

**CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS**  
**Monday, 4th January, 2010**

Present:- Councillor Akhtar (in the Chair); Councillors Goulty and Kaye (Policy Advisors).

**J111. CONNECTING COMMUNITIES**

The Principal Community Involvement Officer reported on the launch of the Connecting Communities which had taken place on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2009, a £12M plan to reinvigorate and connect with those communities that were feeling the pressure from recession most acutely and ensure that they were well placed to share fully in future prosperity and emerge stronger and more cohesive.

The programme had 3 key priorities:-

Leadership – investment in Councillors, other leaders and frontline staff to support their confidence and skills in addressing problems in communities, listening and addressing issues head on.

Giving people a voice – an honest and open debate about the challenges. People would be encouraged to act as community champions.

Increased opportunities – raising awareness of opportunities available to local people.

Rotherham had been identified by GOYH as an area in need of resources and support. The areas identified as priority areas for interventions were East Maltby and Dinnington as they were unlikely to benefit from related initiatives such as Neighbourhood Management Intensive Schemes.

Work had taken place with officers to identify interventions and what support was required from GOYH to ensure local needs were being met. The proposals had been approved by GOYH and were now awaiting approval from CLG.

Rotherham would begin their delivery of the project in the second wave from mid-November, 2009 up to March, 2010. It was envisaged that there would be a third wave to sustain the work.

The NI14 Target Support Fund application from Rotherham for £77,000 had also been approved by CLG which would complement the project.

Local Ward Councillors and Members of Parliament had been notified of the proposals.

Resolved:- (1) That the update on the Connecting Communities areas be noted.

(2) That regular update reports be submitted.

(3) That the report be referred to Cabinet following confirmation from CLG to ensure corporate and political buy-in to the scheme.

#### **J112. EMPTY PROPERTY - UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 188 of April, 2009, an update was submitted on efforts made to bring both private and public sector empty properties back into use within the Borough during 2009/10.

In 2007/08 the number of empty dwellings in Rotherham was slightly lower than the national average. However, in January, 2009, the Empty Homes Agency announced that for the 2008/09 outturn there were 783,633 empty dwellings in England of which 4,273 (3.88%) were in Rotherham. This was a Borough increase from 3.1% in 2007/08.

The empty homes picture for the Borough was changing and the mid-year outturn for Rotherham demonstrated that the number of empties in the Borough had reduced to 3,881 (3.53%).

The cross-directorate Empty Property Working Group had provided a strategic approach towards delivering effective ways of reducing the number of empty properties in both the private and public sector.

Discussion ensued on the report. It was felt that the report gave an outline of the work taking place but did not provide much substance to what had been achieved together with supporting evidence.

Resolved:- That a comprehensive report be submitted, including information from the Community Protection Unit (outlining the activity and outcomes of the Pro-active Enforcement Team).

#### **J113. ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW**

Resolved:- That the report be deferred for consultation with Elected Members and re-submitted to the 18<sup>th</sup> January meeting.

#### **J114. WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

The Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services reported on the Directorate's Workforce Strategy which set out 6 main objectives, informed nationally and regionally.

These would support the Directorate's Strategic and Year Ahead commitments along with the implementation of personalisation across Rotherham in preparation for the development and implementation of an Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy.

The Strategy and Training Plan had a clear action plan detailing how key

milestones would be met as recommended by the recent Care Quality Inspection.

Resolved:- (1) That the Workforce Strategy and the Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy approach be endorsed.

(2) That the Strategy be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care for endorsement.

(3) That the Strategy be submitted to the Adults Board for joint endorsement.

**J115. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs indicated below of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council)).

**J116. PETITION UPDATE - HOWARD ROAD, BRAMLEY**

Further to Minute No. 33 of 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2009, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a further update of actions undertaken in relation to the petition received alleging anti-social behaviour.

A number of actions had been taken against the perpetrators which had culminated in Court action. Since the Court appearance, there had been no further incidents of anti-social behaviour reported or identified.

South Yorkshire Police and Community Protection Officers continued to monitor the situation and engage with residents and the perpetrators.

Resolved:- (1) That the actions taken be welcomed and the partnership work that had taken place acknowledged.

(2) That the resolution of the long term anti-social behaviour associated with the allegations be noted.

(Exempt under Paragraphs 2 of the Act – information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual)

**J117. PREFERRED PARTNER CONTRACT FOR ADAPTATIONS**

In accordance with Minute No. 56 of 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2009, the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services submitted a further update on the performance of the preferred partner contract.

The report also suggested proposals and updates on actions of 2010 Rotherham Ltd. which had offered new opportunities arising from the potential outsourcing of the Repairs and Maintenance function.

Action was being taken to identify the best way of jointly working with 2010 Rotherham Ltd. to ensure minimum disruption to the preferred partner contract agreement.

Resolved:- (1) That the preferred partners' performance to date be noted and the action taken to maximise the opportunity presented to strengthen the future structure of the contract be supported.

(2) That 'in principle' support be approved to include the Aids and Adaptations Service within the market testing process presently being undertaken by 2010 Rotherham Ltd. in respect of the Repairs and Maintenance Service subject to a further report identifying the full implications of this approach.

(Exempt under Paragraph 3 of the Act – information relating to the financial/business affairs of any person (including the Council))