with a debt cap of £115.8million.

Somerset West and Taunton Council owns and manages affordable housing of over 5700 homes mostly at social rent levels. This “business” within the Council had a turnover of £26M. Income was derived mostly from rents from tenants but also from service charges and other fees. Expenditure was made up of Council staff delivering services to tenants along with repairs and maintenance and other improvements to existing homes and investment in new much needed homes, and the repayment of borrowing.

The finances of the Housing Service was held within a ring-fenced account called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which was separate from all other Council finances in that the money was only to be used for providing services to tenants.

In 2012 the Council moved away from a national subsidy system, which meant an annual payment from the HRA to central government, to be ‘self-financing’. As part of the self-financing agreement, a mandatory one-off payment of £85.12m

SWT Scrutiny Committee, 20 01 2020

was made to government, in return for being able to retain all income locally to manage and maintain the housing stock. The total debt in the HRA at the start of self-financing was £99.7m. Financially this was a positive step for the Council and it released more resources to be invested locally on additional services and new homes.

In order to manage the freedoms gained by the HRA through self-financing, a new 30 year Business Plan (2012-2042) was introduced. This set out the Council’s overall aims and objectives for Housing Services, as well as laying out plans to manage the increased risks and opportunities. The HRA Business Plan had been reviewed and updated regularly since 2012, but recently there had been many

changes in national policies and local aspiration that meant a full update of the Business Plan was once again required.

Since 2012 the HRA had been subject to an imposed notional debt cap, essentially setting a limit on the borrowing the service could undertake which provided a constraint on growth of the service in terms of investment in new homes. The HRA debt cap was £116M. Following many years of lobbying by the sector, the debt cap was removed, which heralded a new era of growth opportunity, as the business could afford to prudently borrow significantly more to allow more investment in existing and new homes.

The Council along with all Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing was subject to a four year period of enforced rent reduction. This step imposed in 2016 essentially removed £185M from the 30 year business plan at this time. Measures were taken at this stage to reduce costs and manage this reduction in revenue whilst continuing to invest in properties and in services for tenants. The period of rent reduction was now at an end and provided the opportunity to once again apply appropriate and modest rent increases to ensure the business kept track of increases in its operating costs.

The Council had declared a climate emergency, many tenants struggled to be able to afford to heat their homes, particularly as many homes were hard to heat due to poor thermal performance. The ability of the HRA to invest in communities especially with regard to the built infrastructure created an opportunity for funding to be targeted at these issues.

During the discussion of this item the following comments were made;

- How are we tackling the back log of Fire risk assessments? The fire related works was driven by our own risk assessment. This relates to the communal areas in our flats. A refresh on all of our assets was completed post Glenfel. A review process was now underway with all of the fire risk assessments. We are also employing a Fire Consultancy to come and do some audit of our more complex locations.
- How are the Lease Holders being encouraged to have their fire doors replaced to come up to our standards? There routes that we can enforce that or we may decide that we will replace them anyway as part of our programme;
- The one year introductory tenancies, do they automatically become secure? If we have issues during the introductory period they will be reported. Breaches with tenants will take steps to give warnings and then will escalate to serving notice. If

this is not followed we will then seek Legal Proceedings for possession. We will have to demonstrate that we have followed all the processes;

Resolved that the board were happy to recommend the Policy.

20 HRA Budget Setting 2020/21

An update was given on the HRA Budget Setting for 2020/21. Stated that the HRA is a ring fenced account used to manage the Council's housing stock of some 5,700 properties, with the Council acting as the Landlord.

This report updates Members on the proposed HRA Annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2020/21, the proposed Rent Setting for the average weekly rent for 2020/21 and the proposed Fees and Charges for 2020/21. These proposals would enable the Council to set a balanced budget for the HRA for 2020/21.

In accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020, the Dwelling Rent for 2020/21 for existing tenants will be an increase of CPI+1% to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £83.05 per week. For new tenants only this will be an increase of CPI+1%

plus an additional 5% for general needs to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £87.21 per week. An additional 10% for sheltered/supported and extra care dwelling rents to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £91.36 per week.

To increase non-dwelling rent and service charges in line with national policy by CPI+1% for 2020/21, with the exception of garages for private and shared ownerships tenants which would increase from £10.32 (including VAT) to £12.00 (including VAT).

Resolved that the Board Members were happy to support the recommendations proposed to the Executive and Full Council.

Meeting ended at 19:00

SWT TENANTS STRATEGIC GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 15TH JANUARY, 2020

Present: Alex Akhigbemen, Jessie Bunn, Dennis Galpin, Livvi Mongare and Ivor Hussey

Officers: James Barrah (Director, Housing) Stephen Boland (Housing Landlord Specialist), Kerry Prisco (Finance Specialist)

17 Apologies

Apologies were received from Kevin Hellier and Richard Hirsch

18 Notes from previous meeting on 16 December 2019 (to follow)

19 Housing Review Account Business Plan 2020-2050

HRA Business Plan 2020-2050 - Report of The Director of Housing

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan contained the financial model of the service for the next 30 years. A number of largely external changes meant that a full refresh of the Business Plan was necessary. This report identified the changes and the impact of these. The report also set out a new vision for the Housing Service and plans for growth in the number of new homes we plan to build. The report also proposed a new rent policy following the end of a period of four years of imposed rent reduction, this would provide a refreshed income position on which to build future plans set out in this report.

Officers worked with external housing and business planning advisers Savills to create a new structure and approach to modelling future financial planning. The proposed Business Plan represented the current established position, it incorporated assumptions concerning future projected substantial growth and gearing primarily to invest in new homes, that have been accommodated within the plan. This substantially increased level of investment was possible due to the imposed debt cap on the business having been removed, and represented higher levels of investment and borrowing than the service had previously undertaken. This created substantial

opportunity to do more, but also would increase risk, factors which would need to be balanced carefully by the Council in the coming years.

The assumptions made within the business plan were prudent without being excessively restrictive; they provided for inflation on income and costs at prevailing rates which were aligned, allowed a considerable investment in existing stock, a substantial investment in new homes leading to a net increase in properties, whilst debt forecast at elevated levels to today at the end of 30 years. The peak debt of the plan was £164.4 million in year 11, which would not have been possible under the previous HRA regime with a debt cap of £115.8million.

Somerset West and Taunton Council owns and manages affordable housing of over 5700 homes mostly at social rent levels. This “business” within the Council had a turnover of £26M. Income was derived mostly from rents from tenants but also from service charges and other fees. Expenditure was made up of Council staff delivering services to tenants along with repairs and maintenance and other improvements to existing homes and investment in new much needed homes, and the repayment of borrowing.

The finances of the Housing Service was held within a ring-fenced account called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which was separate from all other Council finances in that the money was only to be used for providing services to tenants.

In 2012 the Council moved away from a national subsidy system, which meant an annual payment from the HRA to central government, to be ‘self-financing’. As part of the self-financing agreement, a mandatory one-off payment of £85.12m

SWT Scrutiny Committee, 20 01 2020

was made to government, in return for being able to retain all income locally to manage and maintain the housing stock. The total debt in the HRA at the start of self-financing was £99.7m. Financially this was a positive step for the Council and it released more resources to be invested locally on additional services and new homes.

In order to manage the freedoms gained by the HRA through self-financing, a new 30 year Business Plan (2012-2042) was introduced. This set out the Council’s overall aims and objectives for Housing Services, as well as laying out plans to manage the increased risks and opportunities. The HRA Business Plan had been reviewed and updated regularly since 2012, but recently there had been many

changes in national policies and local aspiration that meant a full update of the Business Plan was once again required.

Since 2012 the HRA had been subject to an imposed notional debt cap, essentially setting a limit on the borrowing the service could undertake which provided a constraint on growth of the service in terms of investment in new homes. The HRA debt cap was £116M. Following many years of lobbying by the sector, the debt cap was removed, which heralded a new era of growth opportunity, as the business could afford to prudently borrow significantly more to allow more investment in existing and new homes.

The Council along with all Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing was subject to a four year period of enforced rent reduction. This step imposed in 2016 essentially removed £185M from the 30 year business plan at this time. Measures were taken at this stage to reduce costs and manage this reduction in revenue whilst continuing to invest in properties and in services for tenants. The period of rent reduction was now at an end and provided the opportunity to once again apply appropriate and modest rent increases to ensure the business kept track of increases in its operating costs.

The Council had declared a climate emergency, many tenants struggled to be able to afford to heat their homes, particularly as many homes were hard to heat due to poor thermal performance. The ability of the HRA to invest in communities especially with regard to the built infrastructure created an opportunity for funding to be targeted at these issues.

During the discussion of this item the following comments were made;

- How are we tackling the back log of Fire risk assessments? The fire related works was driven by our own risk assessment. This relates to the communal areas in our flats. A refresh on all of our assets was completed post Glenfel. A review process was now underway with all of the fire risk assessments. We are also employing a Fire Consultancy to come and do some audit of our more complex locations.
- How are the Lease Holders being encouraged to have their fire doors replaced to come up to our standards? There routes that we can enforce that or we may decide that we will replace them anyway as part of our programme;
- The one year introductory tenancies, do they automatically become secure? If we have issues during the introductory period they will be reported. Breaches with tenants will take steps to give warnings and then will escalate to serving notice. If

this is not followed we will then seek Legal Proceedings for possession. We will have to demonstrate that we have followed all the processes;

Resolved that the board were happy to recommend the Policy.

20 HRA Budget Setting 2020/21

An update was given on the HRA Budget Setting for 2020/21. Stated that the HRA is a ring fenced account used to manage the Council's housing stock of some 5,700 properties, with the Council acting as the Landlord.

This report updates Members on the proposed HRA Annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2020/21, the proposed Rent Setting for the average weekly rent for 2020/21 and the proposed Fees and Charges for 2020/21. These proposals would enable the Council to set a balanced budget for the HRA for 2020/21.

In accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's new Rent Standard from April 2020, the Dwelling Rent for 2020/21 for existing tenants will be an increase of CPI+1% to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £83.05 per week. For new tenants only this will be an increase of CPI+1%

plus an additional 5% for general needs to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £87.21 per week. An additional 10% for sheltered/supported and extra care dwelling rents to the average weekly rent, from £80.87 per week to £91.36 per week.

To increase non-dwelling rent and service charges in line with national policy by CPI+1% for 2020/21, with the exception of garages for private and shared ownerships tenants which would increase from £10.32 (including VAT) to £12.00 (including VAT).

Resolved that the Board Members were happy to support the recommendations proposed to the Executive and Full Council.

Meeting ended at 19:00

Low Carbon Affordable Homes (HRA) for Somerset West & Taunton

Chris Brown

Head of Housing Development and
Regeneration (interim)

What will we cover?

- What does SWT want from new build affordable homes?
- Climate Change and New Homes - direction of travel
- Local authority case studies and exemplar schemes
- Developing and delivering a SWT low carbon standard
 - 2020/2021
 - 2021+
- The next steps / step change

What does SWT want from new affordable homes?

Low Carbon Homes (zero carbon, zero carbon +, Passiv, LETI, Code 6, etc.) (Homes in Somerset account for approx. 27% of carbon release compared to 20% of UK)

New Homes now or ASAP (sites, scale, specification, procurement, HRA or all SWT new build)

Homes supporting Health & Wellbeing (environment, light, quiet, comfort)

Sustainable tenancies & homes in sustainable communities (connected, affordable, locality, etc.)

Reduced levels of Fuel poverty (who saves and who funds)

Affordable homes (social rent v affordable rent, capital investment v revenue, increased or decreased maintenance costs, SPV)

Homes resilient to future climate change (over heating, flooding, more intense weather)

Well designed homes reflecting the local character (space standards, design guide, Garden Town)

Homes which use modern methods of construction/modular (what are the advantages/are the advantages relevant)

Climate Change and New Homes - direction of travel

Page 18



© Ten Fold / SWNS.com

Somerset We
and Taunton

Climate Change Agenda and direction of travel for new homes

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change the world needs a **net zero global economy by 2050**.

2019 UK **first major economy to pass a net zero emissions target into law**. (All greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050)

Commitment by **2025** the Government will **introduce a Future Homes Standard**

Consultation on changes to the **Building Regulations parts F & L**

- Fabric First approach
- Low Carbon Heat - Heat Pumps, Heat Networks, Direct Electrical Heating, Decarbonisation of the network (green tariffs)
- 31% reduction in carbon emissions compared to the current standard.

The UK housing sector has reduced overall total of **emissions by about a fifth since 1990** despite there being approximately a quarter more homes

The “greening” of the national electricity grid via renewable and low carbon energy sources has reduced carbon dioxide emissions, approx. **50% reduction for the carbon intensity of electricity**

Local authority case studies and exemplar schemes

Page 20



The **Greater London Authority** (GLA) already requires all new homes to achieve a **zero carbon target**

Many local authorities are leading the way in delivering **exemplar housing** developments to a zero carbon or zero carbon plus standard – Exeter, Cambridge, Plymouth, Norwich, etc.

**Somerset We
and Taunton**

EXETER CC / Exeter City Living (SPV/Corporate Company) - Passivhaus

Page 21



Somerset We
and Taunton

EXETER CC / Exeter City Living (SPV/Corporate Company) - Passivhaus



Page 22

- Passivhaus buildings meet exceptionally high environmental and energy efficiency standards developed by the Passivhaus Institute in Germany. This means excellent air quality inside with very little heating or cooling needed, whatever the weather. The homes are built to meet rigorous standards throughout
- Every element of the design is meticulously planned, from the aspect of high-performance windows to harvest warmth and light from the sun to high levels of insulation. This holistic passive design strategy results in homes with exceptionally clean air that always feel comfortable
- Passivhaus homes can reduce the energy demand of a building by up to 75% of that of a standard UK building (if built to current Building Regulation requirements).

RAYNE PARK, NORWICH



- The largest low-energy Passivhaus development in the UK – and one of the largest in Europe, brought forward by Norwich Regeneration.
- The scheme will see 112 of the 172 new homes certified to the Passivhaus standard. The homes will benefit from 70 per cent reduction in heating bills.

MARMALADE LANE, CAMBRIDGE



- A custom-built cohousing community delivered by GHA developer member TOWN.
- 42 custom build homes complemented by first-class shared facilities
- Marmalade Lane has been designed with a fabric-first approach delivered with offsite manufactured closed timber panels supplied by Swedish builder Trivselhus, combined with heat pumps to supply heating and hot water.

ETOLPIA HOMES, CORBY



- 47 modular homes that are equipped with energy saving technology to deliver a net zero carbon standard on site.
- A combined solar photovoltaic and thermal panel, heat pump, inter-seasonal storage and smart home equipment

ALLACK ROAD, LAYTON



- Comprises a mix of 50 new affordable and private flats and houses.
- The development, delivered under the London plan policy for low carbon homes
- It is the first to use a large-scale communal air source heat pump feeding an ambient temperature heat network and individual heat pumps, together with solar photovoltaic panels to provide a predicted 57% reduction in carbon emissions on site.

Developing and delivering a SWT low energy affordable homes standard

Page 27



Somerset We
and Taunton

A few headline SWT opportunities

- The HRA business plan has a target of 1000 new homes over 30 years
- This means new homes will increase from 0.07% of SWT stock up to 20% of stock over by 2050
- 30% of HRA 1000 unit target are live/on site
- Sites identified for an additional 35% of 30 year target
- High demand for affordable homes for rent
- Councils have some freedoms to tackle challenges – SPVs, corporate companies, borrowing, partnerships, Joint Ventures, etc.
- Large Town Centre regeneration increasing volume and opportunity circa 800 units

Learning through doing - start small prepare for the big



Page 29



Somerset We
and Taunton

2020 / 2021 - 6-19 units as Pilots; small, quick, learning, testing, refining, promoting

6-19 new homes zero or zero +units

- ✓ 2-6 surplus HRA garage sites
- ✓ Mainly zero carbon modular 2 bed bungalows (likely to be mobility friendly)
- ✓ Fabric First approach
- ✓ Onsite renewable energy
- ✓ Garden Town menu of external environment enhancements
- ✓ Design Code principles to reflect local character/materials to external environment
- ✓ Procurement and performance measured against existing standard (LETI)
- ✓ Procure through existing Framework
- ✓ RtB Receipts to support 30% cost of small schemes
- ✓ Create in District Low Carbon show homes
- ✓ Continue to learn from others and apply learning to medium sites



2022+ More volume, more modular, more refined

RA Medium sites – 170 units

- ✓ Benefit from our learning through doing
- ✓ Benefit from community buy in through show homes and pilots
- ✓ Homes England subsidy £40k-£60k per unit, RtBR (cannot be used with HE funding), mixed tenure cross subsidy schemes where required
- ✓ Potential for modular approach & bulk purchase discount
- ✓ Potential to deliver directly or through SWT own SPV/Corporate Company or buy services from other public company
- ✓ Establish LETI, Passivhaus or other carbon standard
- ✓ Garden Town menu of external environment enhancements
- ✓ Design Code principles to reflect local character/materials to external environment
- ✓ Opportunity for energy networks or reduced build cost through grid connection and deferred enhancement



Somerset We
and Taunton

2022+ More volume, more modular, more refined

NTWP – 226 units

- ✓ Bespoke approach with Engie (main contractor)
- ✓ Learn from Engie exemplar schemes and core companies energy business
- ✓ Apply learning in phases B-D

Continue with infill approach on small sites – 60+ units

- ✓ Develop small schemes on HRA surplus land / garage sites as per 2020/2021 programme
- ✓ 1 x small regeneration refurbishment (8-12 units) and new build (6-12 units)

Town Centre - circa 800 units

- ✓ Align HRA medium site delivery and standards where possible
- ✓ Greater purchasing power with modular build homes
- ✓ Consider SPV opportunities as an energy company, development agency
PRS landlord supporting homeless agenda



Somerset We
and Taunton

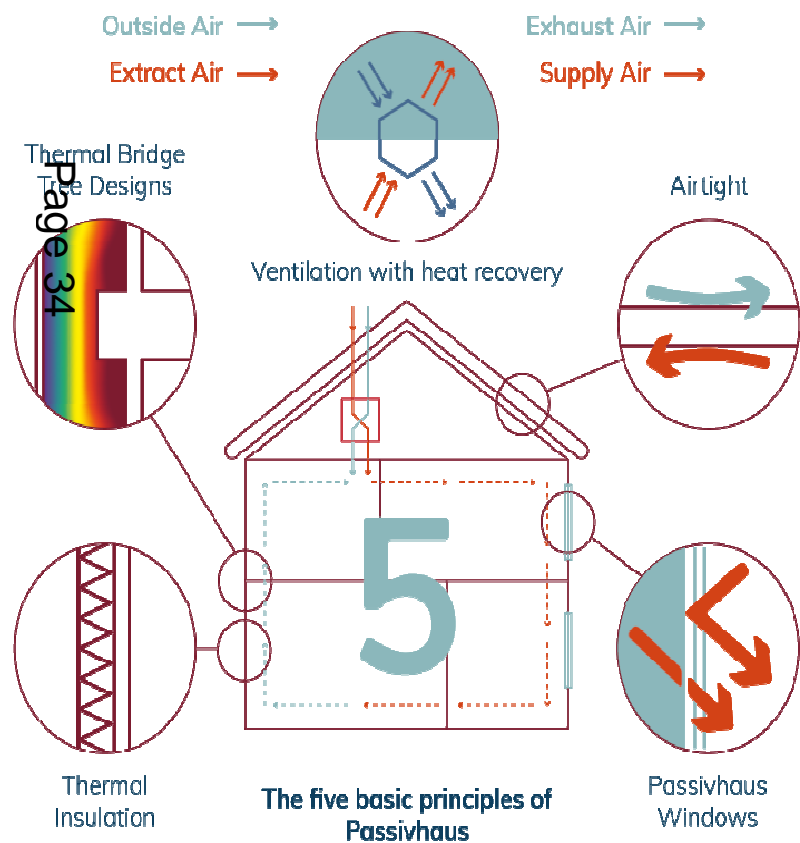
enchmarking SWT procurement against published standards

Choices on standards

- Passivhaus – House and use only
- LETI (London Energy Transformation Initiative) – Whole House and process
- Code 6 sustainable Homes – sustainability other elements
- ...and there are more

Passivhaus homes

This means excellent air quality inside with very little heating or cooling needed whatever the weather

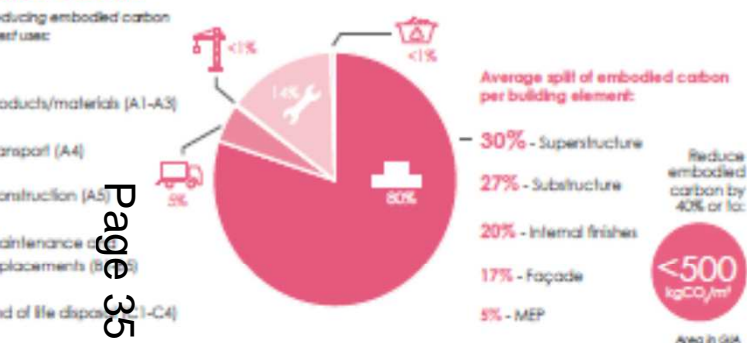


- A mechanical ventilation system with highly efficient heat recovery.
- Natural, recycled and locally and sustainably sourced materials where practical.
- Non-toxic organic paints, waxes and stains.
- Timber from sustainably managed woodlands.
- Reduced use of materials such as PVC and heavy metals.
- Radial electrical wiring in bedrooms to lessen electromagnetic fields (EMFs).

London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) Standard

(Small Homes) – Fabric, Energy/Heat/Power, Embodied Carbon, Data Disclosure

Embodied carbon



Fabric U-values (W/m²K)

Walls	0.13 - 0.15
Floor	0.08 - 0.10
Roof	0.10 - 0.12
Exposed ceiling/floor	0.13 - 0.18
Windows	0.80 (triple glazing)
Doors	1.00

Efficiency measures

Air tightness	<1 (m ³ /h, m@50Pa)
Thermal bridging	0.04 (y-value)
G-value of glass	0.6 - 0.5
MVHR	90% (efficiency), 52m (duct length from unit to external wall)

Maximise renewables so that 100% of annual energy requirement is generated on-site

Form factor of 1.7 - 2.5

Window areas guide (% of wall area)

North	10-15%
East	10-15%
South	20-25%
West	10-15%

Balance daylight and overheating

- Include external shading
- Include operable windows and cross ventilation

Reduce energy consumption to:

35 kWh/m²/yr
Energy use intensity (EUI) in GIA, excluding renewable energy contribution

Reduce space heating demand to:
15 kWh/m²/yr

Heating and hot water

Implement the following measures:

- Fuel**
Ensure heating and hot water generation is fossil fuel free
- Heating**
Maximum 10W/m² peak heat loss (including ventilation)
- Hot water**
Maximum dead leg of 1 litre for hot water pipework
Green Euro Water Label should be used for hot water outlets (e.g. certified 5 litre shower head – not using flow restrictors).

Demand response

Implement the following measures to manage demand and consumption:

- Peak reduction**
Reduce heating and hot water energy demand
- Active demand response measures**
Install heating set point controls
Thermal storage
- Electricity generation and storage**
Consider battery storage
- Electric vehicle (EV) charging**
Electric vehicle turn down
- Behaviour change**
Incentives to reduce power and peak grid constraints



Data disclosure

Disclose energy consumption as follows:

Metering

- meter renewables for energy generation
- meter electric vehicle charging
- meter heating fuel (e.g. heat pump consumption)
- continuously monitor with a smart meter
- consider monitoring internal temperatures
- multiple properties include a data logger
- provide the smart meter to make data logging possible.

123 Disclosure

1. Collect annual building energy consumption and generation
2. Aggregate average operational reporting e.g. by post code for anonymity or upstream meter
3. Collect water consumption meter readings
4. Upload five years of data to GIA and/or CarbonBuzz online platform
5. Consider uploading to Low Energy Building Database.

Please use this link for a clearer graphic
[LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide](#)

Sustainable Homes Code 6 2006-2015 – Net ZERO Point Based Systems (2006-2015)

Completely zero carbon (i.e. zero net emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from all energy use in the home). This could be achieved by:

Improving the thermal efficiency

Reducing air permeability

Installing a high efficiency condensing boiler, or being on a district heating system;

Carefully designing the fabric of the home to reduce thermal bridging

Using low and zero carbon technologies such as solar thermal panels, biomass boilers, wind turbines, and combined heat and power systems (CHP).

The home will have to be designed to use no more than about 80 litres of water per person per day.

30% of the water requirement of the home was provided from non-potable sources such as rainwater harvesting systems or grey water recycling systems.

- Surface water management
- Materials – this means a minimum number of materials meeting at least a 'D' grade in the Building Research Establishment's Green Guide
- Waste management – this means having a site waste management plan in place during the home's construction, and adequate space for waste storage during its use.
- But to get to Level 6 you need a further 64.9 points. So the builder/developer must do many other things to obtain the other points. In fact they will need to do 90% of everything in the Code to achieve Level 6, including:
 - Energy efficient appliances, and lighting;
 - Supplying accessible water butts;
 - Reducing surface water run-off as much as possible;
 - Using highly environmentally friendly materials;
 - Minimising construction waste;
 - Maximum, accessible provision for recycling;
 - Improved daylighting, sound insulation and security;
 - Building to the Lifetime Homes standard;
 - Assessing and minimising the ecological impact of the construction of the home.

Next Steps



Page 37



Somerset We
and Taunton

Next Steps

Early pilots with a strong pipeline **6-19 zero carbon +** homes

Engagement on low carbon objectives with Members, colleagues and Community – guest exemplar speakers

- ~~Workshops~~
 - with Planning & Asset Teams
 - with Town Regeneration Team
- Study trips
- NTWP main contractor exemplar schemes/products

Procurements using the LETI standard as a benchmark against bids

- Fabric First, On site renewables (No Gas), Carbon Capture, Data Capture
- Environment – consideration of the Garden Town & Design Guide (Area Character/Materials)

Next Steps

Show homes/houses, publicity

Reflection and **learning from pilots**

- Refine procurement approach and standard for medium and large developments

Sustainable Funding

- Capital investment v lower running cost to household
- Social rents v affordable rents
- The role of a corporate company / SPV

Tenants Board 16th March 2020

Performance Reporting

Background:

Somerset West and Taunton Council is committed to being transparent and customer focussed. This will involve the regular and routine monitoring of performance across a wide range of measures. To facilitate this, the Housing Directorate is in the process of developing a new performance report to monitor that it is performing well, and to help identify and prioritise areas for improvement.

Proposed approach:

The draft performance report for Housing contains over 100 indicators which cover different aspects of the broad range of services. The report is currently being developed and targets will be agreed over the next month.

To keep it manageable, it is proposed that a subset of these indicators is reported to the Tenants Board, and a potential draft list of indicators is attached. This is an example of the sorts of indicators that could be routinely provided, to help the board discuss and determine exactly what they wish to see.

However, it is essential that the Tenants Board is confident that the performance report covers the issues that they consider to be most important. Additional indicators could be included to monitor, for example: Customer satisfaction, complaints, or financial data.

There may also be additional issues of specific interest to the board, and further suggestions for potential performance indicators would be welcomed.

Alternatively, the board may choose to adopt a different method for performance monitoring which could involve a thematic approach. A rolling programme could be agreed where a different suite of indicators is brought to each meeting so that over the course of a year all relevant aspects of performance are covered. Or it may be appropriate to combine the 2 approaches, and agree a selection of indicators to be reported regularly, but that this could be enhanced by more detailed reports on specific areas as and when appropriate.

DRAFT Tenants Board Performance Scorecard

Performance and Outcomes						
Measure	Target	As at 31/1/20	As at 29/2/20	RAG	Direction of travel	Comments
Tenancy						
Number of new lettings (GN, SP, EXT)	tbc	22	35			
Number of evictions	tbc	0	0			
Income collected as a % of rent owed excluding arrears brought forward.	98.3%	100.74%	100.44%			
Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit	tbc	tbc	tbc			
Housing Voids						
Major Void turnaround times	35 dys	74	70.5			
Minor Void turnaround times	20 dys	36	45.7			
Housing Repairs						
Completion of housing repairs within 24 hours.	99%	99% (Dec)	tbc			Jan/Feb Figures not yet received
Completion of housing repairs within timescale agreed with the tenant.	90%	87.8% (Dec)	tbc			Jan/Feb Figures not yet received
HRA Compliance						
% of housing stock with a valid gas safety certificate	100%	100%	100%			
ASB and Safeguarding						
Number of new ASB cases reported per 1,000 properties	tbc	1.7	tbc			
% of ASB cases that were resolved	tbc	10%	tbc			

Governance Team to populate Report number: Report Number: SWT */19

Report Version No:	1/2/3/4/5 etc.
REPORT SIGNED OFF BY?	Date:
1) Service Manager	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy
2) Legal	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy
3) Finance/s151	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy
4) Head of Function/SLT	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy
5) Governance Team	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy

Somerset West and Taunton

Tenants’ Strategic Group – 16th March 2020

Mutual Exchange Policy

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Member Councillor Francesca Smith

Report Author: (Stephen Boland – Housing Specialist)

1 Executive Summary

To present to the Tenants’ Strategic Group a draft Mutual Exchange Policy.

Recommendations

Members of the Tenants’ Strategic group are invited to consider and make recommendation/s on the draft policy to the Council’s Executive Member for Housing.

2 Risk Assessment

There are no specific risk management issues.

3 Background and full details of the report

A mutual exchange allows social housing tenants to 'swap' their properties with each other.

Each tenant must have the written consent of his/her landlord.

The consent of the landlord must not be withheld except on grounds set out in the relevant legislation.

Somerset West and Taunton approve approximately 50 plus exchanges each year, and this aids mobility both within the council's housing stock and between Somerset West and Taunton and other local authorities and housing associations. Whilst most exchange applications are approved, a small number are refused and some refusals become controversial because the applicants are naturally disappointed, and because some decisions, whilst consistent with current lettings policy, appear harsh to the tenants and their representatives.

4 Links to Corporate Strategy

There are no specific links to corporate aims.

5 Finance / resource implications

There are no financial comments in relation to this report.

6 Legal implications

The statutory duties are set out within the report and require no further comment.

7 Climate and sustainability implications

There are no specific climate or sustainability implications.

8 Safeguarding and/or community safety implications

There are no specific safeguarding and or community safety implications.

9 Equality and diversity implications

None for the purposes of this report.

10 Social value implications

None for the purposes of this report.

11 Partnership implications

There are no specific partnership implications.

12 Health and wellbeing implications

None for the purposes of this report.

13 Asset management implications

None for the purposes of this report.

14 Data protection implications

None for the purposes of this report.

15 Consultation implications

None for the purposes of this report.

17 Scrutiny comments / recommendation(s)

None for the purposes of this report.

Democratic path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – No**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting frequency: **Once only** **Ad-hoc** **Quarterly**
 Twice-yearly **Annually**

List of appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix One	Mutual Exchange Policy
--------------	------------------------

Contact officers

Name	Stephen Boland	Name	
Direct Dial	01823 219503	Direct Dial	
Email	s.boland@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk	Email	

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Mutual Exchange Policy (DRAFT)

March 2020

Policy Number	1
Policy Title:	Mutual Exchange Policy
Author	Stephen Boland – Housing Specialist
Responsible Officer	Stephen Boland
Date Equality Impact Assessment completed:	
Date Agreed by Board:	
Date agreed by Housing Portfolio Holder	
Next Review Date:	March 2025
Version	Draft: 01

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Mutual Exchange Policy

1. Policy objectives

This policy sets out Somerset West and Taunton Council's (SWT) approach to dealing with tenants who wish to carry out a mutual exchange.

SWT will help facilitate mutual exchange as a way of encouraging and promoting tenant mobility. We will do this by:

- Informing tenants of their right to exchange in the tenancy agreement, and tenants handbook;
- Provide an opportunity for tenants to move anywhere in the country without needing to go through the choice based lettings (CBL) system, especially where they do/would not have a high priority for a move;
- Promote mutual exchanges as a method to enable tenants to choose a home in the area they wish to live in;
- Provide advice and assistance for those carrying out an exchange; and
- Facilitating access to an online mutual exchange register.

2. Policy aims

The key aims of this policy are to:

- Provide a framework to ensure that mutual exchanges are carried out efficiently and fairly in full compliance with legislation and the tenancy agreement;
- To comply with and support the Government's nationwide social home swap programme to give council and registered social landlord tenants a wider choice in where they want to live;
- Minimise costs to SWT through a comprehensive inspection and approval process prior to and upon an exchange taking place;
- Encourage the use of mutual exchanges so SWT will achieve the best utilisation of its stock while minimising the risks of inappropriate moves; and
- Establish/maintain a good relationship with all our partners including the local authorities and other registered social housing providers.

3. Who the policy covers

This policy covers SWT social housing tenants living in general needs and supported housing stock. This policy does not cover SWT tenants with introductory tenancies, demoted tenancies, non-secure tenancies or 'use and occupation' arrangements the council may have agreed to.

4. Relevant legal and regulatory information

Section 158 of the Localism Act 2011 sets out the grounds under which a mutual exchange can be refused, these are broadly the same as those set out in Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985. The table below shows what grounds apply under both of these acts.

Schedule 3 Of the Housing Act	Schedule 14 Of the Localism Act	Grounds for Refusing a Mutual Exchange
	Ground 1	When rent lawfully due from a tenant under one of the existing tenancies has not be paid.
	Ground 2	When an obligation under one of the existing tenancies has been broken or not performed.
Ground 1	Ground 3	A court order for possession or a suspended possession order has been made for either property.
Ground 2	Grounds 4 and 5	The landlord has served Notice Of Seeking Possession and the notice is still in force or possession proceedings have commenced.
Ground 3	Ground 7	The property is substantially larger than in reasonably needed by the proposed assignee.
Ground 4	Ground 8	The property is not reasonably suitable to the assignee and their household.

Ground 5	Ground 9	The property is part of a building that is held for non-housing purposes or it is situated in a cemetery and was let in connection with employment with the landlord or local authority or a new town corporation, housing action trust, urban development corporation or the governors of a grant aided school.
Ground 6	Ground 10	The local landlord is a charity and the proposed assignee's occupation of the property would conflict with the object of the charity.
Ground 7	Ground 11	The property has been substantially adapted for occupation by a physically disabled person and if the assignment went ahead a physically disabled person wouldn't be living there.
Ground 8	Ground 12	The landlord lets properties to people in difficult circumstances (other than merely financial circumstances) and the proposed assignee would not fulfil this criteria
Ground 9	Ground 13	The property is let to people with special needs and there is a social service or special facility nearby to the properties to assist people with these special needs and if the assignment was to go ahead no person with those special needs would be living there.
Ground 10	Ground 14	The dwelling is subject of a management agreement where the management is a

		housing association of which least half the members are tenants subject to the agreement and at least half of the tenants of the dwellings are members of the association and also that the proposed assignee is not such a member and is not willing to become one.
Additional ground (Housing Act 2004)	Ground 6	An injunction order under Section 153 of Housing Act 1996 or an Anti-Social Behaviour Order or a Demotion Order or a possession order under Ground 2 for Secure tenancies or Ground 14 for Assured tenancies is in force or an application for one of those is pending either against the tenant, the proposed assignee or a person who resides with either of them.

5. Types of exchange and tenancies

Mutual exchanges are carried out in one of two ways:

- Through assignment; and
- Through surrender and re-grant of tenancies.

Assignment is the swapping of tenancies at the same time as homes are exchanged. The incoming tenant will take on the rights and responsibilities of the tenant they have swapped with. This is used when those exchanging homes hold tenancies with a similar security of tenure.

Surrender and re-grant is where tenants surrender their current tenancy and re-sign a tenancy with a similar security of tenure for their new property. This is used when the parties exchanging hold tenancies with different security, and one of the parties has their security protected by law.

Tenants who hold a lifetime (secure or assured) tenancy that was granted before April 1st 2012 have their security of tenure protected by law. Tenants who hold a secure or assured

tenancy granted before this date therefore cannot swap tenancies (be assigned) with a fixed term or flexible tenant, though there are exceptions.

This legislative protection will not apply when a lifetime tenant chooses to exchange with a fixed term tenant on an affordable rent.

The table below sets out whether an exchange by assignment or by surrender and re-grant will take place:

Tenant 1	Tenant 2	Mutual exchange by:	Exceptions:
Secure/ Assured	Secure/Assured	Assignment (swapping tenancies)	
Secure/ Assured	Flexible/Fixed	Surrender and re-grant (each tenant gets a new tenancy with the same/similar level of security as they currently have).	If the secure/assured commenced after April 2012: exchange by <u>assignment</u> . If the fixed-term has an affordable rent: exchange by <u>assignment</u> .

6. Landlords consent to exchange

All those involved in the exchange must complete a mutual exchange application form.

SWT will acknowledge the exchange and notify all the proposed exchange partners of the decision within 42 days.

When determining bedroom need SWT will follow Homefinder Somerset's Choice Based Lettings allocations procedure.

SWT will request a reference for the assignee from their landlord and consent will not be given until the reference is received.

7. Safety checks

SWT will carry out a number of property inspection to ensure that the property is in a good state of repair. These inspections will include the following:

- Inspection from a property surveyor who will check the structure, fixtures and fittings in the property. If the surveyor finds any changes, damage or fittings that are the tenant's responsibility and are not up to SWT standards these will have to be rectified before the exchange can proceed, with another visit being arranged for the agreed works to be signed off;
- Any problems found by this inspection that are SWT responsibility will be put right before the exchange proceeds;
- Electrical inspection will be carried out;

- An inspection by the housing team will be carried out, at this inspection the officer will look at the cleanliness of the property and garden and discuss items that are being left by the outgoing tenant for the assignee;
- A gas check will be carried out on the day of the move with the gas being capped when the outgoing tenant moves out and re-instated and checked when the incoming tenant moves in;
- Safety certificates will be provided to new tenants for their own information and a copy held on the Council's asset management system;
- SWT will require tenants to sign to accept liability for any non-standard alterations or installations and any items which tenants have agreed with each other to leave in the property; and
- Incoming tenants will be entitled to day to day repairs and to be included in any identified SWT upgrade works programmes.

8. Exchanges without consent

If a tenant does not obtain SWT's written consent or the application to exchange is withheld or rejected, the exchange will be unlawful. Both tenants will be in the position of:

- Having no legal interest in the tenancy at the property at which they are living; and
- Being liable for the rent and other obligations of their original respective tenancies; and having lost their security of tenure because they are no longer occupying their original home as their only or main home.

In these instances the available options to SWT are to:

- Consider making the exchange legal by completing the new tenancy agreements or Deed of Assignment forms retrospectively; or
- Demand that both tenants return to their original homes; or terminate the tenancies by serving a Notice To Quit (NTQ) and without prejudice serve a Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP) on the original homes to seek possession.

9. Rent arrears

SWT cannot withhold consent to a mutual exchange because a tenant has rent arrears unless:

- The tenant or proposed exchange partner has a possession order outstanding against them, whether or not it has already come into force.
- The tenant or proposed exchange partner has outstanding possession proceedings against them or a NOSP is still in force.

SWT will however make it a condition of granting permission that any rent arrears need to be cleared before the exchange can proceed.

10. Succession

The right to succession is personal to the individual tenant and this right transfers with the tenant when they move in a mutual exchange. No new succession rights are created as a result of a mutual exchange and if the incoming tenant has previously succeeded to a tenancy no further successions would be permitted under the tenancy accepted with SWT.

Assignment by way of mutual exchange does not count as a statutory succession.

11. Permission for exchange

SWT will only give permission for an exchange to take place when the consent of all other landlords involved has been obtained and all the following requirements have been met:

- A satisfactory report has been received from landlords of other tenants involved in the exchange concerning tenancy conduct including rent payments, anti-social behaviour and property condition;
- The report should also address any support needs the incoming tenant has; and
- Agreement has been reached between landlords that the exchange may go ahead.

Once the agreement has been reached a letter of confirmation will be sent to all parties involved with the time and date for the completion of paperwork taking place.

The assignee will also receive the following information including:

- Tenancy Agreement with confirmation of the tenancy they will be taking on;
- Tenant's handbook;
- Copy of the property surveyors report;
- Copy of the electrical and gas reports; and
- Disclaimer form for items being left in the property by the outgoing tenant.

12. Section 106 agreements

Section 106 Agreements are made under the town and country planning legislation, and make planning permission subject to certain conditions. In the context of lettings and exchanges these may seek to restrict lettings to people with local connections.

SWT will have regard of Section 106 Agreements where relevant, and will refuse applications where the Section 106 Agreement principles would be broken.

13. Appeals

Any applicant who has had a request for mutual exchange refused may request that the decision be reviewed through the formal complaints process.

14. Review date

To be reviewed September 2025

Governance Team to populate Report number: Report Number: SWT */19

Report Version No:	1/2/3/4/5 etc.
REPORT SIGNED OFF BY?	Date:
1) Service Manager	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy
2) Legal	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy
3) Finance/s151	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy
4) Head of Function/SLT	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy
5) Governance Team	YES/NO/TBC – dd/mm/yyyy

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Tenants’ Strategic Group – 16th March 2020

Terms of Reference for the Tenants’ Strategic Group

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Member Councillor Francesca Smith

Report Author: (Stephen Boland – Housing Specialist)

1. Executive summary

To present to the Tenants’ Strategic Group Terms of Reference.

2. Recommendations

Members are invited to consider and support the following recommendation:

- To approve the Terms of Reference for the Tenants’ Strategic Group.

3. Risk assessment

There are no specific risk management issues.

4. Background and full details of the report

The Terms of Reference describe the role, aims, objectives and expected conduct of the Tenants' Strategic Group and are to be approved for the start of the Tenants' Strategic Group's existence.

5. Links to the Corporate Strategy

There are no specific links to corporate aims.

6. Finance / resource implications

There are no financial comments in relation to this report.

7. Legal implications

There are no specific legal comments.

8. Climate and sustainability implications

There are no specific climate or sustainability implications.

9. Safeguarding and/or community safety implications

There are no specific safeguarding and or community safety implications.

10. Equality and diversity implications

Reference is made within the Terms of Reference that the Tenants' Strategic Group has a collective responsibility to uphold the best possible standards in term of equality.

11. Social value implications

None for the purposes of this report.

12. Partnership implications

There are no specific partnership implications.

13. Health and wellbeing implications

None for the purposes of this report.

14. Asset management implications

None for the purposes of this report.

15. Data protection implications

None for the purposes of this report.

16. Consultation implications

Existing members of the Tenants' Strategic Group held a workshop session on the 15th

January 2020 and their comments and feedback has informed the development of what is proposed.

17. Scrutiny comments / recommendation(s)

None for the purposes of this report.

Democratic path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – No**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency: Once only Ad-hoc Quarterly
 Twice-yearly Annually

List of Appendices (delete if not applicable)

Appendix A	Tenants' Strategic Group – Proposed Terms of Reference
------------	--

Contact Officers

Name	Stephen Boland	Name	
Direct Dial	01823 219503	Direct Dial	
Email	s.boland@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk	Email	

Tenants' Strategic Group

Terms of Reference

2020

1. Membership and meeting arrangements

- 1.1 The membership of the Tenants' Strategic Group will comprise of up to 12 members (including 10 direct tenants of Somerset West and Taunton Council and two Councillors).
- 1.2 Each elected Councillor, one from each of the two main groups at the Council, will be selected by his or her political group.
- 1.3 The Housing Portfolio holder and Shadow Portfolio holder will attend ex officio; other members able to attend as observers.
- 1.4 The Chair of the Group will be one of the tenants and will be elected at each Annual General Meeting. The Group may elect a vice-chair (preferably a tenant representative).
- 1.5 Tenant representatives will be appointed to the Group following election by all direct tenants of the Council.
- 1.6 If there are equal number of candidates for available Group positions and the candidates meet the eligibility criteria they may be deemed as elected unopposed and no election is necessary.
- 1.7 Group members will be expected to maintain close links with other elements of the tenant engagement structure at the Council.
- 1.8 Tenant members will stand for a period of up to 3 year, with an eligibility of reappointment after two years.
- 1.9 This structure shall be reviewed every two years and will also take into account the need for all sections of the community to be represented, in order to ensure membership of the Group is representative of tenants as a whole.
- 1.10 Tenants are not eligible to be elected or serve as a tenant representative on the Group if:
 - They are not a tenant or partner or spouse of at least five year's standing of a tenant living at the same household;
 - They are under 18 years old;
 - They are in serious breach of their obligations as a tenant;
 - They become incapable due to a mental disorder;
 - They do not have a good rent payment and tenancy history;

- They are a Councillor of Somerset West and Taunton;
- They are a member of staff in Somerset West and Taunton's housing service; or
- One of their family members or household is a current member of the Group.

1.11 Membership shall also cease if he or she:

- Resigns by written notice to the Chairperson.
- Misses three consecutive meetings (without reasonable excuse) when they will be deemed to have resigned. The member will be contacted to enquire about their absences.
- Brings the Group into disrepute.

1.12 If a member resigns or relinquishes their position the resulting vacancy will be filled as follows:

- A previously unsuccessful candidate who received the most votes will be asked to fill the vacancy.
- If the candidate is unavailable or unwilling to be co-opted, other candidates will be considered in the order of the number of votes received.
- Should the above provision fail to find a representative, Group members, with the Housing Specialist, will agree on a representative to be co-opted until the next election.

1.13 All members are volunteers. No payment will be received for any work done by them on behalf of the Group. However when attending training or meetings of the Group, members may claim travel, childcare or other carers expenses.

1.14 No substitute members shall be permitted.

1.15 All members must participate in training programmes and seminars aimed at enhancing Group members' roles.

1.16 The Group will be supported by the Housing Specialist. Organisation and administration of the Group will be provided by the Housing Customer Experience Team. The Director of Housing and other staff, as appropriate will attend and advise the Group.

1.17 There will be 6 meetings per year plus 'special' meetings as necessary. The dates, times and venues for the meetings will be agreed annually.

1.18 Minutes of previous meetings will be circulated within 7 days after the meeting and will include notice of the agenda items for the next meeting.

1.19 Agendas and supporting papers will aim to be made available at least one week prior to meetings of the Group. Late reports will be circulated as soon as possible and the Group will determine whether to consider them.

- 1.20 Members of the public will have the right to attend a Group meeting except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting, or part of it, is therefore held in private.
- 1.21 Members of the public can submit questions or make statements to the Group related to items on the agenda, so long as these are received one week in advance of the meeting.
- 1.22 Group meetings will be limited to 2 hours. Any issues not addressed in this time will be carried over, unless members agree otherwise.
- 1.23 Members of the Group are required to disclose the existence and nature of any personal interests which they have in any item of business to be considered at a Group meeting, ahead of its discussion.
- 1.24 The Group will not be involved with day to day operational matters or matters of detailed service delivery or performance.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The Tenants' Strategic Group will represent all direct tenants of the Council at a high level of the Council's decision making process to enable tenants to have their voices heard, making it easy to raise concerns to those in the Council who make the decisions and to influence and shape what the Council does. The Group is an integrated and integral part of the wider council governance and performance structure.
- 2.2 The role of the Tenants' Strategic Group is set out below:
 - To help run the housing function (landlord) by providing oversight, challenge, direction, and recommendations to help with decision making;
 - To work with officers to set the annual budget for housing and determine spending priorities, as well as monitoring spend throughout the year;
 - To be consulted on and advise on key changes to strategy, policies, significant service changes and development proposals;
 - To review overall service quality (including reviewing key performance indicators on a quarterly basis);
 - To maintain an overview of the development of tenant involvement and empowerment; and
 - To report to Council annually, and provide recommendations regarding the housing function.
- 2.3 Members will receive appropriate training in governance skills, housing, finance, legal requirements and policy areas (as necessary).
- 2.4 The Tenants' Action Group will provide feedback to the Tenants' Strategic Group from their meetings so that the Tenants' Strategic Group can consider whether issues arising should impact on strategic discussions and policy development. The

Tenants' Strategic Group will also feed information back to the Tenants' Action Group so that its members develop a better understanding of how services are performing and gain greater transparency about any decisions made.

3. Code of Conduct

3.1 All members of the Group are expected to follow the good practice principles for effective meetings, as set out below:

- All questions should be directed through the Chairperson;
- Everyone should be given equal respect and personal verbal attacks against members of the Group will not be tolerated;
- The Chair's position should be respected at all times;
- Any conflict of interest must be declared to the Group at the start of the meeting;
- No member of the Group should behave in a way likely to bring the reputation of the Group into disrepute;
- Members will be expected to read papers before the meeting;
- All members are expected to take part in training where this is agreed;
- All members of the Group are required to make their best efforts to attend meetings or to send their apologies; and
- The Chairperson will have the authority to give a verbal warning to any member of the Group to leave the meeting.

4. Equal opportunities

4.1 All members are required to comply with equal opportunities statements of the Council.

4.2 Members of the Group using racist, sexist or other inappropriate language or behaviour will be subject to an agreed procedure and may be removed from the Group.

5. Annual review

5.1 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years.

