

# SHELTERED HOUSING CONSULTATION GROUP MEETING

Monday 26 April 2004

## MINUTES

### Present: -

Steve Deakin	ECC		
Tony Bodgin	ECC	Mrs G Tyrrell	Globefield
Paul Callister	ECC	Mrs V Phelps	Shilhay
Louise Barnden	TACT@DOME	Mrs C Wearing	Rennes House
Margaret Matters	Senior Warden	Mr L Pearson	Rennes House
Mr K Murray	Grandisson	Mr D. Copp	Russett House
Mrs P Stoneman	Grandisson	Mr J Sutton	Russett Avenue
Mr Tait	Grandisson	Mrs S Banwell	Southlands
Mrs Sandford:	Carpenter Close	Mrs Chisholm	Southlands
Mrs E Amoroso	Toronto	Mrs V Parr	Southlands
Mrs J Smith	Rennes House	Mrs Brown:	Flowerpots,
Mrs B Staddon	Bodley Close	Mrs J Browning	Flowerpots
Mrs S Bath	Nelson Close	Mrs J Welham:	Aldens Road,
Mr J Capper:	Shilhay,	Mr Harper	Faraday House

### Apologies: -

Mr W Bell:	Carpenter Close,	Mrs S McLeod,	York House
Mrs Clench:	Faraday House,	Mrs M Winham:	York House,
Mrs G Kirby:	Aldens Road,	Mrs Dunlop:	Russett House,
Mr F Griffiths	Abbeville Close	Mrs A Fasey:	Magdalen Gdns,
Mrs D M Tolman	Bodley Close	Mrs Zelent:	Aldens Road,
Mrs J Smith	Rennes House	Mr J. Clarke:	Abbeville Close.

### Introduction

The meeting opened with a general introduction from Tony Bodgin who welcomed two new members to the group and introduced estate officer Paul Callister. The group introduced themselves to make the new members feel more at home. He then went on to introduce Louise Barnden of [TACT@DOME](mailto:TACT@DOME), the new Independent Tenants Advisor.

### The Warden Service

Margaret Matters – the Senior Warden – outlined a list of what duties the wardens are and are not responsible for carrying out. A copy of the list is included.

When the group were asked for comments on the duties it was mentioned that the wardens on the whole provide a very good service. One area which was highlighted

was that the retained wardens need to ensure that they lock the door after visiting residents. This was as a result of an experience of one of the group.

The lifts are being overhauled on the sheltered sites, seats are also being installed for disabled use – Steve Shorter is dealing with this.

## **Independent Tenants Advisor**

Louise Barnden of Dome Consultants, was then introduced to the group.

Louise is the lead consultant and attended the meeting as the representative of [TACT@DOME](mailto:TACT@DOME) who will be representing the tenants and leaseholders of Exeter City Council as their Independent Tenants Advisor.

Dome Consultancies specialise in ITA work and will be working to help the council and tenants through the Options Appraisal process.

The governments Decent Homes Standard is driving the process, which must be achieved by 2010. Local authorities must produce a plan to show how this will be achieved.

It is a government requirement that a Stock Options Appraisal be carried out.

Councils are being challenged to find out how best to own and manage the properties currently owned by local authorities.

There are four options available: -

**Stay as you are** – provides no extra money and plans to manage must be produced.

**ALMO** (Arms Length Management Organisation) – is a separate company. the stock is still owned by the council and can access extra money. Once this is set up it is inspected by the Audit Commission and must get at least a 2 star rating.

**Stock Transfer** - the housing stock is sold to a new organisation. The staff also transfer to the organisation and the new organisation is run as a Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association).

**PFI** (Private Finance Initiative) – brings money in for big contracts for instance where large areas need to be demolished and rebuilt.

**All of these must be looked into to see which will provide the best option for Exeter.**

The information required in order for tenants to assess these options will come from the council. The ITA will ensure that the information is correct and presented in a way that everyone can understand and make a decision based on the facts. Also that the kind of service wanted for the future is taken into account when deciding on an option.

Louise explained that there are two areas which cause tenants the most concern.

These are: - rents ‘going through the roof’ and loss of security of tenure. This will not happen. The government’s plans on rent restructuring will mean that council rents and RSL rents on similar properties will be the same by the year 2011. Clearly then, this issue should not be a cause for concern.

Secondly, should tenants decide their future is best served by choosing an alternative management arrangement then the ITA will work with the council in any review of the Tenancy Agreement in order to ensure that tenants interests are protected.

## **The Process**

To begin with TACT will send out a **newsletter**. This will include a survey card to find out what tenants' priorities are and is a good starting point for the process. Next a Roadshow will go out to where people live to ensure that the information is accessible to everyone.

A '**Insight Group**' will be set up with one job and that is to look at Stock Options. Invitations will be sent out to anyone who expresses an interest to attend. These 'Insight' meetings will be for all tenants and others who are interested in learning more about the options and developing a response from tenants. There will be at least six meetings and will discuss the Options, money etc.

The decision reached must be an informed choice based on what level of services are required and what improvements tenants say they would like. The improvements can include the less obvious ones such as environmental issues like car parking and security etc.

Your views will be put before the council and they will make the final decision based upon your submission. The whole operation is overseen by the Community Housing Task Force – a branch of the Government Office South West - and no part of the operation will be allowed to proceed unless passed by them.

After the newsletter has been circulated, TACT will arrange meetings in the common rooms of the Sheltered Schemes to ensure that the information gets to the sheltered tenants.

The TACT team will consist of:-  
Louise Barnden – Lead Consultant.  
Catherine Griffiths – Associate.  
Fiona Kiely – Admin Support

There is a **24 hour free-phone number – 0800 919994** - which will be manned during working hours and an answer phone outside working hours (this is not to be confused with the pendant scheme).

## **What will happen after 2010?**

The government seem unclear about their requirements on Decent Homes Standards after the year 2010. There will be a need for a Business Plan and this will probably need to be a 30 year plan. Whichever option is chosen it must be a viable sustainable option.

## **What happens when an LSVT is chosen?**

An LSVT would mean that the properties are sold to the new RSL. A board would be put in place and they would borrow money against the rental income stream from the properties. This money would then be used to pay the council for the properties, carry out any repairs and improvements required and to run the business.

The amount of money available for this would be based on the valuation of the stock and would take into account the condition of the stock and the fact that the properties are tenanted.

At the last valuation (for the proposed LSVT) the price arrived at was £9,000 per property.

### **The Process Timetable**

Newsletter – in 4 weeks, around the end of May

Road Show – likely to be week beginning 14 June, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday

Setting up first ‘Insight Group’ meeting – end June to end July.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on: -

**Monday 7 June at the Cowick Barton 2.00 pm start.**

On the agenda next time: -

- Options Appraisal.
- Independent Tenants Advisor.
- If anyone has any issues they want raised at the next meeting please contact Steve Deakin on 265698, but make sure you allow enough time to organise a response.